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Abstract

Purpose: The presence of devolved administrative structures plays a critical role in safeguarding against the abuse of power and promoting political stability. Consequently, ensuring the effective operation of these structures in Kenya, especially given the introduction of devolution, is of paramount importance. The primary reason for the existing inadequacies in service delivery has been the suboptimal implementation of these devolved administrative entities, often stemming from ineffective managerial practices. To bridge this gap, this study had four specific objectives aimed at delineating the scope of strategic leadership practices within these devolved administrative structures: assessing the impact of resource allocation practices, evaluating the influence of public accountability practices, scrutinizing the effect of stakeholder involvement, and examining the moderating impact of legal factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and these administrative structures. The study incorporated three theoretical frameworks: the resource-based view theory, the transformational leadership theory and the institutional theory.

Methodology: The study's target population encompassed 500 participants from Taveta and

Makueni counties. Employing purposive and stratified random sampling techniques, a sample size of 223 was derived from the target population. The research design adopted was descriptive research, intended to provide insights into questions regarding what, where, and when. Quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were applied, with SPSS for data coding and STATA version 12 for analysis. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the collective impacts of resource allocation practices, public accountability practices, and stakeholder involvement practices on devolved administrative structures.

Findings: The study ascertained that strategic leadership practices have the potential to enhance the efficiency of decentralized administrative organizations and streamline the dissemination of information.

Recommendations: The research recommends that county leaders articulate plans in a manner that encourages the development of devolved administrative structures, leading to sustainable transformation.

Keywords: *Strategic Leadership Practices, Devolved Administrative Structures. Taita Taveta And Makueni Counties.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In Thailand, service delivery has been enhanced due to innovative strategies that has been emanating from devolved administrative structures (Sudhipongpracha & Wongpredee, 2016). Most administrative structures were found to utilize co-production methods to enhance the delivery of services that were related to maintenance and repairs of roads. According to Chan (2018), kindergarten leaders in Hong Kong impressed strategic leadership as a tool towards addressing the predicaments that are facing that sector. Networking development, systematic and flexible thinking, leaders' reflective, continuous professional growth and cautious planning and management skills were strategic leadership approaches prevalent in the majority of kindergarten schools. Strategic leadership was discovered to greatly rely upon the vocational education collages in Malaysia (Bin & Zulkipli, 2019). Absorptive, strategic alignment, adaptive capacity, strategic orientation, restlessness, strategic intervention and leadership wisdom were the key practices of strategic leadership that were commonly utilized in the work place.

In Africa, Jooste and Hamani (2017) suggested that the effectiveness inherent in strategic resource allocation in South Africa firms was influenced by strategic leadership actions, emphasis on ethical norms, initiations of strategic direction, putting in place organizational controls, prudent firm portfolio resource management and ensuring over time a better organizational culture. The scholars further revealed that strategic leadership was at the heart of business organizations in manoeuvring and coping with stormy and unpredictable competitive environment therefore underscoring performance. The revelations above are in tandem with Serfontein, Kruger and Drevin (2019) that firm performance was solely the function of strategic leadership activities; communication, processes, autonomy, knowledge, organizational performance values on self-reporting, adaptive leadership and systems. In the republic of Ethiopia, devolved administration has been termed pivotal due to its capacity to recognize ethnic diversity, instilling grass root political plurality and fostering development (Chigwata, De Visser & Ayele, 2021).

In Tanzania, according to Sirili et al. (2018) sub-national governments have been identified to bring accountability among public officials, replacing bureaucratic decision-making red tapes, propagating bottom-up planning approach and fostering the independence of resource mobilization and utilization. The researchers were of the opinion that, despite good devolved administrative structures being seen, it encompasses numerous challenges that mostly entail inadequate and incompetent personnel, untimely disbursement of funds from the national government, giving citizen participation a blind eye, political intrusion and inadequate financial allocations. The laws place responsibilities in the hands of County governors to ensure in place the proper functioning of administrative structures.

Twelve years down the path of devolution, the envisioned benefits are yet to be realized. Constant conflicting interests and clash of mandate with the national government has derailed the good intentions of the 2010 Constitution promulgation (Kangu, 2015). The challenges crippling the progress of devolution, in almost all counties, has ranged from deficient human resource, legal and institutional infrastructure, capacity gaps, conspicuous corruption and conflicting association with national government's deliverables. Consequently, sectors like Health have stagnated or even retrogressed in the quality of services offered (Kimathi, 2017).

Recently, the health workers in Tana River County did strike, complaining about delayed salaries, denied promotion and uncondusive working environment that is riskier for their health and the same was replicated in Nairobi County plus other Counties issuing notices of strikes. Additionally, constant wrangles between the County members of assembly and their respective governors on issues of governance, accountability, public participation, and transparency has been part of their new normal in counties of Taita Taveta, Kirinyaga, Nairobi, Bomet and Laikipia. The leadership of governors has been under challenge, which is a benefit of devolution (Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016), but when the two factions consistently flex their muscles, it is the devolved administrative units that are hardly hit by that conflict (Steeves, 2015). Lack of leadership in resource distribution mobilization has also been attributed to poor governance strategies (Mutungi, Njoroge & Minja, 2019).

However, some counties have realized success in the implementation of Devolution since 2013. Machakos, Makueni and Kakamega are some of those counties that have a positive rating (qualified stature) from the disclaimers published in the Auditor General's report 2019 about their prudent utilization of public funds during their execution of devolved functions (OAG, 2019). While selecting Makueni County for this study, their strategic leadership practices and the eventual influence on performance was carefully analyzed against that of Taita Taveta County so as to derive the individual influence of resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholders' involvement.

Therefore, in reshaping the trajectory of Devolution's prosperity into the future, a careful study of the influence of strategic leadership on these devolved administrative units is timely in order to offer a check-on system for corruption, graft and misallocation of economic and political resources that have built conspiracy monuments in most of the Counties in Kenya (Cannon & Ali, 2018). In addressing the influence of strategic leadership, the performance of devolved administrative structures with respect to strategic leadership and practices was an aforethought for this study. Smoke (2015) posits that the enhancement of service delivery outcome and development, political stability, accountability, making public management effective, strengthening economic development and optimal public service delivery are a package of objectives devolved administrative structures are to achieve. Local governments are bestowed with functions and powers previously held by National government courtesy of devolution.

This study focused on the County government setup in which decision making and actions taken are independent but with insightful supervision of the central government and in line with their general policy at the subnational level. That doesn't make the federal government unimportant, however; instead, intergovernmental relations (IGR) take center stage, providing institutions some leeway in terms of provincial and municipal structures that enable significant autonomous engagement on their own matters via different IGR forums. Decentralization postulates devolution by central government relieving itself some specific functions; administrative, political and economic attributes to democratic grass root entities that happen to be autonomous of the central entity within a given legal framework and geographical domain (Faguet, 2017). Devolution was reviewed in light of de-concentration of authority from the centre to the peripheral unit of administration. The problem of decentralization of control against the de-concentration of power from the national to other government levels necessitates that coordination be pursued to prevent needless power squabbles and disputes between governments at various levels.

Devolved administrative structures, therefore in the wake of tensions, conflicts and challenges brought by a given model of devolution, bold the intergovernmental coordination to surmount the same. The study is of the opinion that keen crafting of line of tasks and responsibilities defined a linear system of devolved governance therefore calling for short-term legislative acts and most importantly a continuous refinement of these Acts.

The fruits of devolution are realized when there is political goodwill and support from the central government. Entirely, devolution requires not only administrative, political and legal as prerequisites for its functionality, but also cultural, social and economic aspects that deemed to promote accountability for utilization of government funding by responsible local leaders, participation of locals in planning, service delivery at the local level, and implementation of government programs (Banerjee Duflo, Imbert, Mathew & Pande, 2020). With the help of analytical frameworks, evidence on the experience on devolution was drawn from four countries: Philippines, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia.

The framework made a description and comparison of the decentralization type adopted, the degree and endeavour that led to revelation of diversity in degree and type in each of these democratic dispensations. For instance, in Philippines, evidence suggested that local units were devolved with huge roles, while Ghana registered the least with only health services delegated to autonomous entities as Uganda and Zambia sat in between these extremes (Alonso-Garbayo, Raven, Theobald, Ssenkooba, Nattimba & Martineau, 2017; Resnick, 2017; Resnick, Siame, Mulambia, Ndhlovu, Shicilege & Sivasubramanian, 2019). An observation by Glaser (2017) suggests that the success of devolution hinges on proper developed and implemented structure, policies of institutional nature, structures of administration and strategies spurring, encouraging, and enlisting local community into active participation. In pursuit of effective and practical services, the constitution offers pathways for the greater devolution of county powers and the delivery of county services.

Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Scholars Norzailan, Othman and Ishizaki (2016) term strategic leadership as those approaches unleashed in response to vested interest, resistance from within and external environmental variability. Özer and Tınaztepe (2014) view strategic leadership as a bridge connecting strategic functions and leadership roles that justifies the manner in which an organization carries out certain activities. According to Engert and Baumgartner (2016), strategic leadership is an endeavour of problem identification and strategy formulation that provide solutions to those problems. According to these scholars, strategic leadership is a necessity in fostering, advancing and maintaining over time organizational significance. Empirical evidence from Malaysia's education vocational colleges suggested high level expression of strategic leadership (Bin & Zulkipli, 2019).

The scholars noted that some of the prevalent practices of strategic leadership were the alignment of strategies, wisdom in leadership, strategic intervention, restlessness, and orientations of strategies, absorptive and adaptive capacity. Research by Chan (2018) in Hong Kong revealed that kindergarten leaders were able to surmount challenges that were facing the sector with the help of strategic leadership. Key in beating the challenges were reflective leaders, systematic thinking, networking development, flexible leadership, continuous professional development and ability to plan and management prudently in most kindergarten schools.

According to Jooste and Hamani (2017) actions of strategic leadership among organizations in South Africa that led to effective strategic resource allocation encompassed the emphasizing on ethical practices, determination of strategic direction, sustainable effective organizational culture and effective organizational resource portfolio management and developing an organization's controls. In the wake of turbulent competitive and unpredictable environments South Africa, businesses were able to enhance their performances using the approach of strategic leadership.

Odero, Egessa, and Oseno (2019) examined the effect of strategic leadership on the performance of commercial and financial corporations in Kenya. The study discovered that effective organizational culture, corporate strategic direction, balanced organizational controls, effective management of corporate resources portfolio, and an emphasis on ethical practices were highly correlated with the performance of the aforementioned institutions. On the other hand, Masungu, Marangu, Obunga and Lilungu (2015) while investigating the effect of strategic leadership on the performance of devolved system in Kakamega County concluded that there was need for devolved governments to employ strategic leadership in their operations as this enhances their level of operations.

In the current study, strategic leadership practices were assessed based on resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholders' involvement. Resource allocation calls on a plan(s) for transforming the culture of the organization in areas like performance standards, ability to deliver, quality, teamwork, flexibility and customer service that specifies the people with diverse attitudes, personal characteristics and beliefs (Harrison, Hall & Nargundkar, 2017). In the process of assigning and managing assets, resource allocation will encompass managing tangible assets so as to harness the softer assets such as human capital (Harrison, Hall & Nargundkar, 2017). Therefore, this study focused on resource allocation with more interest on involved programs, policy execution, process of resource allocation, formulation of plans and regulations. Public accountability involves management and cultivation of one's reputation, conveying the impression of competently performing roles and seen as reputable actor in a myriad of audiences (Busuioc & Lodge, 2016).

Governments rely heavily on accountability measures to safeguard and enhance the performance of public sector entities (Schillemans, 2016). Said, Alam and Aziz (2015) are also of the same opinion that improvement of public services is as a result of improving accountability in the public sector. For accountability to work effectively it needs some meta-principles: – transparency, responsiveness and participation (Van Genstel & Van Lochem, 2020). In this study, public accountability was assessed through public officials' reputation, stakeholder relationship, improved public services, and timely and comprehensive information. The outcome of projects is defined by the involvement of stakeholders especially during the initiation, planning, implementation and review of projects (Kobusingye, Mungatu & Mulyungi, 2017).

The creation and facilitation of workshops provides solution to a range of barriers and thus fosters stakeholders' involvement, enhancing better insights into their needs, values and concerns (Storvang & Clarke, 2014). In the implementation of proactive environmental practices, stakeholders significantly influence decisions among them notably in different ways (Rasi, Abdekhodae & Nagarajah, 2014). For instance, employees and customers are involved during process-based changes while senior managers are interested in participating on matters concerning internal management improvements. The participation of stakeholders in the identification, execution, and monitoring of the automotive emission control project in Nairobi,

Kenya, revealed an effect on the project's performance (Njogu, 2016). On the other hand, involvement of stakeholders in the road projects at Kenya national highways authority indicated that awareness, seminars, conferences and feasibility had a great positive influence on road project performance (Nyandika & Ngugi, 2014).

In contrast, there was an imbalance in stakeholders' involvement in change management in public entities (Obong'o, 2017). It was observed that stakeholders were involved in developing sound procedures for effective changes, giving feedback to management, piloting phase before rolling out changes, and giving their feedback and views through a series of meetings. The study noticed that there was no involvement of the staff in the design phase of the change process. This research sought to assess stakeholders' involvement using seminars, conferences, meetings, feedbacks, needs and values.

Statement of the Problem

Strategic leadership that recognizes opportunities and potential threats, incorporate divergent challenges, to come up with realignments and informed decisions, helps organization to have a competitive edge and realize higher returns (Tykkyläinen, 2019). Globally and locally, interrelated researches in the field of strategic leadership have been done. However, a majority of them focused on isolated sectors, disregarding the administrative structures in County government. In South Africa, the impact of strategic leadership on performance of business enterprise and their operational strategy was studied (Serfontein, Kruger, H., & Drevin, 2019). The study by Serfontein, Kruger, and Drevin (2019) was on how strategic leadership has affected the performance of business enterprise together with the operational strategy. From a study conducted by Muli (2015), the level of devolution implementation varies with respect to the roles leaders play to actualize processes.

Kenyan expressed disappointment from performance of county government. More than half (53%) of the residents were dissatisfied with how county government works, with 28% being neither satisfied or disappointment while only 18% indicated that they were satisfied. Muli (2015) identifies that the dissatisfaction and displeasure was as a result of unimplemented reforms (54%), the never fulfilled campaign promises (19%) and corruption/ethnicity/nepotism (13%). In addition, the accomplishment of objectives set out, which are documented as five-year strategic plans, by County governments are derailed by the same governments (Khaunya, Wawire & Chepn'eno, 2015).

Moreover, the operationalization of the strategic plans by the county governments was described by the researchers as weak and faced with numerous challenges. Nevertheless, some counties like Bomet, Makueni and Kakamega have fully operationalized and implemented up to between 70% and 90% the devolved administrative units like village units as capsulated in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution and other legislation at the national and county levels while other counties are yet to fully operationalize and implement them. The above studies failed to link strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures. Therefore, this study examined the effects of strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures in the Kenyan counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni.

Objectives of the Study

1. To establish effects of resources allocation on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.

2. To determine effects of public accountability on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
3. To establish effects of stakeholders' involvement on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
4. To determine the moderating effect of Legal factors on strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni counties, Kenya.

Study Hypotheses

The study hypothesised the following null and alternative hypotheses in order of the study objectives as follows;

1. **H₀₁:** There is no effects of resources allocation on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
2. **H₀₂:** There is no effects of public accountability on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
3. **H₀₃:** There is no effects of stakeholders' involvement on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
4. **H₀₄:** There is no moderating effect of legal factors on the relationship between strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.

Justification and Significance of the Study

This study comes in the backdrop of peak stages growth and maturity of devolved units in the Country whereby systems are opting to establish on their own. Devolved structures, whose existence came by the passage of 2010 constitution and subsequent implementation following the aftermath of 2013 general election are endeavouring to find their traction. Available studies on resource allocation, have failed to unravel the effect of strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Coast and Eastern Regions, studies which had been done and found in the gallery have only covered “stand-alone” counties, particularly Nairobi City County Government and Kisii County Government.

The findings from the study will be of essence in the generation of crucial intuitions into the themes emerging on matters touching the performance of devolved administrative structures. Revelations from the study will be of paramount importance to researchers as they will form the basis of their future studies. Recommendations emanating from the findings offer policy actors solution to a range of challenges crippling the county governments in their strategy execution. Further this study will be the source of knowledge to broaden skills in the implementation of devolved administrative structures among devolved units.

The findings of the research expanded available literature on the theme strategic leadership and the roles it plays in realizing performance and development techniques in the context of county

governments' premeditated strategies. In addition, the study will provide the impetus among the county governments in policy execution as a result of insights acquired from the findings by the National Government on where exactly to place interest.

Performances and successful policy execution by various county administrations happen to be key determinants the accomplishment of Vision 2030. This having been established by their premeditated development schedules. The outcomes from the researched study will give National Government clue on weak areas on policy execution by the County Governments hence the need of empowering them to realize outstanding leadership. In light of this, vision 2030 will be achieved and, safeguard, develop and support devolved established administrative structures.

The County Governments greatly benefitted as they endeavoured to forecast, evaluate, and appraise performance as a tool of projecting development therefore fluctuating environment would have been defined. Various stakeholders would reap out of the study's outcomes something that would enrich the importance of practice of Planning Strategies by leadership of the county governments. A suitable platform for generation of conclusion on a dilemma about supporting the county government's facility or the county government's structural venture was elucidated in the study where respective county residents were versed with various aspects that are touching policy execution in their County Governments. The findings would further provide insights on the need of active input during communal platforms something that will give birth to consensus of plans for execution by their county governments and obligations of leaders for improved service provision. The study outcome would provide the local citizens with some insights hence an eye opener for them to be mindful on the need to be part and parcel of the success of their counties.

The Scope of this Study

The geographical scope of the study were two semi-arid counties in Kenya; the Taita Taveta in Coastal region and Makueni in Lower Easter region. Theoretically, the study focused on transformative leadership theory and institutional theory. The study targeted top leadership, middle and operational managers who are working in the two counties as the units of observation (analysis) with contextual scope being strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures. Strategic leadership practices were assessed in light of resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholder involvement. The study's predictor variable was strategic leadership practices while the response variable was devolved administrative structures.

Limitation of the Study

The research was narrowed down to the two County Governments only; which are Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties whose findings were generalized to the rest of the forty-five counties. Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were relatively with limited scope because for better results to be realized, they ought to be derived from census on the large populace. To overshadow this limitation, a sample of the larger population was of essence for the study. Unexpected non-responsiveness based on suspicion on the objectives of the study from among the objects of observation is another foreseen limitation that upon emerging the researcher addressed it by providing research permits to ascertain the academic nature of the study.

Fear of being reprimanded by the county leadership was another limiting factor among respondents hence making them hesitant in providing required information. To overcome this limitation, the researcher endeavoured to reassure respondents that the data collected would be

kept strictly confidential. Lastly, expansiveness of research sites and environmental challenges could be a limitation to hinder the study. Nevertheless, the respondents were sought remotely.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

Devolved Administrative Structures

Empirical evidence from commonwealth of independent states, Eastern and central Europe on conditions for successful decentralization, Florian and Becirevic (2014) observed that civic participation mobilization, development of human resources and, legislative framework and process were behind the success of devolution in those jurisdictions. The current study sought to borrow heavily from Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2016) arguments on strategic leadership concepts as they have been deemed empirically accepted and conceptually valid in the past. This concepts on strategic leadership are based on aspects of maintaining flexibility, envisioning, thinking strategically, anticipating and encouraging employees to be innovative thereby resulting to organizational transformation that has positively impacted organizational performance.

Rahman, Othman, Yajid, Rahman, Yaakob, Masri, and Ibrahim (2018) argues that strategic leadership is grounded on strategic leadership's visionary capabilities that focus on developing an organization that will eventually be transformative. In this case therefore, devolved administrative structures are paramount in establishing small segments that enhance fair political competition whereby the minorities who were previously aggrieved are handed an opportunity to control local government hence bringing about stability in the political environment and scaling down any chances of power abuse through the transfer of considerable number of functions from the central government to the grass root (Faguet, 2017). Local governments are bestowed with functions and powers previously held by the National government, courtesy of the devolution.

This study focused on the County government setup in which decision making and actions taken are independent but with insightful supervision of the central government and in line with their general policy at the subnational level. This, however, does not render the existing central structures irrelevant; rather, intergovernmental relations take center stage, in which, it granted institutions a reasonable degree of autonomy in terms of regional (provincial) and also in the local structures, thereby allowing them to participate meaningfully in their own affairs through various Intergovernmental forums (IGR) that which are available for various purposes. In the current research study, Devolution was reviewed in light of de-concentration of authority from the centre to the peripheral units of administration.

Strategic Leadership Practices

Wang, Zhang and Jia (2017) studied the personal characteristics of strategic leaders and firm performance in China. The characteristics were personality, personal experience, cognitive styles, values and leadership behaviour. The characteristics were further grouped into three styles; morality, clear and strong authority and concern and considerateness. However, Wang, Zhang and Jia (2017) did not focus on collective institutional strategic leadership influence on a devolved administrative setup. Algarni and Male (2014) in their review on models and constructs of leadership so as to evaluate the role of educational leaders in promoting and developing public schools in Saudi Arabia, concluded that, the current system viewed

educational leadership as a single individual's responsibility suggesting maintenance as compared to development and management in contrast to leadership.

Although the current Saudi education system promoted a collaborative learning environment, the conclusions of Algarni and Male (2014) are contradictory. In this study, devolved administrative setup was the foci not the educational setup, and an investigation of strategic leadership practices like resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholders' involvement unlike a sweeping investigation on constructs of leadership. In Ghana, Ofori and Atiogbe (2014) conducted an investigation on strategic planning with Public Universities being units of observation. They discovered that information and communication use translated to a successful implementation of their strategic plans and that staff members viewed strategic planning as a responsibility for only the top management. Serfontein, Kruger, and Drevin (2019) also found out that strategic leadership had a direct association with operational strategy and further related to return on assets (ROA) and earnings per share (EPS) in a business organization in South Africa.

In contrast to this study, strategic leadership practices like resource allocation, programs, plan formulation and execution of policies regulation were not investigated. Odero et al. (2019) while studying the impact of strategic leadership on performance of commercial and financial state corporations in Kenya, discovered that, a balanced organizational control in the management of human, financial, and social capita plus the organizational culture was effective towards the realization of good performance. Odero et al., (2019) restricted his study on financial institution and not the devolved administrative structures.

Masungu, Marangu, Obunga, and Lilungu (2015) while studying the influence of strategic leadership on the performance of devolved government system in Kakamega County, concluded that Strategic leadership in devolved government improves the level of performance. They only focused on Kakamega County which this study expanded to two other counties. Further, Rigii, Ogutu, Awino, and Kitiabi (2019) emphasized that county leadership has to incorporate strategic leadership and innovatively train its employees for improved service delivery. Their scope was limited as it did not include resource allocation or execution of policy regulations in the devolved units. Therefore, the current research sought to unravel whether devolved administrative structures could be influenced by strategic leadership practices.

Resource Allocation Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Atienza (2018) in her study on experiences of a devolved setup-the politics of health devolution, realized that politicization in management of public health resources (like medicine procurement), constraints in improvement and construction of health facilities and a lack of health personnel/facilities were the common problems facing local government units in Philippines. Atienza (2018) further concluded that, the lack of exhaustive deliberations, poor design and hast implementation of health devolution partially were the causes of those problems. This current study intends to focus on the influence of budgetary process, plans formulation and policies execution on performance of devolved administrative structures which in the study was narrowed to only the health sector.

An investigation on the association between decentralization and equity of health resource allocation was conducted in Chile and Colombia (Bossert, Larrañaga, Giedion, Arbelaez, & Bowser, 2016). Their findings indicated that, increased levels of funding were directly translating to increased service utilization and devolution aided and maintained an equitable allocation of health resources in different devolved units with different levels of income.

Therefore, the current study deviated from equitable health resource sharing among devolved units to resources allocation in terms of allocation process, plans formulation and execution in devolved administrative structures. Bossert et al. (2016) while investigating resource allocation and District Performance-Decentralization in Zambia, found out that the allocation formula that was based on population size and hospital beds, allocated almost equal per capita expenditure on different districts.

In addition, decentralization allowed autonomy in internal resources allocation and expenditure in each district. However, disparities were evident in revenue generation as wealthier districts were able to meet their targets while poorer districts fell way short of their targets despite exceedingly using their maximum allocations. This current study did not investigate revenue generation but resource allocation in devolved administrative structures. Moindi (2014) while studying resource distribution methods under devolved systems of government in selected counties in Kenya, it was shown that even when the resources are available, counties confront a number of difficulties in mobilizing and implementing resource allocation plans.

In his bid to unmask the resource allocation strategies in Kiambu, Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos and Nakuru counties, optimization was applied in maximizing efficiency for the uniquely set objectives in each county so as to address their changing environment and need. Allocation of resources was further based on national government's long-term projects, rather than short-term county government's projects (Moindi, 2014). The above studies were done in different counties with the gap the current research sought to fill by investigating the effect of resource allocation practices on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni counties in Kenya.

On the question of how resource allocation planning influenced public procurement in Kenya, Danis and Kilonzo (2014) in light of the public procurement Act (2005) and Regulations (2006) and revised (2010) found out that resource allocation affected procurement performance. The Public Procurement Oversight Authority specified that procurement performance begins from purchasing efficiency and effectiveness so as to attain the set performance levels in public institutions (Public Procurement Oversight Authority, 2007). The above study was on public procurement whereas this study was on devolved administrative structures. Tsofa, Goodman, Gilson and Molyneux (2017) while investigating Devolution and its impacts on commodities management and health workforce, identified political interference and discrimination during the award of contracts or recruitment of staff in county government of Kilifi.

Further, Ngigi and Busolo (2019) found out that the chief inhibitor towards the institutionalization of devolved governance strategy by county governments in Kenya was inadequate resource allocation. However, the Tsofa et al. (2017) concentrated more on the department of health in Kilifi County, while Ngigi and Busolo (2019) gave a generalized view of county resource allocation state. This study was specific for Public Procurement Oversight Counties where resource allocation was investigated based on formulation plans, policies and regulation execution, and allocation process/budget.

Public Accountability Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Accountability for the longest time has been regarded as the cornerstone of successful public management (Forrer, Kee, Newcomer & Boyer, 2014). In order to build trust among workers with diverse experiences and backgrounds, performance measures are critical and will assist managers to assess, engage and over time improve organizational performance, thus enhancing

accountability (Forrer et al., 2014). In a study done by Forrer et al. (2014) on public-private partnerships and the public accountability question in the UK, where the performance measurement for public-private partnerships accountability were to include the development of a strategy that is efficient and effective in the collaborative process, that involves monitoring and evaluation against standards of value-for-money according to government and citizen expectations.

However, this study deviated from public-private partnerships to investigate devolved administrative structures' performance focusing more on access to information, social audits and publication of citizen's budget which Forrer et al. (2014) did not research. Devolution was meant to create a political structure which will be more transparent and more accountable to the marginalized and poor groups in the society, bringing the government closer to people (Deshingkar, Johnson, & Start, 2015). In a study on devolution and development in India, done by Deshingkar et al. (2015), devolution led to local elites capturing a large share of public resources at the expense of the poor. However, some of the national government programs like subsidies on rice for low-income households and providing credit packages to women's self-help groups, enhanced and empowered the poor and vulnerable in India.

In this study, public accountability practices such as communication and access to information, social audits and publication of budgets that Deshingkar et al. (2015) were silent on, were investigated. In South Africa, Munzhedzi (2017) examined the significance of power separation in maintaining public accountability. Results concluded that, the most fundamental responsibilities of parliament were to oversee the executive arm, to ensure that projects, programmes and policies are carried out as approved. However, the legislature encounters the challenge of political seniority within the ruling party, such that the members of parliament shy from holding the executive to account fearing political assassination of their character and reprimand from their party.

In the case of Munzhedzi (2017), the target level of governance was the national government and accountability was towards the legislature. In this study, the target level of governance was the County governments and accountability was to the citizen in the respective counties. In Nigeria, Ibietan (2017) investigated corruption and public accountability, where the study found out that the existing external and internal mechanisms of achieving accountability were ineffective since they lacked political goodwill as sanctions placed on offenders were weak and easily canvassed thus did not deter potential and actual offenders from engaging in corruption.

Contrastingly, Ibietan (2017) focused largely on why corruption persisted, which this study diverged and focused more on exploring strategic leadership practices which addresses public accountability in relation to the performance of those structures of devolved administration. Devolved units in Kenya are facing challenges manifested in call for dissolutions of county governments by the citizens on the account of legitimacy, degenerating levels of accountability and transparency, substandard access to devolved public services, recurring inequalities in the distribution of county resources that does not consider accountability, equitability and transparency.

However, four decades into independence, roll out of plans have suffered setbacks in Kenya due to issues shrouded with poor leadership majorly occasioned by politicians and part of management administrators (Minja, 2017). More often, impeachment motions are levelled against the county boss over accountability and prudent resource allocations notwithstanding dissatisfaction over salary delay for county staff. Formal and informal means are usually used

in order to hold executive to account, where the members of county assemblies whether out of selfish interests or controlling the executive power, regenerates into accountability (Dyzenhaus & Cheeseman, 2018).

Although milestone progress has been achieved through county governments, mistrust still exists between members of county assemblies and the county executive. This mistrust further cascades downwards to the citizens who picture devolution as devolved ‘corruption’ from the national government (Opalo, 2019). Supremacy battles occasionally being displayed over who is transparent and prudent in planning for development between county assemblies and the county executive members (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015). A

ccountability was categorized into two by Wa Githinji and Holmquist, (2016) on their assessment of reform and political impunity in Kenya - transparency without accountability with thematic areas being Horizontal and vertical accountability among branches of government and government to its citizens respectively. While horizontal accountability is monitored through checks and balances, vertical accountability from politicians remains unaccountable (Wa Githinji, and Holmquist, 2016). Ochieng (2017) while answering the question of ‘Who is responsible for Kenya’s devolved health sector?’ realized that the burden of accountability squarely lies on the counties although decision making and resource management authority still remains with the national government.

Stakeholder Involvement Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

As viewed by Nyang’au (2014), stakeholder/public involvement is a crucial part of a decision-making process targeting support for organization policy and activities which avoids conflict in achieving success of the planned strategy over time. While investigating public-private partnerships and the subject of public accountability, Forrer et al (2014) found out that clear and consistent communication to all stakeholders was important in ensuring fruition of the public-private partnership efforts. These clear and consistent communication helped build trust and transparency that later increased engagements between the partner (Kim & Lee, 2018). However, in addition to communication, this study investigated whether there exist stakeholders’ engagement plans, stakeholders’ involvement financing and citizen participation.

In England-UK, Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders (2017) while studying citizen participation and changing governance, concluded that citizen consultation (involvement) had been insufficient to undesirable extent in devolution dealings rolled out in England. In addition, even with the desire from political leaders to expatiate their mandates quickly, deeper forms of consultation in the form of mini-public deliberations, would have been possible so as to get informed public opinion on priority areas thus legitimizing local governance reforms process. The study by Prosser et al. (2017) only investigated public participation which this study finds inadequate.

Thus, alongside public participation, this research intends to investigate whether other stakeholder engagements and evidence of financing for stakeholder involvement exercises have influence on the performance of devolved administrative structures. In Kenya, Opano, Shisia, Sang, and Josee (2015), conducted research on devolved governments with Kisii county government being the point of focus. The scholars concluded that key determinants to the implementation of developed strategic plans in the county government of Kisii, were financial resources and the involvement of stakeholders. These revelations prompted the scholars to make a recommendation that the study of this magnitude should be conducted nationwide. As

Juma et al. (2014) advised, all stakeholders should guard devolution with a clear resolute such that past governance mistakes will be lessons for bettering Kenya through devolution.

Muli (2014), while studying the difficulties of implementing the devolution approach in the Nairobi city county administration, uncovered the following: realized that the political and physical environment, resistance from Members of the County Assembly, employees, business community and the electorate were the main impediment towards the implementation of their devolution strategy. Further, he observed that, in order to reduce resistance at all levels of implementation process, participation of stakeholders is crucial, and rules guiding the execution of devolution approach must be explicit to minimize misunderstanding. The research by Nyang'au (2014) on public participation and the effectiveness of strategy implementation at the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in Kenya is illuminating, concluded that when the ministry involved the public in strategy implementation, there was reduced time and resistance from stakeholders. It also ensured proper utilization of resources by scaling down corruption and unnecessary expenditure. Hence this study delved into finding out whether in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, stakeholders' engagement plans, financing for stakeholder involvement and citizen participation have been incorporated in their governance practices.

Legal factors and Devolved Administrative structures

The existence and operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya is deeply anchored in Chapter Eleven of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. Its functions and powers with reference to that of the national government are clearly stipulated. However, in case of competing or conflicting interests between the two levels of governments, the national government's authority becomes superior to that of the devolved unit (COK, 2010). Even with this carefully crafted guideline in our Constitution, there has been serious tensions regarding those functions and powers between the national and county governments (Kangu, 2015). Juma, Rotich, and Mulongo (2014) on their study about devolution and governance conflicts in Africa-Kenyan scenario, recommended that the governments should respect the basic principles of socio-eco-political justice, fully embrace constitutionalism for the realization of development, disregard the feeling of fiscal stress when implementing the stated percentage of devolved funds to counties and ensuring the existence of a uniform governance culture.

Odero, Egessa, and Oseno (2019) discovered in their research on the moderating effect of legal factors on the link between strategic leadership practices and performance of deposit taking SACCO's in Kenya, and that the legal factors indeed moderated the link between the strategic leadership practices and performance of Deposit taking SACCOs. Therefore, in their recommendation, they advised that, organizations should ensure that strategic leadership is conscious of the legal factors as they improve overall performance of the organization. However, Odero, Egessa and Oseno's (2019) study, did not focus on devolution which this study focused on. In addition, they covered only Nairobi County and this study covered two counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. Hence, this study made a thoughtful conclusion on the question about; "what is the influence of Strategic Leadership practices on performance of administrative structures of devolved units (County Governments) in Kenya?"

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory views leadership as the creation of a positive change within an organization, where care for one another's interest is key towards the realization of group goals (Manzoor, Wei, Nurunnabi, Subhan, Shah and Fallatah, 2019). It aims at boosting morale

that will directly impact each employee’s performance in a way that they are better equipped to align their self-worth and identity towards the organization’s collective identity (Orabi, 2016). This theory, as Andersen (2018) asserts, places leader(s) as pivots in providing inspiration, open space for consultations and becoming role models themselves. A transformational leader often challenges the status quo by empowering the employees to participate in decision making, motivating them to picture the long-term goals and trigger creativity out of their comfort zones (Hu et al., 2018). Eichelberger (2017) outlines four facets of transformational leadership that included idealized effect (Charisma), intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and personal/individual attention. In light of Eichelberger (2017), this study adopted the theory in establishing the impact of strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in Kenya. In addition, it shaped accountability effects, impact of stakeholders’ involvement and legal issues arising due to strategic leadership practices.

Conceptual Framework

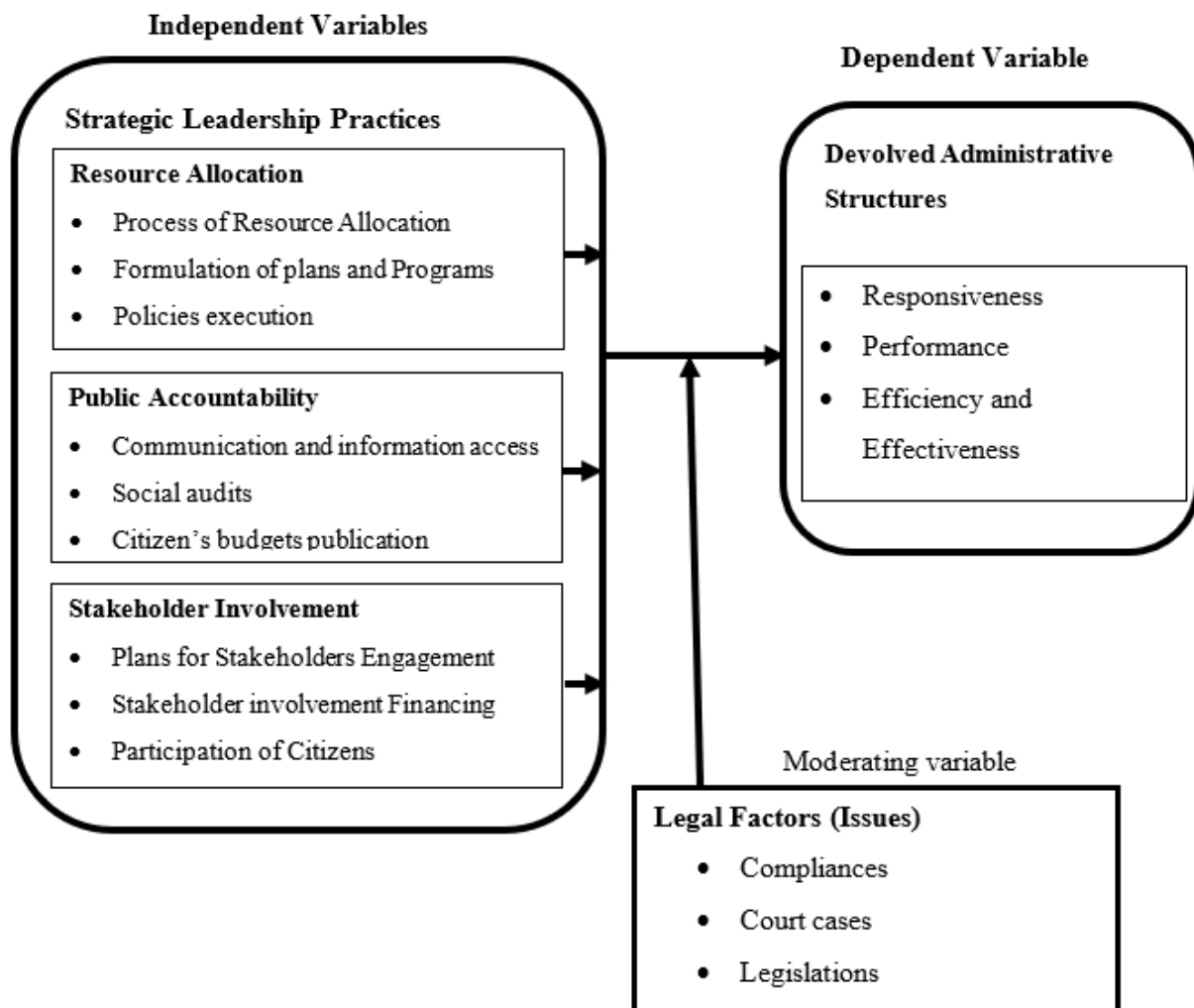


Figure 2. 1 - Conceptual Framework

Source; Researcher (2021)

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Research philosophy

The study entirely relied on pragmatism research philosophy because it advocates for adoption of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and the analytical methods that is deemed prudent for social research (Morgan, 2014).

Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design which was suitable for this study as it propagates for conducting careful observations and giving the phenomena, a proper and well detailed documentation (Walliman, 2017). The design sought to answer the phenomenon's question on what, where, and when it occurs. Situations are examined with the view of establishing what is the norm, that is, what may be anticipated to occur under the same conditions.

Target Population

The target population was derived from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. Encompassing the target population was the top leadership that was purposively sampled from the two county governments whose findings were generalized to the rest of 45 County Governments.

Sampling Techniques

The research employed purposive and random sampling to draw from the target population of 500, a sample size of 223 in the leadership of the two counties. These were Governor's, Deputy Governors, Speakers of the County Assembly, Members of the County Assemblies, the County Executive Committee Members, the Chief Officers, the County Public Service Board Members, Directors/Managers, Sub County Administrators, Ward Administrators and the Village Administrators who made a representation of 223 respondents. Therefore, Purposive sampling was utilized to sample the top leadership who are mandated to oversee functions in the devolved administrative setup; the Governor's, Deputy Governors, Speakers of County Assembly and Clerks of County Assembly. Random sampling was also utilized to the Members of County Assemblies, Executive Committees, Chief Officers, County Public Service Board Members, Directors/Managers, Sub County Administrators, Ward Administrators and Village Administrators who are in leadership capacities.

Sample Size

The sample size was calculated using Yamane (1967) formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Whereby;

n - Represented the computed sample size,

e - Represented 0.05, which was the margin of error allowed and

N - Represented the size of the population.

The study's sample size was;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{500}{1 + 500(0.05^2)} = 222.2 \approx 223.$$

Further, using Cochran's (1977) formula for proportional allocation of the sampled respondents, Table 3.2 was generated. The formula is as illustrated below.

$$n_i = \left(\frac{n}{N}\right)N_i$$

Where;

n_i Is the expected sampled individuals in stratum i ,

n Is the computed sample size,

N Is the Target population of the study and,

N_i Is the population in stratum i .

Data Collection Procedure and Tool

In this research study, its data was gathered using questionnaires and interview schedules. The data collected were restricted to demographic information of the respondents was earlier promised and the research objectives. In obtaining the data, approval of the study was issued to the researcher from Kenyatta University Graduate School and the authorization research permit from Kenyatta University. The researcher then sought licence from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then visited the Counties to facilitate the process of data collection by booking appointments where necessary and securing the respondents' consent for progression to administering the research instruments. The questionnaires were distributed through a drop-off and pick-up method, and respondents were allowed one month to complete the questions. The study held face-to-face interviews with the sampled interviewees and also drop questionnaires to respondents for later picking so that respondents had ample time to fill them.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Since the data collected were both quantitative and qualitative in nature, the quantitative data was sorted, edited and coded into SPSS version 26 then analysed in STATA version 12. The analysis of quantitative data involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Under this descriptive statistics, the analysis involved measures of central tendency (frequency and means), measures of dispersion (standard deviation) and the measures of association (cross tabulation). Further, inferential statistics involved Chi-square relational measure and Multiple Linear regression modelling.

Multiple linear regression presented a linear relationship between the strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures, quantified the extent of the effect and direction of association, whether direct or inverse association. These direct or inverse association provided the individual contribution of each independent variable on performance of devolved administrative structures (Zhang, 2017). The significance and proportion of variation on response variable explained by the multiple linear regression model, were derived from goodness of fit statistic (R-squared statistics). As was recommended by Field (2017), that when checking for relationships between predictor and response variables, normality, Linearity, Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity should be used in carrying out the testing, which this study conducted. In regards to qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis and direct quotes (participants' voices) were adopted.

4.0: FINDINGS

Response Rate

The study targeted 500 respondents in top leadership levels drawn from Taita Taveta County in Coastal region and Makueni County in Eastern region. The respondents were made up of top leadership purposively sampled from the two County Governments who comprised of the leaders at the strategic level, functional level and operational level.

Table 1: Response Rate

Research Instrument	Duly Filled	Unfilled	Expected Count
Questionnaire	182 (81.61%)	19 (8.52%)	201 (90.13%)
Key Informant Interviews	18 (8.07%)	4 (1.79%)	22 (9.87%)
Total	200 (89.69%)	23 (10.31%)	223 (100%)

Source: Researcher (2021)

Out of the 500 individuals targeted, the study computed a sample size of 223 individuals. However, from the 223 anticipated respondents, 200 respondents fully filled the issued questionnaire and returned them, giving a response rate of 89.69% which the study deemed adequate for further analysis. Only 10.31% of the sampled respondents did not fully fill the issued questionnaires or did not consent to fill the research tool due to tight schedules, away from office on special assignment, misplacing the questionnaires and not seeing the essence of filling the questionnaires. Table 1 above illustrates the proportion of the research tool issued that were dully filled and those that were unfilled.

Demographic Characteristics

In examining the demographic features of the respondents, Table 4.2 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	134	67
	Female	66	33
Education Level	O/A Level	12	6
	Certificate/Diploma	52	26
	Bachelors	118	59
	Postgraduate	18	9
Position in the County	Director	32	16
	CO	44	22
	CECM	92	46
Years serving in the county government	0 – 3 Years	59	29.5
	3 – 5 Years	95	47.5
	6 – 8 Years	36	18

Source: Research Data (2021)

In terms of gender, majority (67%) of the respondents were Male while 33% of the participants were female. Majority of the participants were male because they are the majority of the employees in the two county governments hence reflecting since time in memorial the cultural gender disparity. More than half (59%) of the participants had attained a Bachelor's degree

level of education, 26% had attained a Certificate or Diploma level while 9% and 6% of the participants had attained a Postgraduate degree and O/A level of education respectively. The participants with higher education qualifications were fewer due to the fact of inaccessibility of education since independence.

In terms of the position the respondents occupied in the County government, 46% were CECM's, 22% were CO's and 16% were Directors in the County governments of Taita Taveta and Makueni. In terms of the years the respondents have worked in the respective County governments, 47.5% had worked for the County government for between 3 to 5 years, 29.5% had worked for 3 years while only 18% of these respondents had worked for between 6 and 8 years in the County government. The descriptive analysis of demographic characteristics of the participants, ensured that all individuals' unique characteristics and capabilities were incorporated in the study so as to have a representative sample for the study.

Strategic Leadership Practices

In evaluating strategic leadership practices, the study used Resource Allocation Practices, Public Accountability Practices and Stakeholders Involvement practices as the sub-constructs, and the level of agreement with postulated statements under each of the sub-constructs descriptively analysed.

a. Resource Allocation Practices

In order to evaluate resource allocation procedures, participants were needed to identify the degree to which Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties implemented resource allocation practices. Respondents were expected to choose from 1 (Not at all), 2 (to a small extent), 3 (to a moderate extent), 4 (to a large extent) and 5 (to a very large extent) which resources allocation practices were carried out.

Table 3: Resource Allocation Practices

County Government's Resources Practices		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
B1	To what extent does the county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource?	0	6	32	54	8	3.64	.716
B2	County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes.	0	1.5	25	65.5	8	3.8	.593
B3	To what extent does the County Government develop processes through implementing plans to support change?	0	1	20.5	68	10.5	3.88	.581
B4	Given the opportunity, to what extent has leaders in your County Government strategically allocated resources to the stakeholders?	10.5	22	46.5	12	9	2.87	1.053
B5	To what extent does the vision of the County Government directly influence the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources?	15.5	26.5	37.5	14.5	6	2.69	1.086
B6	To what extent, in your County Government scenario, has planning been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources?	13	30.5	37.5	12	7	2.695	1.067
B7	To what extent does leaders in your County Government develop specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically.	3	15	31.5	32.5	18	3.475	1.046
Aggregate value for County Government's Resources Allocation Practices							3.29	.366

Source: Researcher (2021)

As shown in Table 4.3, more than half (54%) of the respondents indicated that county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource to a large extent. While 32% of the participants indicated that county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource to a moderate extent neutral. However, 8% and 6% of these respondents indicated that county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource of a very large extent and to a small extent respectively. The mean of 3.64 and reflected standard deviation of 0.716 imply that respondents generally were of the opinion that county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource to a large extent. The above findings were of different perspectives to those of Tsofa (2017) political interference and discrimination during the award of contracts or recruitment of staff in county government.

On whether County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes, majority (65.5%) of the respondents indicated that County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes to a large extent. 25% of the participants indicated that County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes to a moderate extent. 8% and 1.5% of the participants showed that County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcome to a very large extent and to a small extent respectively. The mean of 3.8

and standard deviation of 0.593 imply that respondents generally were of the opinion that County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes to a large extent.

In addition, on whether County Government developed processes through implementing plans to support change, majority (68%) of the respondents indicated that County Government developed processes through implementing plans to support change to a large extent. 20.5% of the participants showed that County Government developed processes through implementing plans to support change to a moderate extent. 10% and 1% of the participants indicated that County Government developed processes through implementing plans to support change to a very large extent and to a small extent respectively. The mean of 3.88 and reflected standard deviation of 0.581 imply that, respondents generally were of the opinion that the County Government had developed processes through implementing plans to support change to a large extent.

Further, on whether leaders, given the opportunity in the County Government, would strategically allocate resources to the stakeholders, 46.5% of the respondents showed that leaders, given the opportunity in the County Government, would strategically allocate resources to the stakeholders to a moderate extent. 22% of the participants indicated that leaders, given the opportunity in the County Government, would strategically allocate resources to the stakeholders to a small extent. 12%, 10.5% and 9% of the participants indicated that leaders, given the opportunity in the County Government, would strategically allocate resources to the stakeholders to a large extent, to no extent and to a very large extent respectively. The mean of 2.87 and standard deviation of 0.053 imply that respondents generally were of the opinion that leaders, given the opportunity in the County Government, would strategically allocate resources to the stakeholders to a moderate extent.

The revealing of the study was in tandem with Bossert et al., (2016) that increased levels of funding were directly translating to increased service utilization and devolution aided and maintained an equitable allocation of health resources in different devolved units with different levels of income. In terms of the vision of the County Government and its effect on development of strategic planning processes, 37.5% of the participants indicated that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources to a moderate extent. 26.5% of the participants indicated that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources of a moderate extent. 26.5% of the participants indicated that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources of a small extent. 15.5%, 14.5% and 6% of the respondents indicated that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources to no extent, to a large extent and to a very large extent respectively. The mean of 2.69 and standard deviation of 1.086 imply that respondents generally were of the opinion that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources to a moderate extent.

The above findings agreements being below average, converge with those of Moindi (2014) that counties face a lot of challenges during the mobilization and utilization of resource allocation strategies even when the resources are accessible to them. Furthermore, on whether County Government planning has been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources, 37.5% of the participants indicated that County Government planning

scenario has been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources to a moderate extent. 30.5% of the respondents indicated that County Government planning scenario has been used purposely to generate various imagined outcomes, based on practice of resources allocated within a small extent. 13%, 12% and 7% of the respondents indicated that the County Government planning scenario has been used to generate various imagined outcomes, which are based on allocated resources to no extent, to a large extent and to a very large extent respectively. The mean of 2.695 and standard deviation of 1.067 implies that respondents generally were of the opinion that County Government planning scenario has been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources to a moderate extent.

These results are contrary to those of Ngigi and Busolo (2019) who found that the chief inhibitor towards institutionalization of devolved governance strategy by county governments in Kenya was inadequate resource allocation. On the whether the leaders in County Governments have developed specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically, 32.5% of the respondents indicated that the leaders in County Governments have developed specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically to a large extent.

31.5% of the participants indicated that the leaders in County Governments have developed specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically to a moderate extent. 18%, 15% and 3% of the respondents indicated that the leaders in County Governments have developed specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically to a very large extent, to a small extent and to no extent respectively. The mean of 3.475 and standard deviation of 1.46 imply that respondents generally were of the opinion that the leaders in County Governments have developed specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically to a moderate extent. Overly, the respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were of the opinion that resource allocation practices, to a moderate extent has been exercise in both Counties, as indicated by the mean of 3.29 and standard deviation of 0.366 from the computed aggregate value for County Government's Resources Allocation Practices in the table above.

b. Public Accountability Practices

Respondents were expected to identify the degree to which public accountability procedures were implemented in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties while evaluating public accountability practices. Respondents were expected to choose from 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree) with public accountability practices carried out.

Table 4: Public Accountability Practices

Public (Leadership) Accountability Practices		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
C1	The strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner.	8.5	56	23	8.5	4	2.435	.911
C2	Information continuously circulates among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members.	6	66.5	20	7	0.5	2.295	.707
C3	County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely.	5	60.5	27.5	5.5	1.5	2.38	.734
C4	Transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication is enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public.	10	66	18	5.5	0.5	2.205	.711
C5	Networking with other counties' stakeholders is enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement.	8.5	4	27	59	1.5	3.41	.931
C6	With the help of communication, organizational leaders are able to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens.	8.5	61.5	24.5	3.5	2	2.29	.754
Aggregate Value for Public (Leadership) Accountability Practices							2.50	.293

Source: Researcher (2021)

As indicated in Table 4.4, more than half (56%) of the participants agree that the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner. 23% of the respondents were neutral on whether the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner or not. 8.5% of the participants strongly agreed the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner. However, a similar proportion, 8.5%, were disagreeing that the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner.

Further, 4% of the participants strongly disagreed that the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner. The mean of 2.435

and standard deviation of 0.911 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner. The revelations above conform to the arguments of Said, Alam and Aziz (2015) that improvement of public services is as a result of improving accountability in the public sector. These findings are also in tandem with the suggestions by Schillemans (2016) governments rely heavily on accountability measures to safeguard and enhance the performance of public sector entities.

On whether information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members, majority (66.5%) of the respondents agree that information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members. 20% of the respondents were neutral on whether information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members or not. However, 7% of the respondents agreed that information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members.

In contrast, 6% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members. Only 0.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members. The mean of 2.295 and standard deviation of 0.707 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that information continuously circulated among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members.

In terms of County leadership always validating responses given by county government employees in a timely manner, majority (60.5%) of the respondents agree that County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely manner. 27.5% of the respondents were neutral on whether County leadership always validated responses given by county government employees in a timely manner or not. However, 5.5% of the respondents disagreed that County leadership always validated responses given by county government employees in a timely manner.

In contrast, 5% of the participants were strongly agreeing that County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely manner. Only 1.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely manner. The mean of 2.38 and standard deviation of 0.734 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely manner.

Further, on Transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication and county leadership, majority (66%) of the respondents agree that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. 18% of the respondents were neutral on whether transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public or not. However, 10% of the participants strongly agreed that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. In contrast, 5.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public.

Only 0.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. The mean

of 2.205 and standard deviation of 0.711 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. The findings therein are in harmony with the Van Genstel and Van Lochem (2020) arguments that for accountability to work effectively it needs some meta-principles – transparency, responsiveness and participation.

In terms of networking with other counties' stakeholders and enhancement of County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement, more than half (59%) of the respondents were disagreeing that networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement. 27% of the respondents were neutral on whether networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement or not. However, 8.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement.

Further, 4% of the respondents were agreeing that networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement. Only 1.5% of the participants strongly disagreed that networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement. The mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 0.931 imply that respondents generally were neutral that networking with other counties' stakeholders was enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement.

In addition, regarding the help of communication and team commitment which benefit citizens, while 61.5% of the respondents were agreeing, 8.5% of the participants strongly agreed that, with the help of communication, in this, organizational leaders were able to establish team commitment which later benefited the citizens. 24.5% of the respondents were neutral and, 3.5% of the respondents were also disagreeing that, with the help of communication as a public accountability practice to organizational leaders, it was able to establish team commitment which later benefited the citizens or not. The mean of 2.29 and standard deviation of 0.754 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that, with the help of communication in an organization, organizational leaders were able to establish team commitment which later benefited the citizens.

The study found that citizen's benefit from their leaders contravenes Deshingkar et al. (2015) perspective that devolution led to local elites capturing a large share of public resources at the expense of the poor. Therefore, the respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were neutral on the public accountability practices, as exercised in both Counties, as shown by the mean of 2.5 and standard deviation of 0.293 from the computed aggregate value for public accountability practices in the table above.

c. Stakeholder Involvement Practices

In assessing stakeholder involvement practices, respondents were required to show the extent to which stakeholder's involvement were carried out in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. Respondents were expected to choose from 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree) with stakeholder involvement practices carried out.

Table 4: Stakeholder's Involvement Practices

Stakeholder Involvement Practices		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
D1	There is timely communication of leadership practices and strategies to local citizens and involved stakeholders.	2	29.5	64	4.5	0	2.71	.581
D2	There exists perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders.	1	25.5	67	6.5	0	2.79	.563
D3	There is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public.	0	22.5	73	4.5	0	2.82	.489
D4	Leaders in your County Government strategically allocate resources for stakeholder involvement.	3.5	33.5	47.5	9	6.5	2.815	.891
D5	Transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication is enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public.	2.5	31.5	47	8.5	10.5	2.93	.959
D6	Enhanced communication enables organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens.	34	62	4	0	0	1.7	.539
Aggregate Value for Stakeholder Involvement Practices							2.628	.271

Source: Researcher (2021)

As shown in Table 5, more than half (64%) of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that there is timely communication of top leadership practices and strategies to local citizens and involved stakeholders. 29.5% of the respondents were in agreement that there is timely communication of leadership practices and strategies to local citizens that which involved the stakeholders. 4.5% of the respondents disagreed that, there is timely

communication in public leadership practices and strategies to local citizens and involved stakeholders. In addition, 2% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that there is timely communication of leadership practices and the strategies to local citizens which involved the stakeholders in play.

The mean of 2.71 and standard deviation of 0.581 implies that the respondents generally were neutral that there is timely communication of top leadership which brings public accountability and strategies to local citizens and involved stakeholders. Hesitation to either agree or disagree to some extent justifies Razavi, Kapiriri, Abelson and Wilson (2019) argument that vulnerable groups were never involved in stakeholder participation and that conflicting priorities, values and interest were among the main challenges facing stakeholder involvement in local priority setting.

In terms of information flow from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders, majority (67%) of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that there exists a perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders. 25.5% of the respondents were agreeing that there exists a perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders. However, 6.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that there exists a perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders. The mean of 2.79 and standard deviation of 0.563 imply that respondents generally were neutral that there exists a perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders.

With regards to the timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, majority (73%) of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public. 22.5% of the respondents were agreeing that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public. However, 4.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public. The mean of 2.82 and standard deviation of 0.489 imply that respondents generally were neutral that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public.

Further, with regards to Leaders in the County Government strategically allocating resources for stakeholder involvement, 47.5%) of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that Leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. 33.5% of the participants were agreeing that Leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. However, 9% and 6.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that Leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement.

The mean of 2.815 and standard deviation of 0.891 imply that respondents generally were neutral that Leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. The finding therein upholds the arguments by Jooste and Hamani (2017) that the effectiveness inherent in strategic resource allocation in firms are influenced by strategic leadership actions, emphasis on ethical norms, initiation of strategic direction, putting in place

organizational controls, prudent firm portfolio resource management and ensuring over time a better organizational culture.

On transparency, trust and honesty, 47% of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. 31.5% and 2.5% of the respondents were agreeing that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. However, 8.5% and 10.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. The mean of 2.93 and standard deviation of 0.959 imply that respondents generally were neutral that transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication was enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public. These findings are in line with the sentiments by Opano, Shisia, Sang, and Josee (2015) that that key determinants to the implementation of developed strategic plans in county governments, were financial resources and the involvement of stakeholders.

Regarding enhanced communication and team commitment, majority (62%) of the respondents were agreeing that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens. Also, 34% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens. However, 4% of the respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens.

The mean of 1.7 and standard deviation of 0.539 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens. The findings above a firm suggestion by Serfontein, Kruger and Drevin (2019) that firm performance was the function of communication, processes, autonomy, knowledge, organizational performance values on self-reporting, adaptive leadership and systems. Thus, the respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were neutral on the stakeholder involvement practices, as exercised in both Counties, as shown by the mean of 2.628 and standard deviation of 0.271 from the computed aggregate value for stakeholder involvement practices in the table above.

Devolved Administrative Structures

In assessing devolved administrative structures, respondents were required to show the extent to which they agree with the postulated statements on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties has been. Respondents were expected to choose from 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Agree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree) with respect to devolved administrative structures.

Table 6: Devolved Administrative Structures

Devolved Administrative Structures		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
G1	There are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government.	32.5	50.5	13	4	0	1.89	.778
G2	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints	10.5	20.5	8.5	43	17.5	3.37	1.277
G4	Administrative structures' initiatives in your County are influenced by Strategic leadership.	7.5	15.5	10	43	24	3.61	1.219
G5	The Administrative structures in the County has contributed to the achievement of the desired goals of Leadership.	17	21	45	17	0	2.62	.959
G6	Devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in your County in the last 8 years.	15.5	28	47.5	9	0	2.50	.862
G7	Devolved administrative structures performance is influenced by effective leadership.	23	75	2	0	0	1.79	.455
G8	Formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership.	18.5	30	51.5	0	0	2.33	.771
G9	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services	9	16	45.5	26	3.5	2.99	.962
G10	The leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures.	9	13.5	46.5	23.5	7.5	3.07	1.015
G11	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been effective in the delivery of County services	7	35	27	23.5	7.5	2.9	1.077
Aggregate Value for Devolved Administrative Structures							2.71	.310

Source: Researcher (2021)

As indicated in Table 4.6, more than half (50.5%) of the participants agree that there are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government. 32.5% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government. 13% of the respondents were neutral that there are acceptable levels

of Administrative Structures in your County Government. 4% disagreed that there are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government. The mean of 1.89 and standard deviation of 0.778 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that there are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government. These findings support the arguments by Glaser (2017) that the success of devolution hinges on proper developed and implemented structures, policies of institutional nature, structures of administration and strategies spurring, encouraging, and enlisting local community into active participation.

On whether the devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints, a substantial proportion (43%) of the respondents disagreed that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints. Also, 17.5% of the respondents were strongly disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints. 20.5% of the respondents were agreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints. Further, 10.5% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints. However, 8.5% of the respondents were neutral that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints. The mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 1.277 imply that respondents generally were neutral that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints.

In terms of administrative structures' initiatives in the County that are influenced by Strategic leadership, a substantial proportion (43%) of the respondents disagreed that administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership. Also 24% of the respondents were strongly disagreeing that, the administrative structures' initiatives in the County's as devolved are influenced by Strategic leadership. 15.5% of the respondents were agreeing that administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership. Further to this, 7.5% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that the devolved administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership. However, 10% of the respondents were neutral that administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership. The mean of 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.219 imply that, respondents generally were disagreeing that administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership.

In terms of the devolved administrative structures' contribution to the achievement of most desired objectives of the Leadership, with a proportionate size (45%) of the respondents were neutral that administrative structures in the County has contributed to the achievement of desired objectives of every emerging Leadership. 21% of the respondents agreed that the devolved administrative structures in the County has made contribution to the achievement of the desired goals. In addition, 17% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County has contributed to the achievement of the desired objectives of Leadership. However, 17% of the respondents were in disagreement that devolved administrative structures in the County Governments has made contributions to the achievement of the desired objectives of Leadership. The mean of 2.62 and standard deviation of 0.959 implies that the respondents were neutral in general and that the devolved

administrative structures in the County has made contributions to the realization of the desired achievements and objectives of Leadership.

The findings are in line with the revelations that devolved administrative structures are paramount in establishing small segments that enhance fair political competition whereby the minorities who were previously aggrieved are handed an opportunity to control local government hence bringing about stability in the political environment and scaling down any chances of power abuse through the transfer of considerable number of functions from the central government to the grass root (Faguet, 2017). Further, on devolved administrative structures success in the last 8 years, a substantial proportion (47.5%) of the respondents were neutral that devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in the County in the last 8 years. 28% of the respondents were agreeing that devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in the County in the last 8 years.

In addition, 15.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in the County in the last 8 years. In contrast, 9% of the respondents were disagreeing that devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in the County in the last 8 years. The mean of 2.50 and standard deviation of 0.862 imply that respondents generally were neutral that devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in the County in the last 8 years. These findings march the evidence from the commonwealth of independent states that participation mobilization, development of human resources and, legislative framework and process were behind the success of devolution in those jurisdictions (Florian & Becirevic, 2014). Furthermore, majority (75%) of the respondents were agreeing that devolved administrative structures' performance is influenced by effective leadership. 23% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that devolved administrative structures' performance is influenced by effective leadership.

However, only 2% of the respondents were neutral that devolved administrative structures' performance is influenced by effective leadership. The mean of 1.79 and standard deviation of 0.455 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that devolved administrative structures' performance is influenced by effective leadership. The findings above prove right arguments of Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2016) that concepts of strategic leadership among them; maintaining flexibility, envisioning, thinking strategically, anticipating and encouraging employees to be innovative result to organizational transformation that positively impact organization performance.

More than half (51.5%) of the respondents were neutral that formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership. 30% of the respondents were agreeing that formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership. Further, 18.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership.

However, none of the respondents were disagreeing that formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership. The mean of 2.33 and standard deviation of 0.771 imply that respondents generally were agreeing that formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership. Furthermore, 45.5% of the respondents were neutral that devolved administrative structures in the County government

have been efficient in the delivery of County services. 26% of the respondents were disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services.

Further, 16% of the respondents agreed that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services. Also, 9% of the respondents strongly agreed that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services. However, 26% of the respondents were disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services. Also, 3.5% of the respondents were strongly disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services. The mean of 2.99 and standard deviation of 0.962 imply that respondents generally were neutral that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services.

On leadership implementations, administrative structures, legal processes and procedures, 45.5% of the respondents were neutral that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures. 23.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures. Further, 7.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures. Contrastingly, 13.5% of the respondents agreed that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures. Further, 9% of the respondents were strongly agreeing that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures. The mean of 3.07 and standard deviation of 1.015 imply that respondents generally were neutral that leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures.

Lastly, on the question of devolved structures' effectiveness in delivery of County service, a substantial proportion (35%) of the respondents were agreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been effective in the delivery of County services. 27% of the respondents were neutral on whether devolved administrative structures in the County government have been effective in the delivery of County services or not. However, 23.5% of the respondents were disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been effective in the delivery of County services. Also, 7.5% of the respondents were strongly disagreeing that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been effective in the delivery of County services. Thus, the respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were neutral on the Legal factors, as exercised in both Counties, as indicated by the mean of 2.71 and standard deviation of 0.31 from the computed aggregate value for devolved administrative structures in the table above.

Diagnostic Analysis

The study further evaluated the data against the assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique for regression.

Table 5: Regression Results for Strategic Leadership Practices (Model of Coefficients)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-statistics	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.581	.318		4.976	.000
	Aggregate value for Resource allocation practices	.172	.058	.166	2.967	.005
	Aggregate value for Public Accountability practices	.296	.072	.280	4.095	.000
	Aggregate Value for Stakeholders Involvement	.002	.079	.002	.029	.977

a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate Value for Devolved Administrative Structures

Source: Research data (2021)

From Table 4.7, the regression equation is as presented in equation 4.1 below.

$$Y = 1.581 + 0.166Ra + 0.280Pac \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 4. 1}$$

Where;

Y - Represents Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

Ra – Represents Resource Allocation Practices.

Pac – Represents Public Accountability Practices.

Resource allocation practices were significantly affecting the Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties at $P_{value} = 0.005 < 0.05$). Further, a $(\beta = .166)$ means that a 1% improvement in resource allocation practices leads to a 16.6% increase in the Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, in the presence of public accountability practices and stakeholders Involvement. Public accountability practices were significantly affecting the Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties ($\beta = .280, t = 4.095, P_{value} = 0.000 < 0.05$). This means that a 1% improvement in public accountability practices leads to a 28% increase in the Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, in the presence of resource allocation practices and stakeholders Involvement.

However, stakeholder involvement practices were not significantly influencing Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties ($\beta = .002, t = 0.029, p_{value} = 0.977 > 0.05$). This means that, a 1% increment in stakeholders’ involvement has no effect on the operations of devolved administrative structures and has no significant effect at 0.00% of involvement. Overly, the results provide evidence that strategic leadership practices had a significant effect on Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, hence supports the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0).

From the model summary in Table 4.14, strategic leadership practices were positively correlated to the devolved administrative structures ($r = .237$). 5.6% of the variation was on

the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, they were accounted for by strategic leadership practices ($R^2 = .056$) with a standard error of .302. Therefore this implies that the study fails to reject the null hypothesis and recognizes that the legal factors do have a moderating effect on the strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

From the first objective, the research concluded that resource allocation practices had a significant impact on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. From the second objective, research concluded that public accountability practices had a significant effect on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. From the third objective, the research concludes that there was a significant effect of stakeholders' involvement on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. In addition, from the fourth objective, the research concludes that there was significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction term on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

Thus, legal factors have a moderating effect on the association between strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya. From the qualitative analysis, Strategic leadership practices have enhanced service delivery through the devolved units by reaching more people at the grassroots and meeting them at their point of need. The citizens are able to access services from the county government through the overlap from the national government, untimely dispersal of county funds and underfunding causes conflict.

Contributions of the Study to Knowledge

First, empirical studies which focused on organizations, recognized that strategic leadership practices had a substantial connection on operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. The current research banked to this knowledge by concentrating on the part of strategic leadership practices, that is, resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholders' involvement on operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya.

The research recognized that strategic leadership practices had a constructive role operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. In the second part, the present research focused on uncharted field of study in strategic Leadership. This research therefore offers pragmatic indication that strategic leadership practices can lead to a superb operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. On the third part, the research augments theoretic thoughts of strategic leadership practices on operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya.

This comes into divergence to utmost researches which had remained focused on strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures perspective in Kenya. Additionally, the present research explored the effect on legal factors as moderating variable on the connection amid strategic leadership practices on operationalization of devolved administrative structures perspective in Kenya. The research established that legal factors did moderate the association. Fourthly, the research necessities transformational leadership theory

that which considers varied understanding of performances, creating the equilibrium amid the efficiency, efficacy, significance and competence.

Recommendations for Policy Implication

The findings found that, rise in strategic leadership practices leads to enhanced operationalization of devolved administrative structures. Henceforth, strategic leaders should set up structures that care for executional inventiveness and guarantee that responsibilities to be executed should as well be connected to the policies, additionally ensuring information movement should be done continuously and efficiently. On strategic leadership practices, which stood to be significant in operationalization of devolved administrative structures, County Government top Leadership must distinguish and recompenses improvement of operationalization of devolved administrative structures.

The administration and policy makers must consequently originate programmes which guarantee judicious and sensible consents that top leadership makes wherever probable experts and professionals in particular fields might need for delivery of service. It also recommends that public accountability must be endeared often with a purpose of addressing newly emerging stratagems with randomness to hi-tech, financial and demographical vicissitudes. In this current research, it is recommended that entirely major decision-making processes in line with strategic work relations must conform to the administered prescribed guidelines with actions shaped by proper behaviour that shall get demarcated principles as the basement from these. Strategic leaders in top leadership must endeavour to sheerly and precipitously connect approximately in all stratagems, through indistinct appearances connecting communiqué in addition to accountability principles placed before it.

Proceeding to Stakeholders involvement, this current research posits that strategic leaders and administrators must offer thought-provoking occasions to personnel to rally in self-built concerts. County Government top leadership must place tactics which enable prolific besides broad-minded working related atmosphere. In addition, strategic leaders and administrators must distinguish virtuous talents and recompense them whereas providing prospects to employee's profession improvement. Strategic leaders and administrators ought to make available sustenance for investment stratagem through Stakeholders involvement as a way of building human capital which is a key asset in institutions in full structural realization. This research was conducted at a time when decentralized units in the country have reached their peak of development and maturity and are attempting to stand on their own. The structures are attempting to gain traction since the constitution of 2010 and the subsequent general election of 2013 brought their existence into being. Consequently, this research may be of considerable use to the stakeholders:

The study findings provided policymakers and government players in the National and County government sectors with constructive views for further research. The research study provided potential beneficiaries with insights into a variety of issues that impeded the county governments' implementation of decentralized administrative systems. The policy actors used the suggested results that would undoubtedly emerge from the study to provide resolutions to the obstacles encountered by county governments while implementing different predetermined tactics. This increased knowledge and expertise in executing the administrative systems in Counties as stipulated in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution.

The research outcomes were purposively used towards the National Government by means of places of interest in the aspects that were stimulus in the execution of policies by county

governments in Kenya. The accomplishment of Vision 2030 stood profoundly reliant on the recital performance besides the accomplishment of execution of policies by the county administrations. This being made by way of their premeditated scheduling as the counties were steered by the Vision 2030 which acts as the blue print intended for their development. In addition to enabling county governments to provide effective leadership, the study's findings served as a reference for the national government about the shortcomings of county governments in policy implementation.

Recommendation for Further Research

It is recommended that studies of this similarity can be done to other Counties in Kenya. It's important to note that this type of research consumes a lot of time and resources. In addition, organizational ethics could be given an exploration as a variable that should give explanations to the influence surrounding strategic leadership practices. This research focused on strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures. However, there was small margin of variation in operationalization of devolved administrative structures that was giving explanation from the strategic leadership practices point of view. Therefore, it shows that there are some factors not within these that drives the operationalization of devolved administrative structures. It is therefore critical if these factors are given consideration that would necessitate for future studies.

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