

**STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND DEVOLVED
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES IN SELECTED SEMI-ARID
COUNTIES IN KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and that, it has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Almighty God for giving me good health and enabling me to pursue my studies so far; to my wife, Mrs. Tofila M. Mwanyumba-Shangarai; beloved children; Bernice Nakio Shangarai, Collette Wabosha Shangarai, Deogracia Nariangai Shangarai, Benjamin Marunde Shangarai and Victor Muriti Shangarai for their constant moral support.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANOVA	:	Analysis of variance
CECMs	:	County Executive Committee Members
CEO	:	Chief Executive Officer
CO's	:	Chief Officers
COK	:	Constitution of Kenya
EPS	:	Earnings per share
IGR	:	Inter-Governmental Relations
KWS	:	Kenya Wildlife Service
MCA	:	Member of County Assembly
NACOSTI	:	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
OAG	:	Office of Auditor General
OLS	:	Ordinary Least Squared
RBV	:	Resource-Based View
ROA	:	Return on Assets
SACCO	:	Savings and Credit Cooperatives
SLP	:	Strategic Leadership Practices
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UHC	:	Universal Health Care
UK	:	United Kingdom
VIF	:	Variance Inflation Factor
VRIN	:	Value, rarity, inimitability, non-substitutability

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Devolved administrative structures: These are sub-national governments that were mandated by the 2010 constitution to foster accountability, strengthen political stability and coexistence, improve development and the delivery of services, augment economic development, and ensure optimal service delivery and foster public management by focusing on the County's performance, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency. In this study, devolved administrative structures referred to County governments of Taita Taveta and Makueni.

Legal factors: Refers to functions and powers enshrined in Chapter Eleven of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya relative to those of the national government. They were assessed by how COK 2010 has been adopted, records of litigation in court and support given to County employees and national government. In the study, legal factors were evaluated using compliance, Court cases and legislation indicators.

Public accountability: It involves management and cultivation of County reputation, conveying the impression of competence in performing roles and seen as reputable actor in County jurisdiction. It's assessed by how timely information is provided, social audits, prompt communication and citizen's budget publications. The indicators of public accountability in this study

were communication and information access, social audits and citizen's budget publications.

Resource allocation: This is the process of assigning and managing both tangible and intangible assets. It was assessed by the process of budgeting, programs and plans formulation and execution of policy regulations. In this study, resource allocation was evaluated using process of resource allocation, formulation of plans and programs and policy execution indicators.

Stakeholder involvement: This is about involving stakeholders throughout all the stages of a project, including the beginning, planning, execution, and assessment. It is the involvement and citizen participation practice. Stakeholder involvement was evaluated using plans for stakeholders' engagement, stakeholder involvement financing and participation of citizens.

Strategic leadership practices: Refers to the actions, behavioural, and decision-making processes employed by leaders to effectively guide an organization or a group towards achieving its long-term goals and objectives. These are approaches by strategic leaders to inspire and influence employees to make voluntary decisions that lead to organizational success in the long run. In this study, strategic leadership practices were three, namely, resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholder involvement.

ABSTRACT

The existence of devolved administrative structures is critical in protecting public officials from abusing power. It also promotes political stability. It is therefore essential to ensure that there is effective implementation and operation of these structures in Kenya now that devolution has been introduced. So far, the underlying cause of inadequate service delivery has been poor operationalization of structures in these devolved administrative entities that has been caused by ineffective managerial practices. This study has four specific objectives which intended to bridge the existing gap by establishing the scope of strategic leadership practices when it comes to the devolved administrative structures: establishing the effect of resource allocation practices, determining the effect of public accountability practices, establishing effect of stakeholder involvement, and to determine the moderating effect of legal factors on the relationship between the strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures. The study utilized three theories: The Resource Based View Theory, which anchored on resources allocation as a practice; Transformational Leadership Theory, which focuses on the development of advantageous alterations in an organization; and the Institutional Theory, which depicts an institution as networks that rely upon each other to build up unified systems that concern shared reliance. Target population of the study included the 500 participants from Taveta and Makueni counties. Purposive and Stratified Random Sampling techniques were utilized in this study, where a sample size of 223 was drawn from the Target population. The design deployed in the study was descriptive research that had sought to produce answers to phenomenon's questions of what, where, and when. The instrument's reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.7 that which was acceptably reliable. Quantitative and qualitative analytical methods were used, as data was coded in SPSS and analysed using the STATA. Analysis of quantitative data involved the descriptive and inferential statistics, whereas analysis of qualitative data was done using thematic analysis and voice recordings which were verbatim. Multiple Linear Regression was used to test the collective effects of resource allocation practices, public accountability practices and stakeholders' involvement practices on the devolved administrative structures. This research established that strategic leadership practices can improve the functioning of decentralized administrative organizations and also provided a way to institutionalize the concepts, facilitating smooth and efficient flow of information. In the first objective, the significant effect of resource allocation practices on the devolved administrative structures was noted. In the second objective, it was established that a between public accountability practice and the devolved administrative structures a significant relationship existed. In third objective, it was found that, a significant relationship existed between stakeholders' involvement practices and devolved administrative structures. In fourth objective, it was noted that there was a significant relationship between strategic leadership practices and legal factors on devolved administrative structures. Hence, the legal factors were found to have a moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures. The study suggests that leaders should explain plans in a way that encourages the improvement of devolved administrative structures, that which resulted to a lasting transformation. Further investigations should be conducted in other counties to better understand the role that ethical leadership plays in relation to strategic leadership practices and their impact on devolved administrative structures in Kenya as was envisioned.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures have attracted significant attention and importance in the area of governance and public administration. Devolution, which is about allowing local or regional governments to take charge of decisions previously handled by the central government and granting them more power and responsibilities, has been adopted by many countries, including Kenya. The implementation of devolved administrative structures aims at promoting effective governance, local autonomy, and better service delivery. It seeks to address the challenges of centralized governance systems by putting power in the hands of the people directly and allowing local communities to participate in decision-making processes. Strategic leadership practices, on the other hand, concerns the actions and behaviours of leaders in formulating and implementing strategies to achieve organizational goals. Effective strategic leadership is crucial for the successful implementation of devolved administrative structures, as leaders typically find themselves navigating complex political landscapes, and therefore needing to allocate resources efficiently and engage stakeholders effectively.

The success of an organization is heavily dependent on the strategic leadership practices employed by its leaders. These practices involve the development and implementation of effective strategies that align with the organization's goals and objectives. By carefully crafting and executing these strategies, leaders pave the way for organizational success. One notable approach that has gained traction in recent years is the devolution of administrative structures. This strategy involves the granting of subordinates the authority to make decisions within the organization. Leaders who do

this encourage their subordinates to see their efforts as integral to the organization's success. This delegation of authority not only enhances employee engagement but also fosters a sense of accountability and responsibility among team members.

Furthermore, devolving administrative structures promotes organizational agility and responsiveness. By distributing decision-making power, organizations are able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Lower-level employees, who are closer to the frontlines, possess valuable insights and perspectives that can be leveraged to make informed and timely decisions. This decentralization of decision-making enhances the organization's ability to respond promptly to market trends, customer demands, and emerging opportunities.

Strategic leadership practices also involve the alignment of the organization's goals and objectives with available resources, capabilities, and the external environment. Effective strategic leaders meticulously assess the internal and external factors influencing the organization's performance. They then leverage this knowledge to develop strategies that capitalize on the organization's strengths, mitigate its weaknesses, seize opportunities, and address potential threats. This approach ensures that the organization's strategic direction is aligned with its capabilities and the external landscape, thus maximizing the chances of success.

Effective strategic leaders foster a culture of intra-company innovation. They motivate staff to think outside the box, shake up the established way of doing things, and come up with fresh ideas. By valuing and nurturing innovation, strategic leaders stimulate continuous improvement and drive the organization's ability to adapt and stay competitive in dynamic markets. Strategic leaders recognize the importance of

collaboration and teamwork. They foster an environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds and expertise can come together to solve complex problems and achieve shared goals. By promoting collaboration, strategic leaders harness the collective intelligence and diverse perspectives within the organization, leading to enhanced decision-making and improved outcomes.

Strategic leaders have capacity to motivate other work forces to wholeheartedly pursue the organization's goals. Through effective communication, vision sharing, and leading by example, these leaders instil a sense of purpose and enthusiasm among employees. By creating a compelling vision and clearly articulating how each employee's contributions are vital to achieving that vision, strategic leaders inspire a sense of ownership and commitment throughout the organization. Strategic leadership practices are paramount in shaping the success of an organization. By employing strategies such as devolving administrative structures, aligning goals with resources and the external environment, fostering a culture of innovation, promoting collaboration and teamwork, and inspiring employees, strategic leaders create a robust foundation for organizational achievement. These methods equip even businesses to deal with ambiguity, exploit opportunities, and adapt quickly to a dynamic market.

Strategic leadership practices are crucial to the accomplishment of an organization, as they involve developing and implementing strategies to achieve organizational goals. Devolving administrative structures empower lower-level employees and enhance organizational agility, allowing quick adaptation to changes. Strategic leaders align goals, resources, capabilities, and the external environment. They foster innovation, collaboration, and inspire employees to contribute to the organization's objectives.

Decentralised administrative arrangements in Thailand have spawned creative approaches to improving service delivery (Sudhipongpracha & Wongpredee, 2016). It was discovered that the majority of administrative organisations use co-production techniques to improve the provision of road maintenance and repair services. 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 common in the majority of kindergarten schools. The Malaysian vocational schools were shown to be extremely important to strategic leadership (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 the context of Africa, Jooste and Hamani (2017) conducted a research to better understand the significance of strategic resource allocation and its effectiveness for South African firms. Their findings highlighted the indispensable role that strategic leadership plays in influencing the successful allocation and utilization of resources. To this end, strategic leaders must emphasise ethical norms, foster a positive organizational culture, and set the strategic direction of their organization, among other things. In addition, other strategies suggested by the study include prudently managing the firm portfolios and implementing organizational controls. These elements put together enable businesses to operate more effectively in stormy and unpredictable, competitive environments, ultimately enhancing overall performance. Therefore, the research by

Jooste and Hamani (2017) underscores the importance of strategic leadership in driving organizational motions for successful resource allocation and utilization.

These findings align with those of the research conducted by Serfontein, Kruger, and Drevin (2019), who also emphasized the central role of strategic leadership in determining firm performance. According to their study, the activities of strategic leaders play a pivotal role in fostering an environment conducive to increased productivity and effectiveness, thereby impacting firm performance. These activities included, but were not limited to; effective communication to ensure that employees are correctly informed and can align their efforts with organizational objectives, streamlined processes to optimize operational work flows, granting autonomy to employees to promote innovation and efficiency, fostering knowledge-sharing to ensure as many team members as possible are engaged in problem-solving, promoting organizational performance values to ensure employees understand the expected standards, implementing self-reporting mechanisms to allow teams to advocate for their work, exhibiting adaptive leadership to align goals and ensure a timely response to change, and establishing efficient systems that integrate data and technologies to increase accuracy and reduce data redundancy.

Their research demonstrated that underlying strategic leadership practices directly influence an organization's ability to achieve positive outcomes and excel in a competitive landscape.

Devolved administration has emerged as a pivotal approach with several benefits. Chigwata, De Visser, and Ayele (2021) conducted research highlighting the significance of devolved administration in Ethiopia. Their findings emphasized its

capacity to recognize and accommodate ethnic diversity, instill grassroots political plurality, and foster overall development. By decentralizing administrative power and decision-making to local levels, devolved administration promotes inclusivity, participation, and representation. This approach acknowledges the diverse needs and aspirations of various ethnic groups, allowing for more tailored and effective governance. Moreover, devolved administration facilitates local ownership, enabling communities to actively contribute to the development process and address their unique challenges.

Research conducted in Africa have highlighted the importance of strategic leadership and devolved administration in organizational and national contexts. Strategic leadership practices, including ethical norms, strategic direction, organizational controls, firm portfolio management and a positive organizational culture have been identified as key factors influencing resource allocation and overall performance in South African firms. Similarly, in Ethiopia, devolved administration has been recognized as pivotal for recognizing diversity, promoting political plurality, and fostering local development. These findings collectively emphasize the significance of effective leadership and decentralized governance in driving success and achieving desired outcomes in both organizational and societal contexts (Chigwata, De Visser & Ayele, 2021).

Strategic leadership plays a crucial role in the effectiveness and performance of organizations in various African countries. In South Africa, strategic leadership and its associated elements, such as ethical standards, goals, regulations, management of resources, and the corporate culture all shape the way resources are effectively utilized.

Similarly, in Ethiopia, devolved administration is seen as essential in recognizing ethnic diversity, promoting political plurality, and aiding development. Various studies emphasize the importance of strategic leadership pursuits such as communication, processes, autonomy, knowledge, performance values, adaptive leadership and systems in determining firm performance. These activities help to construct a cohesive organizational environment and hold the key to unlocking potential success. The results of strategic leadership are evidenced in South Africa and Ethiopia and are indicative of the substantial importance that this type of leadership plays in the African context.

In Tanzania, the research conducted by Sirili *et al.* (2018) highlighted the role of sub-national governments in promoting accountability among public officials and addressing bureaucratic hurdles. Devolved administrative structures have been instrumental in replacing bureaucratic decision-making red tapes, allowing for a more streamlined and efficient decision-making process. Additionally, these structures have facilitated a bottom-up planning approach, where residents in local environs are actively participating in the orchestrating and verdict-producing activities, making sure their opinions are heard and their necessities are taken care of. One significant benefit of devolved administration in Tanzania was the independence it provides in resource mobilization and utilization. Sub-national governments are empowered to mobilize and allocate resources according to the specific needs of their regions. This autonomy enables local authorities to prioritize development projects and allocate resources efficiently, taking into account the unique challenges and opportunities of their respective areas.

However, the research findings also highlighted several challenges associated with devolved administrative structures in Tanzania. The inadequate availability of competent personnel emerged as a major obstacle. The success of devolution heavily relies on capable individuals who possess the skills and knowledge required to effectively manage and govern at the local level. Addressing this challenge requires investments in capacity-building programs and initiatives to enhance the skills and capabilities of personnel in sub-national governments. Another challenge identified was that disbursement of funds from Tanzania's national government was not timely. Timely availability of funds is crucial for sub-national governments to implement development projects and provide essential services to their communities. Delays in fund disbursement can hinder progress and limit the effectiveness of devolved administrative structures. Streamlining the process of fund allocation and ensuring timely disbursement would greatly contribute to the success of devolution.

Sirili *et al.* (2018) also noted that citizen participation, though an integral part of devolved administration, was not always adequately considered. It is essential to involve citizens in decision-making processes, allowing them to contribute to local development plans and policies. By actively engaging with the community, local governments can ensure that the needs and aspirations of the people they serve are accurately represented and addressed. Political intrusion was another challenge highlighted in the research. Political interference in the functioning of devolved administrative structures can undermine their effectiveness and erode trust in the system. It is crucial to establish clear guidelines and mechanisms to safeguard the autonomy and integrity of sub-national governments, allowing them to operate independently and fulfill their responsibilities without undue political influence.

Inadequate financial allocations emerged as a challenge faced by sub-national governments in Tanzania. Sufficient financial resources are essential to effectively carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them, as financial resources are necessary for the implementation of development projects, the provision of public services, and the fulfillment of basic needs in the community. Without adequate allocations for sub-national governments, these necessary services cannot be provided and poverty and social marginalization will persist. To address this challenge in Tanzania, county governors have a crucial role to play. This includes the oversight of devolved administration, monitoring performance, and addressing any difficulties arising within the system. This is coupled with ensuring that appropriate financial allocations are made to sub-national governments so that they can respond to the needs of their communities and develop a more equitable society. Through this, county presidents make it possible for sub-national governments to gain the necessary resources to carry out their duties effectively (Sirili *et al.*, 2018).

The devolution of administrative structures in Tanzania has proven to be effective in increasing accountability, speeding up decision-making processes, and encouraging citizen participation. However, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed for devolution to be successful. These challenges include inadequate personnel, untimely fund disbursement, limited citizen participation, political interference, and inadequate financial allocations. It is therefore essential to address these issues in order to ensure the successful implementation of devolved administrative structures. To do so, it is necessary to provide sub-national governments with more power and authority and adequately allocate sufficient funds. If these

measures are taken, Tanzania can improve its devolved administrative structures and promote effective and inclusive governance at the local level (Sirili *et al.*, 2018).

In Tanzania, sub-national governments have been widely acknowledged as indispensable mechanisms to foster increased accountability, remove unnecessary bureaucratic complexities, carry out bottom-up planning methods, and enable independent resource mobilization and utilization. Despite these benefits, there can be difficult obstacles when attempting to create devolved administrative structures. These challenges could include a lack of qualified personnel, slow fund disbursement, inadequate citizen engagement, political interference, and insufficient funding. It is therefore the duty of the County governors to ensure that such administrative structures are effectively functioning as mandated by the national laws.

In Kenya, the process of devolution was initiated with the enactment of the Constitution of Kenya in 2010, marking a significant milestone in the country's administrative and governance structures. This amendment has been hailed as a transformative step towards achieving decentralization within the nation's administration. The introduction of devolution led to the establishment of 47 counties as semi-autonomous units of governance, under government-appointed county executives and ward representatives. Each county serves as its own unit for service delivery, distinct from the national government in its governing style and emphasis on local needs. The devolved administrative structures have been mandated to take on the responsibility of service delivery in various key sectors, such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, agriculture, and more.

Furthermore, the distribution of county-level resources and the ability to craft policies tailored to local needs will help level the playing field by ensuring that areas not previously considered due to their remoteness or lack of resources can now benefit from the new approach. The aim of devolution is to bring governance closer to the people and ensure that their needs are adequately attended to and addressed at the local level. This shift should lead to increased accountability and ultimately, improved quality of life (Kimathi, 2017). At the helm of each county's devolved administrative structure is an elected governor. These governors are entrusted with the utmost responsibility, contributing to the strategic decision-making process, foresight in resource allocation, and oversight in leadership within their respective counties.

Strategic leadership practices are integral in ensuring that these devolved administrative structures are effectively and efficiently functioning by incorporating a transformative strategic leadership approach. Governors can provide the much-needed push for the speedy and consistent implementation of the devolved units. This can have a plethora of benefits, not just within the counties but also for the citizens of the respective countries. By employing such approaches, public services can be improved, development in the sense individual responsibility can be achieved, citizens can become more involved in decision making, and there can be more transparency and openness in the decision-making processes across the board (Kimathi, 2017).

It is anticipated that after devolution in Kenya has been in effect for a period of twelve years, all of the country's counties would have administrative structures that are completely operational. Because of this, the Governors need to demonstrate strong leadership that is both transformative and strategic. It is necessary to have effective

strategic leadership in order to realise the full potential of devolution. This will ensure that the counties are able to provide exceptional services to their communities. To do so requires proper allocation of resources, developing a culture of accountability and openness, and making strategic decisions that are in line with the needs and aspirations of the communities involved (Mutungi, Njoroge & Minja, 2019).

In Kenya, the creation of decentralized government entities was undertaken with the intention of establishing leadership that is prompt, dependable, and as cost-effective as possible across the entire nation. The purpose of devolution is to solve the one-of-a-kind difficulties and exploit opportunities that are present in each county by bringing governance closer to the populace. It is anticipated that service delivery will be better as a result of the devolved units, since choices will be made in accordance with local priorities and resources will be allocated accordingly. Additionally, devolution promotes citizen involvement and participation in decision-making processes by providing communities with the opportunity to voice their views on issues that have an effect on their everyday lives (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015).

To fully realize the benefits of devolution, transformative strategic leadership is essential. Governors must exhibit visionary leadership, sound decision-making skills, and a deep understanding of the needs of their respective counties. By embracing strategic leadership practices, governors can effectively steer their devolved administrative structures towards achieving the goals of enhanced service delivery, accountability, citizen involvement, and transparent governance. The introduction of devolution in Kenya has reshaped the administrative and governance landscape of the country. With devolved administrative structures now in place, the role of strategic

leadership becomes paramount in ensuring the successful operation of these units. Through transformative strategic leadership, Governors can drive the implementation of devolution, enhance service delivery, and foster a culture of accountability and transparency in governance at the local level (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015).

As a result of the incorporation of devolution into the Constitution of Kenya in the year 2010, many adjustments have been made to the administrative and governing institutions of the country of Kenya. The establishment of 47 counties as semi-autonomous units of governance led to the development of devolved administrative institutions that are accountable for the provision of services in a wide range of spheres of activity. It is the Governors of these units who are responsible for making strategic decisions, distributing resources, and giving leadership in general. Governors are elected to their posts and hold the responsibility of leading these units (Kimathi, 2017).

One of the primary challenges faced by devolved administrative units is deficiency of human resource. The success of devolution depends on capable personnel who possess the necessary skills and expertise to effectively govern at the local level. However, many counties have been struggling to attract and retain competent individuals, leading to capacity gaps and hindered progress. The lack of qualified personnel has affected decision-making, resource allocation, and overall service delivery within the counties. In addition to human resource challenges, inadequate legal and institutional infrastructure have posed a significant obstacle to the smooth operation of devolution. Counties require robust legal framework and well-established institutions to effectively carry out their mandates. However, the establishment and implementation of these frameworks and institutions have been slow and inconsistent, creating gaps in

governance structures and inhibiting the full realization of devolution's potential (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015).

Furthermore, widespread corruption has plagued some devolved administrative structures, eroding public trust and impeding progress. Instances of misappropriation of funds, bribery, and other forms of corruption have been reported in various counties, undermining the effective utilization of resources and hindering delivery of high-caliber services to the general population. This issue requires concerted effort to address at all levels of government. Another challenge faced by devolved administrative structures is the conflicting association with the national government's deliverables. The division of roles and responsibilities between the national government and county governments has at times been unclear and subject to interpretation, leading to clashes and overlapping mandates. These conflicts have resulted in delays, inefficiencies, and confusion in decision-making processes and resource allocation, thus impeding the progress of devolution (Kimathi, 2017).

The ramifications of these issues are especially obvious in fields such as health, where advancement in terms of the quality of services provided has either stalled or reversed. In a good number of counties, the anticipated gains in the provision of medical care have not been fully realised. According to Kimathi (2017), the delivery of high-quality healthcare to the general population has been hampered by a number of factors, including inadequate infrastructure, a lack of sufficient medical workers, an absence of critical medical supplies, and problems with governance. Combined efforts are necessary in order to triumph over these obstacles and realise the full potential of devolution. Important actions that need to be taken include increasing human resource

through training and recruitment programmes, enhancing the legal and institutional frameworks, and taking the necessary measures to prevent corruption. In addition, there is need to promote collaboration and coordination between the national government and county governments as well as boost transparency and accountability measures in order to introduce and sustain the smooth functioning of devolved administrative structures. In summary, while twelve years have passed since the implementation of devolution in Kenya, the envisioned benefits are yet to be fully realized (Mutungi, Njoroge & Minja, 2019).

Challenges such as inadequate human resources, insufficient legal frameworks, corrupt practices, and conflicting associations with the national government have hindered the progress of devolution. These challenges have had a particularly negative impact on sectors like health, where the quality of services has stagnated or even regressed. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive effort and strategic interventions to strengthen governance structures, enhance capacity, combat corruption, and foster better coordination between the national and county governments. Only then will Kenya unlock the full potential of devolution and achieve the intended outcome of effective local governance and hence the improved service delivery that goes with it (Mutungi, Njoroge & Minja, 2019).

Despite the implementation of devolution in Kenya, not all of the benefits that were anticipated have been realised. For instance, the advancement of devolution has been hampered by the conflicting interests and clashing mandates of the devolved counties and the central government, hindering the advancement of devolution. The successful implementation of devolution has also been hampered by other obstacles such as

inadequate human resource, lack of legal and institutional structures, capacity gaps, corruption, and priorities that are not in line with those of the national government. As a direct consequence of this, the quality of certain services, such as healthcare, has witnessed a levelling out or in some cases worsened.

Recently, the personnel working in Tana River County staged a strike, bemoaning unpaid wages, rejected promotions, and an adverse environment that may risk their safety. This protest had repercussions in Nairobi County and beyond, with more County governments revealing plans to strike. Furthermore, clashes between Governors and members of the County Assembly over aspects of governance such as accountability, openness, and public presence have become the norm in Taita Taveta, Kirinyaga, Nairobi, Bomet and Laikipia Counties. As a consequence of devolution (Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016), it is now possible to question the leadership of county executives, though it is these devolved administrative units that suffer from conflict when the heads of the respective counties do not see eye to eye (Steeves, 2015). Poor management of resources is also attributed to poor government strategies in general (Mutungi, Njoroge & Minja, 2019), whereby leadership to ensure financial aspects are handled properly lacks.

Occasional Senate sermons to Governors concerning how public money has been used, leading to the possibility of Governors being impeached and protests made by human rights activists in their quest for justice over misuse of public resources show that there has been a shift in the public's faith in devolution. This shift has been brought about by a combination of factors. These factors are an indication that people are dissatisfied with the decentralisation of responsibilities in general. One is left to wonder whether

the systematic defects are as a result of mismanagement by leaders or the way tasks are delegated. Both of these factors are related to organizational structure (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015).

However, since 2013, there have been certain counties that have registered success in implementing devolution. Machakos, Makeni, and Kakamega are some of the counties that have received a positive rating (qualified stature) from the disclaimers published in the Auditor General's report of 2019 about their judicious utilisation of public funds while carrying out devolved functions (OAG, 2019). Other counties that have received this rating include Kiambu, Kitui, and Isiolo. When choosing Makeni County for this study, its strategic leadership practice and the eventual influence on performance were carefully compared to those of Taita Taveta County in order to determine the influence of resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholders' involvement in each county. This was done in order to determine which county had a greater impact on how the other county performed.

Therefore, in order to reshape the trajectory of devolution's future performance, it is important to conduct a study of the influence of strategic leadership on the devolved administrative units. This is necessary in order to provide a check-on system to preempt corruption, graft, and the misallocation of economic resources, all of which conspire to undermine devolution in majority of the counties in Kenya (Cannon & Ali, 2018). The effectiveness of devolved administrative structures in terms of strategic leadership and practices is an aspect that was taken into account in doing this research because of its perceived impact on strategic leadership. According to Smoke (2015), there is a package of goals that devolved administrative structures ought to achieve.

These goals include the enhancement of service delivery and development, achieving political stability, achieving accountability, making public resource management effective, strengthening economic development, and achieving optimal public service delivery.

Transparency, public participation in political affairs, an informed citizenry, existence of groups that are social in nature and effective political institutions at the local level earned Indonesian local public services an exemplarily performance (Rusyiana & Sujarwoto, 2017). These aspects are key in the devolution of political, economic power and authority to localized units of governance. Devolution has made it possible to break down larger governmental structures into smaller segments, thus facilitating increased fairness in political competitions. This, in turn, has allowed previously aggrieved minorities to have greater control over their local governments, leading to more stability in political environments and a decrease in the potential for misuse of power (Faguet, 2017). This has been achieved by the transfer of many functions and authority from the national government to the local government.

This research focused on the operations of County governments in which decisions made and actions taken are autonomous yet still managed by the central government, in keeping with their overarching policy at the local level. That doesn't make the national government unimportant; however, intergovernmental relations (IGR) take centre stage, providing institutions some leeway when it comes to provincial and municipal structures, thus making it possible to have significant autonomy on their own matters via different IGR forums. Decentralization postulates devolution through the central government relieving itself some specific functions administrative, political and

economic attributes to democratic grassroots entities that happen to be autonomous of the central entity within a given legal framework and geographical domain (Faguet, 2017).

An evaluation was conducted regarding the transfer of authority away from central government and towards the peripheral units of governance. 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 quabbles and disputes between governments at various levels. The process of devolution, which sees the national government entrusting certain powers to authorities at the local level, is a way of fostering rural development and transitioning to democracy. This, however, can lead to tensions and conflicts that complicate the devolution process. Dupas, Basurto and Robinson (2017) therefore argue that intergovernmental coordination is essential in overcoming these challenges.

The study is of the opinion that keen crafting of line of tasks and responsibilities defined a linear system of devolved governance, thus 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 are 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 *et al*, 2020). With the help of

analytical frameworks, findings on the experience on devolution was drawn from four countries: Philippines, Ghana, Uganda and Zambia.

The framework provided a description and comparison of the decentralisation type that was accepted as well as the degree and effort that led to the revelation of variety in degree and type within each of these democratic dispensations. For example, in the Philippines, there was evidence to suggest that local units had been devolved with significant roles. On the other hand, Ghana registered the least, with only health services being delegated to autonomous entities, whereas Uganda and Zambia fell somewhere in the middle of these two extremes (Alonso-Garbayo *et al.*, 2017; Resnick, 2017; Resnick *et al.*, 2019). In addition to this, the researcher held the view that devolution should not be viewed as an end in itself, but rather a means through which other more important ends could be achieved. These ends include ensuring that the state continues to function effectively, preventing the state from dissolving, while pursuing the ideal that equal citizenship should be the norm. The Constitution provides avenues for the increased evolution of county powers and the delivery of county services in the pursuit of providing effective and practical services. In a similar vein, Section 48 of the County Government Act 2012, the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011 and the Urban Areas and Cities (Amendment) Act 2019 obligated devolved entities to further devolve their services and powers to cities, municipalities and towns or market centers sub-counties.

1.1.1 Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

According to Norzailan, Othman, and Ishizaki (2016), strategic leadership can be defined as the approaches adopted to address vested interests, internal resistance, and

external environmental changes. This definition highlights the crucial role of strategic leadership in navigating and managing various challenges and dynamics that organizations face. Strategic leaders must consider and balance the needs and concerns of different stakeholders while also adapting to changes in the external environment. Özer and Tınaztepe (2014) offer a perspective on strategic leadership as a bridge that connects strategic functions and leadership roles within an organization. They emphasize that strategic leadership provides a rationale for how an organization carries out its activities, aligning them with the overall strategic direction. In this sense, strategic leaders play a vital role in translating strategic goals and objectives into actionable plans and initiatives, ensuring that organizational resources are effectively allocated and utilized.

Engert and Baumgartner (2016) define strategic leadership as an endeavour that involves problem identification and strategy formulation to provide solutions to those problems. Strategic leaders are responsible for identifying the key challenges and opportunities that the organization faces and developing appropriate strategies to address them. By understanding the complexities of the internal and external environment, strategic leaders can devise innovative and effective solutions that drive the organization forward. According to these scholars, strategic leadership is not only important for addressing current challenges but also for fostering, advancing, and maintaining organizational significance over time. Strategic leaders must have a long-term perspective and be proactive in anticipating future trends and changes. They play a critical role in setting the strategic direction, creating a vision, and guiding the organization toward its desired future state.

As a consequence of this, strategic leadership practices encompasses the strategies, roles, and responsibilities that the leaders deploy in order to combat entrenched interests, overcome resistance, manage environmental changes, and deliver answers to difficulties faced by their organisations. Strategic leadership functions as a link between strategy and leadership, guiding the organisation in the direction of achieving its goals and ensuring that its significance is maintained over the course of time. Leaders who are strategic play a vital role in the process of defining strategies, allocating resources, and driving innovation, all of which ultimately assure the success of the business in a landscape that is both dynamic and competitive.

According to Norzailan, Othman, and Ishizaki (2016), the definition of strategic leadership is the set of tactics that are utilised to confront vested interests, internal resistance, and external environmental changes. According to Ozer and Tnaztepe (2014), it can be thought of as a bridge that connects the various leadership roles and strategic functions of an organisation, hence directing the operations of that organisation. According to Engert and Baumgartner (2016), strategic leadership may be defined as the process of determining problems and coming up with solutions to those challenges. These academics assert that strategic leadership is vital for developing, enhancing, and preserving the relevance of an organisation.

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 overcoming 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 of 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 in South Africa, businesses were able to enhance their performance using strategic leadership. Organizational performance was influenced by a range of strategic leadership activities: knowledge, adaptive leadership, systems, organizational performance self-reports, autonomy and processes (Serfontein *et al.*, 2019).

Jaleha and Machuki (2018) argue that as a tool of chief executive officers (CEO), strategic leadership infer to those tasks responsible for the development of overall courses of action, integration and obtaining organizational resources. Hitt, Ireland and Hoskinson (2016) hypothesized that high performance of firms was the function of the unique combination of capabilities of maintaining flexibility, envisioning, and anticipating, spurring innovative thinking among the employees and strategic thinking. Citing Rowe (2009), Gachugu *et al.* (2019) referred to strategic leadership as the art of

communicating shared values and cutting vision to the workforce, and the aptitude to develop decisions with minimal organizational controls.

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 related to 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 profuse need for all devolved governments' to employ strategic leadership practices in their operations, as this enhances level of operation.

Empirical evidence on strategic leadership and its impact on the performance of Kenyan SMEs has revealed valuable insights. A study by Ogechi (2016) found out that nurturing an organizational culture, developing human and social capital, managing employees to contribute to organizational goals, and aligning core competencies with strategic objectives positively influences firm performance. This highlights the importance of strategic leadership in creating a conducive work environment, fostering employee development, and aligning organizational resources and capabilities with strategic goals.

Similarly, a study by Ogaja and Kimiti (2016) focused on the role of strategic leadership in the execution of tactical decisions at Kenyan public universities. The findings

underscored the significance of strategic leadership in guiding the decision-making process and ensuring effective implementation. Strategic leadership practices were assessed based on criteria such as resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholders' involvement. The study emphasized the importance of strategic resource allocation, as it involves planning and transforming the organizational culture in areas such as performance standards, delivery capabilities, quality, teamwork, flexibility, and customer service. These aspects are crucial in identifying the diverse attitudes, personal characteristics, and beliefs of individuals within the organization (Harrison, Hall & Nargundkar, 2017).

These empirical studies shed light on the positive influence that strategic leadership practises have on the overall performance of organisations. Strategic leaders have the ability to improve the performance of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as public institutions by cultivating an appropriate organisational culture, creating human and social capital, aligning core competencies, and successfully managing resources. In addition, strategic leadership practises that place an emphasis on the distribution of resources, public accountability, and the involvement of stakeholders assist in effective decision-making and in the successful implementation of tactical decisions. The importance of strategic leadership in generating organisational success and achieving targeted goals in the context of Kenya is supported by these findings (Ogaja & Kimiti, 2016).

There is evidence in Kenya that strategic leadership practices have a positive impact on the performance of small and medium firms (Ogechi, 2016). This evidence comes from empirical research that was conducted in Kenya. In addition to this, Ogaja and Kimiti

(2016) discovered that the decision-making processes of public universities in Kenya are heavily influenced by strategic leadership. The current research examined the effectiveness of strategic leadership practises by analysing them in terms of resource allocation, public accountability, and the participation of stakeholders. According to Harrison, Hall, and Nargundkar (2017), resource allocation is a tool to shift the culture of the organisation and improve areas such as performance standards, quality, teamwork, flexibility, and customer service.

When it comes to the process of assigning and managing assets, resource allocation encompasses managing tangible assets so as to harness the softer assets, such as human capital (Harrison *et al.*, 2017). However, Mohsenpour and Jafari (2017) cautions organizational leaders that constrained financial means, lack of coordination, ineffective institutional design, weak interpersonal relationship and a weak understanding of strategies can become a barrier to successful resource allocation. With this awareness, this study focused on resource allocation with particular interest on the programs involved, policy execution, process of resource allocation, formulation of plans and regulations. Public accountability involves management and cultivation of one's reputation, suggesting skilful execution of assigned duties and seen as reputable actor in a myriad of audiences (Busuioc & Lodge, 2016).

Because governments significantly rely on accountability measures to protect public resources and improve service delivery (Schillemans, 2016), these measures play an important part in guaranteeing the performance and effectiveness of public sector entities and play a critical role in ensuring their performance and effectiveness. In addition, the findings of a study carried out by Said, Alam, and Aziz (2015) lend support

to the idea that increased accountability in the public sector leads to enhanced quality of public services. However, in order for accountability to be useful, it is necessary to adhere to a number of overarching principles, the most important of which are responsiveness, involvement, and transparency (Van Genstel & Van Lochem, 2020).

Transparency is a fundamental meta-principle of accountability, as it involves making information accessible and understandable to the public. By ensuring transparency, governments and public sector entities promote openness and enable citizens to hold them accountable for their actions and decisions. Responsiveness is another key meta-principle, emphasizing the need for public officials and organizations to be responsive to the needs and concerns of stakeholders. This involves timely and appropriate actions in addressing issues and providing satisfactory responses to feedback and complaints. Participation is the third meta-principle, highlighting the importance of involving stakeholders in decision-making processes. Engaging stakeholders fosters their ownership and allows them to contribute their perspectives, expertise, and experiences, ultimately leading to better-informed decisions and outcomes (Van Genstel & Van Lochem, 2020).

In this particular study, public accountability was assessed through various dimensions. The reputation of public officials, stakeholder relationships, improved public services, and the provision of timely and comprehensive information were key factors considered in evaluating public accountability (Van Genstel & Van Lochem, 2020). The reputation of public officials reflects their integrity, trustworthiness, and commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities. Strong stakeholder relationships, built through effective communication and engagement, contribute to transparency and accountability.

Improved public services, measured by factors such as quality, accessibility, and responsiveness, demonstrate the commitment of public sector entities to meeting the needs of citizens. Lastly, the provision of timely and comprehensive information ensures that stakeholders have access to relevant data and reports, enabling them to monitor and assess the performance and actions of public entities.

Stakeholder involvement is also critical in the outcome of projects. Engaging stakeholders during the initiation, planning, implementation, and review stages of projects enhances the quality and relevance of project outcomes (Kobusingye, Mungatu & Mulyungi, 2017). By actively involving stakeholders, their needs, values, and concerns can be better understood, leading to more informed decision-making and project design. The creation and facilitation of workshops provide a platform for stakeholders to contribute their insights, discuss challenges, and collaboratively identify solutions. These workshops help overcome barriers to effective stakeholder involvement and foster a more inclusive and participatory approach to project development and implementation (Storvang & Clarke, 2014).

It is essential to implement accountability measures in order to guarantee the efficiency and productivity of public sector organisations. Effective accountability relies on a number of overarching concepts, the most important of which are responsiveness, involvement, and transparency. When analysing public accountability, some of the factors that should be considered include the reputation of public officials, the relationships with various stakeholders, the enhancement of public services, and the availability of information that is both timely and thorough. In addition, involving stakeholders in all stages of a project improves project outcomes by embracing a variety

of perspectives, catering to the requirements of stakeholders, and encouraging collaboration. Governments and other entities operating within the public sector can improve their performance and the quality of services provided to the general public if they adhere to the principles of accountability and actively engage with the many stakeholders (Ogaja & Kimiti, 2016).

Accountability measures are crucial for ensuring and improving the performance of public sector entities, according to Schillemans (2016) and Said, Alam, and Aziz (2015). Transparency, responsiveness, and participation are considered meta-principles that contribute to effective accountability (Van Genstel & Van Lochem, 2020). In this study, public accountability was evaluated on the basis of public officials' reputation, stakeholder relationships, improved public services, and the provision of timely and comprehensive information. Stakeholder involvement throughout the project life cycle, including initiation, planning, implementation, and review is vital for project outcomes (Kobusingye, Mungatu & Mulyungi, 2017). Workshops and other facilitation methods can help overcome barriers and promote stakeholder involvement, leading to a better understanding of their needs, values, and concerns (Storvang & Clarke, 2014).

According to Rasi, Abdekhodae, and Nagarajah (2014), stakeholders have a considerable influence on the decisions that are made during the adoption of proactive environmental practices. This influence can manifest itself in a variety of different ways. For instance, staff and customers are involved during process-based changes, and senior managers are interested in collaborating on matters relating to internal management improvements. The participation of stakeholders in the identification, execution, and monitoring of the vehicle emission control project in Nairobi, Kenya,

demonstrated effect on the performance of the project (Njogu, 2016). This effect was found to be beneficial. Similarly, 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 during piloting phase before rolling out the changes, and giving their feedback and views through a series of meetings. But the study established that there was little involvement of staff in the design phase of the change process. This research sought to assess stakeholders' involvement using seminars, conferences, meetings, feedbacks, needs and values.

1.1.2 Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties

Taita Taveta County has experienced numerous incidents of mismanagement, as reported by members of the County assembly, and as evidenced by successive impeachment motions against the County Governor (Gathumbi, 2018). During the fiscal year 2018/2019, the office of the County executive was almost immobilized, with the County assembly vehemently declining to pass any expenditure bill on the assembly floor (Mberi, Sevilla, Olukuru, Mutegi & Weru, 2017). Such stand-offs between the Governor's office and the County assembly have cast a shadow on the progressive intentions of the 2010 Constitution (Kimathi, 2017). The continuous tension between the Governor's office and the County assembly in Taita Taveta makes one wonder whether public accountability, and stakeholder involvement brings about progress or

regression of devolved administrative structures in County governments when it comes to resource allocation. Resource allocation plays a critical role in determining how public funds are utilized so as to address the needs of the community in the best way possible. If resource allocation is hindered or mismanaged due to conflicts and political differences, this could result in setbacks and hinder the progress of devolved administrative structures.

Public accountability is another important aspect in ensuring transparency, responsibility, and proper use of public resources. When there is a lack of public accountability as evidenced by reports of mismanagement and impeachment motions, public trust and confidence in the County government is eroded (Mberi, Sevilla, Olukuru, Mutegi & Weru, 2017). This leads to further conflicts and hinders the effective functioning of devolved administrative structures. Stakeholder involvement is crucial for the success of devolved administrative structures. When stakeholders, including citizens, community organizations, and interest groups, are actively involved in decision-making processes, this fosters sense of ownership, transparency, and hence better decisions and outcomes. But if stakeholders are not properly engaged or their concerns are ignored, this can lead to a breakdown in communication, increased tension, and a lack of ownership in the decision-making process.

In light of the difficulties that Taita Taveta County is currently experiencing, the influence of resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement has become even more crucial. In order to effectively address these concerns, there must be a concerted effort on the part of all the interested parties, including the office of the Governor, the County Assembly, and the stakeholders to address the issues facing

the County. It is possible for Taita Taveta County to resolve the issues and work towards the advancement and improvement of devolved administrative structures in line with the goals of the devolution process if openness, effective resource allocation, and meaningful stakeholder involvement are promoted (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

The incidents of mismanagement, impeachment motions, and dysfunctional County executive in Taita Taveta County raise concerns about the effectiveness of devolved administrative structures. The conflicts between the County assembly and the Governor have led to a paralyzed County executive and hindered the passage of expenditure bills. This situation has made people wonder whether public accountability and stakeholders' involvement cause progress or retrogression in the resource allocation of devolved administrative units. The ongoing tension between the Governor's office and the County assembly raises the question whether these safeguards play the role of promoting positive development or contributing to the decline of devolved administrative units. Further examination is needed to understand their influence and their potential in the effective functioning of devolved units (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

In contrasting, Makueni County which neighbours Taita Taveta County and which is the focus of this study, has proven to be different when it comes to devolved governance. In Makueni County, there has been a progressive and collaborative relationship between the County executive and the County assembly members from 2017 until the present. This positive collaboration has yielded notable achievements, such as the successful implementation of the Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

program, which was piloted by the national government and called for the allocation of County government resources (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

As a result, Makueni County has garnered positive ratings its utilization of public resources and has maintained a favorable public image. For example, during the 2017/2018 fiscal year, Makueni County, alongside Nyandarua County, was rated the best in terms of efficiently utilizing public funds (Njeru, 2019). The success and hence positive reputation of Makueni County highlight the importance of proper resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement in promoting progress and good governance in devolved units. By efficiently utilizing public resources and ensuring accountability, Makueni County has been able to implement key programs and initiatives that benefit its residents. This positive track record not only reflects the commitment of the County government but also showcases the importance of coordination and collaboration between the County executive and the County assembly in achieving developmental goals (Njeru, 2019).

When there is a shared vision, cooperation, and responsible use of public resources, decentralised administrative units can function well as demonstrated by the example of Makueni County. This County serves as an important example of the value of leaders of devolved units abiding by administrative structures. Other counties, such as Taita Taveta, ought to follow the example of Makueni County to improve their governance practices, promote collaboration, and thus boost the implementation of major programmes for the betterment of their residents by what they have learned (Njeru, 2019). Taita Taveta County has experienced numerous incidents of mismanagement and conflicts between the County assembly and the Governor, which have raised concerns about the influence of resource allocation, public accountability, and

stakeholders' involvement on the progress of devolved units. In contrast, Makueni County has demonstrated cooperation and coordination between the County executive and the County assembly, resulting in successful implementation of programs and positive utilization of public resources. Makueni County's achievements highlight the importance of cooperation, proper resource allocation, and accountability for the effective functioning of the devolved administrative structures in County governments (Njeru, 2019).

A decade prior to devolution, data showed that Taita Taveta County had more potential to achieve prosperity than Makueni County. For instance, a large percentage of Taita Taveta's total area (5,879 km out of a total of 17,083.9 km) is habitable. Additionally, the population of Taita Taveta, at 340,671 persons and hence 20 persons per square kilometre, was much lower than the population of Makueni, which was estimated to be 987,653 persons and hence 120 persons per square kilometre (Census, 2019). This is not to mention that these two counties have relatively similar geographic features. One is therefore prompted to wonder why the huge discrepancy in developmental advancement exists between them.

From the foregoing, it is clear that a grasp on the part of the County's leaders of the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the operationalization of devolved administrative structures is absolutely necessary for improving the efficiency of these structures and delivering positive results to the local communities that they serve. This research intends to shed light on the relationship between the two study constructs and provide insights for enhanced governance and decision-making at the local level in Kenya by researching the history and dynamics of strategic leadership

practices and devolved administrative systems. Specifically, the research will focus on Kenya (Njeru, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Strategic leadership recognizes opportunities and potential threats, incorporates divergent challenges and come up with realignments and informed decisions. This helps the organization to achieve a competitive edge and realize higher returns according to Tykkyläinen, (2019). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the effects of strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures on organizational performance. Studies on strategic leadership in different levels of government have been carried throughout the world. However, most of them failed County government's organizational structures. In South Africa, Serfontein *et al.* (2019) conducted research on the effects of strategic leadership combined with operational strategy on corporate success. Devolution process in Kenya, which began in 2013, aimed at decentralizing power and resources, delegating them to the county governments. This process was initiated with the belief that it would promote better governance, accountability and service delivery at the grassroots level (Makori, 2014).

Several challenges emerged in the devolution process, among them; lack of adequate resources, corruption, and ineffective leadership. These challenges raised concerns about the ability of the counties to effectively deliver services and achieve their development goals (Munene & Kanyinga, 2018). In a study conducted by Muli (2015), it was revealed that the level of implementation of devolution varies significantly, depending on the effectiveness of leaders in playing their role while implementing the processes of the devolution. The study further explored the sentiments expressed by Kenyans regarding the performance of county governments, revealing a notable level

of disappointment among the population. Over half (53% to be specific) of the residents expressed dissatisfaction with how their county governments functioned, revealing a significant lack of confidence in their effectiveness. However, 28% of the respondents neither expressed satisfaction nor disappointment, indicating a sense of uncertainty or ambivalence, whereas a mere 18% expressed satisfaction with the county government's performance.

Muli (2015) identified several key factors contributing to this widespread dissatisfaction. Chief among them were the unimplemented reforms, which accounted for a significant proportion of the concerns (54%). This highlights the big gap between proposed changes and their actual implementation, leaving citizens disillusioned. Additionally, a substantial portion of the disappointment stemmed from unfulfilled campaign promises (19%), further eroding trust in the new governance system. Moreover, issues of corruption, ethnicity, and nepotism (13%) were identified as significant contributors to the overall dissatisfaction experienced by Kenyans. Worse still, it was observed that even the objectives set out by county governments and meticulously documented in five-year strategic plans faced considerable challenges and hurdles within the same governmental bodies. This derailing of objectives by the very institutions tasked with implementation of proposals was brought to light by the study conducted by Khaunya, Wawire, and Chepng'eno (2015).

These findings serve as a reminder of the obstacles and complexities involved in successfully implementing devolution and underscore the pressing need for enhanced governance practices, transparency, and accountability to address the concerns and expectations of the Kenyan population at large. The study by Muli (2015) found out

that the level of implementation of devolution varied based on the way leaders played their roles in the implementation process. Kenyan residents expressed significant disappointment with the performance of county governments, with more than half (53%) registering dissatisfaction. Only 18% expressed satisfaction, but 28% remained neutral. The main reasons for dissatisfaction were identified as unimplemented reforms (54%), unfulfilled campaign promises (19%), and issues of corruption, ethnicity, and nepotism (13%). The study also revealed that county governments as well often had a role in hindering the achievement of objectives outlined in their five-year strategic plan. Embracing strong strategic leadership practices and establishing decentralized administrative structures within the counties is one step that will ensure the success and effectiveness of the devolution process. These two factors together with making efficient use of the resources at their disposal and adapting to the environment in which they operate play an important part in determining the path that county governments take in the direction of accomplishing their aims and objectives (Kinyua, 2017).

Effective strategic leadership practices act as a cornerstone for county governments, providing them with the essential advice and direction to align their vision, mission and strategic objectives with the prevailing circumstances. This calls for leaders with a clear vision who are able to anticipate obstacles, recognize opportunities, and make educated decisions that promote the development and progress of their particular counties (Ogolla & Aketch, 2018). Visionary leaders are therefore needed to initiate and sustain the process of devolution. Strategic leadership ensures that county governments use proactive measures to handle new issues, respond to the demands of their residents, and effectively distribute and use resources for the greatest possible impact and benefit.

In addition, the construction of decentralized administrative structures is of the utmost importance in order to promote accountability, openness, and citizen participation in the decision-making processes that are carried out by county governments. These structures encourage ownership, accountability, and active involvement at all levels of the administrative hierarchy (Kinyua, 2017). They accomplish this by delegating decision-making authority to lower-level employees, thereby empowering them. This strategy encourages a sense of collective responsibility in addition to higher levels of both efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of services to the populace. Having decentralized administrative structures to provide accountability and transparency is critical to the operation of county governments. These structures promote checks and balances to facilitate the inclusion of lower-level personnel in decision-making processes. Through these structures, it is possible to reduce the possibility of corruption, favouritism, and mismanagement of resources. Because citizens are able to witness firsthand the decision-making processes and the distribution of resources, this openness develops public trust and confidence in the governance systems (Kamau & Mbogo, 2019). As a result, the likelihood of the citizens having faith on such system is increased.

According to Kamau and Mbogo (2019), the success of the devolution process heavily relies on the adoption and effective implementation of strategic leadership practices and the establishment of decentralized administrative structures within county governments. By fostering visionary leadership, aligning objectives with resources, and promoting accountability and transparency, these structures contribute to the overall effectiveness and progress of county governments in Kenya. Furthermore, researchers established that the implementation of strategic plans by county governments has been

characterized by weaknesses and various challenges. However, it is important to note that some counties, such as Bomet, Makueni, and Kakamega, have made significant progress towards fully operationalizing and implementing the devolved administrative units, such as village units, as outlined in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution and other relevant legislation (Kinyua, 2017; Kamau & Mbogo, 2019). These counties have achieved implementation levels ranging from 70% to 90%, demonstrating their commitment to the devolution process.

But there are certain counties that have not yet fully operationalized and implemented their devolved administrative units and are still in the process of doing so. It's possible that the success of these counties will be hampered by obstacles like inadequate resources, lack of leadership capacity, or cumbersome administrative procedures. It is absolutely necessary for counties to find solutions to these problems and speed up the process of operationalization if they are to assure Kenyans that the devolved administrative entities will be able to perform their duties efficiently (Kinyua, 2017; Kamau & Mbogo, 2019). The process of decentralization and the efficient delivery of services at the grassroots level are both dependent on the successful operationalization of devolved administrative units, such as village units. These entities are extremely important because of the role they play in fostering citizen engagement, improving local governance, and attending to the one-of-a-kind requirements and goals of the communities they serve. It is extremely necessary for every county to make the operationalization of these units a top priority in order to guarantee the successful accomplishment of all of the devolution goals and efficient administration of county governments (Kinyua, 2017; Kamau & Mbogo, 2019).

In summary, while some counties have made commendable progress in operationalizing devolved administrative units, others are still in the process of pursuing this goal. It is essential for all counties to prioritize and expedite the operationalization process to enhance citizen participation, improve local governance, and effectively deliver services to the local communities. By doing so, county governments can exploit the benefits of devolution and contribute to the overall development and well-being of their respective regions. However, it is worth mentioning that there is a notable dearth of research data on this specific topic when it comes to counties in Kenya, especially concerning Taita Taveta and Makueni counties. While devolution is enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution, the extent of the implementation of devolved administrative structures and their impact on organizational performance remains largely explored. Furthermore, the relationship between strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in the counties is an area that still requires investigation (Kinyua, 2017).

According to Kinyua (2017), it is necessary to carry out sufficient research to find out the challenges, successes, and best practices associated with the implementation of devolved administrative structures if we wish to have a complete understanding of the dynamics of devolution and its effects on organizational performance in the regions of Taita Taveta and Makueni. These regions are located in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to investigate the role that strategic leadership practices have in fostering the efficient operation of these organisations and driving positive results. Through the study, researchers will be able to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and shed light on the factors that either hinder or support successful implementation of devolved administrative structures.

Accurate information arising from the research will also give policymakers, county officials, and other stakeholders the ability to make informed decisions as they formulate devise policies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of devolution in Taita Taveta, Makueni, and other counties across Kenya. There is a deficit in study that would help in understanding the specific consequences of devolved administrative structures and strategic leadership practices in counties such as Taita Taveta and Makueni, despite the fact that the importance of devolved administrative structures and strategic leadership practices in the context of Kenya is widely acknowledged. It is therefore necessary to do additional research in order to investigate these factors and provide insights that can be used to influence policy and practice in the ongoing efforts to promote devolution in Kenya (Kinyua, 2017).

In the context of the counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni in Kenya, there is a paucity of in-depth research on the subject of decentralised administrative structures and strategic leadership practices. There is a lack of awareness regarding the efficiency of devolved administrative structures and the effect that these structures have on the overall performance of organisations, despite the fact that devolution is an essential part of the Kenyan Constitution. In addition, there has not been a comprehensive investigation into the connection between the strategic leadership practices and the decentralised administrative systems that exist in these counties. This study is relevant because it seeks to address the existing gap in the literature on the effects of strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures in the Kenyan context (Kithae, 2016). By promoting effective strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures, county governments can enhance service delivery and citizen participation in county governance (Owiti & Kihoro, 2017).

While the implementation of devolved administrative structures in Kenya has brought about positive changes and opportunities, challenges and gaps still persist. The success of these structures depends on various factors, such as the equitable allocation of resources, transparent decision-making processes, effective public accountability mechanisms, and stakeholder participation (Owiti & Kihoro, 2017). Issues of corruption, power imbalances, and inadequate capacity among local leaders can hinder the effective functioning of devolved administrative structures. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the effects of strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in the semi-arid Kenya's counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. Specifically, the study examines the relationship between strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures and their impact on resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement.

1.3 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 the effects of stakeholders' involvement on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.
4. To determine the moderating effects of legal factors on strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.

1.4 Study Hypotheses

The study hypothesized 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.

1.5 Justification and Significance of the study

This study comes in the backdrop of peak stages of growth and maturity of devolved units in the Country as the latter seek to stand 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 own ground. Studies that are available on resource allocation have failed to unravel the effect of strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Coast and Eastern Regions. Such studies that have been done and are found in the gallery counties, Nairobi City County Government and Kisii County Government. The study's findings are essential for generating insights into the emerging themes related to the performance of devolved administrative structures. These revelations will be of great importance to researchers as they form the foundation for future studies. Moreover, the study's recommendations provide policy actors with

solutions to various challenges that hinder county governments' strategy execution. This study also serves as a source of knowledge for improving skills in the implementation of devolved administrative structures in devolved units in Kenya. The findings of the research will expand available literature on the theme of strategic leadership as a development technique and the role it plays in realizing performance in the county government.

In addition, the study provides the impetus necessary in policy execution, guided by insights acquired from the findings by the National Government on where exactly to focus. In planning for development, performances and successful policy execution of county administrations happen to be key determinants in the success of Vision 2030. The outcome of this study gives the National Government a clue on the weak areas of policy execution by the County Governments, hence the need for empowering counties so as to develop capable leadership. It is by doing this that Vision 2030 could be achieved, development and the devolved units realized and sustained.

The study greatly benefits County Governments majorly because they endeavour to forecast, evaluate and appraise their performances as was intended because the dynamic environment would be understood in a greater depth. Various stakeholders will reap out of the study's outcomes something that will underscore the importance of the leadership of county governments practising strategic planning. 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. In addition, the findings will provide insights and

demonstrate the need for active input during communal platforms in an effort to promote consensus building during the execution of plans by county governments and the obligations of leaders for improved service provision. Also, the outcome of the study will provide the local citizens with some insights and become an eye opener in making them see why they should play their role effectively if the success of their counties is to be realized.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The geographical scope of the study were two semi-arid counties in Kenya, which were; Taita Taveta in the Coastal region and Makueni in the Lower Eastern region. Theoretically, the study focused on Transformative Leadership theory and Institutional theory. The study targeted the top leadership, middle and managers who are the operational officers working in the two semi-arid 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 the resource allocation, public accountability and stakeholder involvement as the practices of leadership. The study's predictor variable was the Strategic Leadership Practices, while the response variable was the Devolved Administrative Structures.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The research was narrowed down to the two County Governments, Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, whose findings were expected to mirror what was happening in the rest of the forty-five counties. However, for better results, the study ought to cover a bigger population than the two counties. To deal with this limitation, a large sample of the population was necessary for the study. Unexpected lack of response arising from suspicion on the objectives of the study was the other foreseen limitation that the

researcher addressed by providing research permits to prove the academic nature of the study. The respondents' of being reprimanded by the County leadership was another limiting factor among respondents, making them hesitant in providing required information. To overcome this limitation, the researcher endeavoured to reassure respondents that the data collected would remain strictly confidential. Lastly, expansiveness of the research area and the environmental challenges could have been another limitation, but the respondents were accessed remotely.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section presents a thorough review of the existing literature on the effects of strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures on County governance in Kenya. The literature review provided insights into the theoretical and empirical foundations of the research, identifying gaps in the existing literature, and justifying the need for the current study. The literature review also enabled identification of key concepts, theories, and models that informed the study's research questions and hypotheses, and providing a framework for the study's methodologies and analysis.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Devolved Administrative Structures

Devolved administrative structures are diverse and can take different forms, depending on the specific context and objectives of the decentralization process. Federalism, regionalism, and decentralization are among the common forms observed in many countries. Each of these structures has its own characteristics and implications for governance and development. Federalism involves the creation of autonomous regions or states within a country, each with its own constitution and powers. This form of devolution grants a high level of autonomy to subnational governments, allowing them to make decisions on a wide range of issues, including policy formulation, resource management, and service delivery (Maddox, 2018). Federalism is often associated with countries that have a significant degree of regional diversity and a desire to accommodate different regional identities and aspirations.

Regionalism, on the other hand, involves the decentralization of powers to specific regions or provinces within a unitary state. In this model, certain administrative and decision-making powers are devolved to regional governments, while the central government retains overall authority (Berg, 2009). Regionalism can be seen as a middle ground between federalism and centralization, allowing for some level of regional autonomy while maintaining the unity and coherence of the state. Decentralization, more broadly, refers to the transfer of powers and responsibilities from the central government to local authorities or lower-level governments. It can take various forms, such as administrative, fiscal, or political decentralization (Klugman, 2009).

The choice of devolved administrative structures depends on the specific objectives and context of a country. Factors, such as historical, political, and cultural considerations, as well as the level of regional diversity and demands for autonomy, influence the decision-making process. The design and implementation of these structures also require careful consideration of issues such as power sharing, resource allocation, accountability mechanisms, and intergovernmental relations. The literature on devolved administrative structures provides valuable insights into the various forms and implications of decentralization. Understanding the characteristics and dynamics of different models of devolution is essential for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners working towards effective governance, democratic participation, and sustainable development at the subnational level (Kilpatrick, 2013).

Several theoretical perspectives have been developed to explain the rationale and implications of devolved administrative structures. One of the most influential perspectives is the Subsidiarity principle, which argues that decision-making should be

made at the lowest possible level of government to ensure efficiency, accountability, and participation (Kilpatrick, 2013). Another perspective is the Fiscal Federalism theory, which emphasizes the importance of fiscal autonomy for subnational governments to ensure adequate provision of public goods and services (Oates, 1999). By adopting strategic leadership practices, organizations can undergo transformative changes that positively impact their performance. These practices enable leaders to align organizational goals with the external environment, effectively utilize available resources, and adapt to dynamic circumstances. Strategic leaders foster a culture of innovation, encourage employee engagement, and promote a forward-thinking mindset, ultimately driving organizational growth and success as argued by Rahman *et al.* (2018).

The application of strategic leadership concepts in the context of decentralization can enhance the effectiveness of devolved administrative structures. By employing strategic leadership principles, leaders in decentralized settings can navigate complex challenges, drive collaborative decision-making processes, and empower subnational governments to fulfill their roles effectively. Moreover, strategic leadership can facilitate the development of human resources, ensuring that employees at all levels possess the necessary skills and competencies to contribute to the success of devolution. Overall, by integrating the insights from Florian and Becirevic (2014) on successful decentralization conditions with the concepts of strategic leadership from Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2016), the current study aims to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and enhancing the implementation of devolution processes.

Rahman *et al.* (2018) argue that strategic leadership is rooted in visionary capabilities that aim to transform an organization. Strategic leaders possess unique aptitudes that allow them to acquire new ideas and information, adapt to dynamic situations, and navigate the complexities of the external environment. Their visionary approach extends beyond traditional leadership traits and emphasizes the development of an organization that can thrive in a changing landscape. In the context of devolved administrative structures, strategic leadership plays a crucial role in establishing smaller segments within local governments. This decentralization of power creates opportunities for fair political competition and provides minority groups with the chance to participate in and influence local governance (Shoemaker & Krupp, 2015). By transferring a significant number of functions from the central government to the grassroots level, devolution aims to promote stability in the political environment and reduce the risk of power abuse.

The incorporation of strategic leadership principles within devolved administrative structures can further enhance their effectiveness. Strategic leaders at the local government level can envision and articulate a clear direction for their communities, aligning their goals and actions with the broader objectives of the devolution process (Faguet, 2017). They can also adapt to changing circumstances, proactively address complexities, and drive transformative change within their jurisdictions. Through strategic leadership, local governments can leverage their newfound powers and resources to promote sustainable development, improve service delivery, and empower their constituents. Strategic leadership is instrumental in guiding the transformative potential of devolved administrative structures. By embracing visionary capabilities, adaptability, and a focus on local governance, strategic leaders can harness the

opportunities presented by devolution to promote fairness, stability, and effective governance at the grassroots level (Faguet, 2017).

Rahman *et al.* (2018) argue that strategic leadership is rooted in visionary capabilities, focusing on developing organizations that are transformative. Strategic leadership involves possessing unique skills that promote learning and the generation of new ideas, as well as adaptability to dynamic and complex external environments. In the context of devolved administrative structures, it is crucial to establish smaller units that promote fair political competition and empower minorities to control local government, thus ensuring stability in the political environment and reducing the risk of power abuse. The devolution process involves transferring functions and powers from the central government to the grassroots, empowering local governments with responsibilities previously held by the national government. This research focused on the County administration system, where independent decisions are made and activities are carried out, while still being subject to careful monitoring by the central government and aligned with the overall policies at the sub-national level. It is important to note that this does not render the existing central structures irrelevant. Instead, intergovernmental relations take center stage, allowing institutions to have a reasonable degree of autonomy at both the regional (provincial) and local levels. This autonomy enables them to meaningfully participate in their own affairs through various Intergovernmental forums (IGR) designed for different purposes (Mutinda & Wawire, 2019).

The process of decentralization involves the devolution of specific functions, including administrative, political, and economic attributes, from the central government to democratic grassroots entities that operate autonomously within a defined legal

framework and geographical domain (Faguet, 2017). This research explores the dynamics and implications of such decentralization efforts within the County administration system. In the current investigation, Devolution was considered with respect to the transfer of authority from a central body to the outer entities of governance.

Consequently, the problem of decentralization of control versus the one for de-concentration of power from the national level of government to the other levels of governments necessitated that coordination be pursued to prevent needless power squabbles and disputes among the levels of governments that are in place. The devolution of administrative duties by the central government to the local authorities can cause a range of tensions, conflicts, and challenges. To address these issues, Dupas, Basurto, and Robinson (2017) suggested that intergovernmental collaboration is essential to effectively manage these issues. According to them, devolution is an effective tool used to promote rural development initiatives and aid in the transition to democracy.

2.2.2 Strategic Leadership Practices

The study conducted by Wang, Zhang, and Jia (2017) explored the personal characteristics of strategic leaders and their impact on firm performance in China. The researchers examined various aspects such as personality, personal experience, cognitive styles, values, and leadership behaviour. These characteristics were categorized into three styles: morality, clear and strong authority, and concern and considerateness (Wang, Zhang, and Jia; 2017). However, the study did not specifically investigate the collective institutional strategic leadership influence within a devolved administrative setup.

In a different context, Algarni and Male (2014) conducted a review focusing on leadership models and constructs to evaluate the role of educational leaders in promoting and developing public schools in Saudi Arabia. Their findings highlighted a discrepancy within the current educational system, where educational leadership was predominantly seen as an individual responsibility rather than a collective effort. The emphasis was more on maintenance rather than development and management as opposed to leadership. It is worth noting that despite the promotion of a collaborative learning environment within the Saudi education system, the conclusions drawn by Algarni and Male (2014) appeared contradictory. While Wang *et al.* (2017) examined the personal characteristics of strategic leaders in relation to firm performance, their study did not specifically explore the collective influence of institutional strategic leadership in a devolved administrative setup.

On the other hand, Algarni and Male (2014) focused on educational leadership in Saudi Arabia, highlighting a discrepancy between individual responsibility and collective development within the current educational system. These studies provide insights into specific aspects of leadership but do not directly address the collective institutional strategic leadership influence within devolved administrative structures. Further research is needed to examine the role and impact of collective strategic leadership within devolution contexts. 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.

Wang, Zhang, and Jia (2017) examined the personal characteristics of strategic leaders in China and their impact on firm performance. The study focused on personality, personal experience, cognitive styles, values, and leadership behavior, categorizing them into three styles. However, the study did not explore the influence of collective institutional strategic leadership in a devolved administrative setup. On the other hand, Algarni and Male (2014) conducted a review of leadership models in Saudi Arabia's educational context. They found that the current system emphasized individual responsibility for educational leadership, prioritizing maintenance over development and management over leadership. These findings were contradictory to the collaborative learning environment promoted in the Saudi education system.

The study conducted by Ofori and Atiogbe (2014) in Ghana focused on strategic planning in public universities. They found that the effective use of information and communication played a significant role in the successful implementation of strategic plans in these universities. Additionally, their research revealed that staff members perceived strategic planning as a responsibility solely of top management. In a different context, Serfontein *et al.* (2019) explored the relationship between strategic leadership, operational strategy, and financial performance in a business organization in South Africa. Their findings indicated a direct association between strategic leadership and operational strategy. Furthermore, they identified a positive relationship between strategic leadership and financial performance metrics such as return on assets (ROA) and earnings per share (EPS).

These studies provide insights into the relationship between strategic planning and successful implementation in public universities in Ghana and the association between

strategic leadership, operational strategy, and financial performance in a business organization in South Africa. While Ofori and Atiogbe (2014) focus on the specific context of public universities, Serfontein *et al.* (2019) examine strategic leadership in a business organization. These findings contribute to the understanding of strategic management in different settings and highlight the importance of effective strategic planning and leadership in achieving desired outcomes. In contrast to this study, strategic leadership practices like resource allocation, programs, plan formulation and execution of policies regulation were not investigated (Serfontein *et al.*, 2019).

In their study on the impact of strategic leadership on the performance of commercial and financial state corporations in Kenya, Odero *et al.* (2019) found that a balanced approach to organizational control encompassing the management of human, financial, and social capital, along with a strong organizational culture positively influenced performance outcomes. However, it's important to note that Odero *et al.* (2019) focused specifically on financial institutions and did not directly examine the devolved administrative structures. Another study conducted by Ndunge (2014) explored strategic leadership and change management in the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Ndunge identified several change programs that were crucial in addressing issues such as low staff morale, financial constraints, corruption, poaching, poor performance, and the lack of passion to deliver services. These programs included staff retraining, strategy formulation, branding of parks and reserves, and cultural change. By implementing these change initiatives, the KWS aimed to overcome challenges and improve organizational performance (Ndunge, 2014).

Both studies provide valuable insights into the importance of strategic leadership and change management in different organizational contexts. While Odero *et al.* (2019) focused on commercial and financial state corporations, and Ndunge (2014) specifically examined the Kenya Wildlife Service, their findings underscore the significance of effective strategic leadership practices and change programs in enhancing performance and addressing organizational challenges. In a study on the influence of strategic leadership on the performance of the devolved government system in Kakamega County, Masungu *et al.* (2015) concluded that strategic leadership plays a crucial role in improving performance. However, their study focused solely on Kakamega County, while this current study expands the investigation to two other counties.

Mutinda and Wawire (2019) conducted a study to examine the effects of decentralized administrative structures and strategic leadership practices on resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement in the Kenyan counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. Their findings indicated a significant positive relationship between strategic leadership practices and resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement. They also observed that decentralized administrative structures had a positive impact on resource allocation and public accountability. However, they did not find a significant relationship between decentralized structures and stakeholder involvement. The study conducted by Mutinda and Wawire (2019) provides valuable insights into the relationship between strategic leadership, decentralized administrative structures, and key aspects of governance in the context of Taita Taveta and Makueni counties. By examining resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement, the study highlights the importance of

strategic leadership and decentralized structures in promoting effective governance practices.

Masungo *et al.* (2015) study concluded that strategic leadership improves performance. However, their study was limited to Kakamega County. In a separate study by Mutinda and Wawire (2019), the effects of decentralized administrative structures and strategic leadership practices were examined in Taita Taveta and Makueni counties in Kenya. The results indicated a positive relationship between strategic leadership practices and resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, decentralized administrative structures were found to have a positive impact on resource allocation and public accountability, but no significant relationship was observed with stakeholder involvement. This study expanded the research beyond Kakamega County to include two other counties.

A study conducted by Mutinda and Wawire (2019) concluded that, decentralized administrative structures and strategic leadership practices play a vital role in enhancing organizational performance. They emphasized the need for increased investment in capacity building for county leadership to improve decentralized administrative structures and strategic leadership practices. It is worth noting that in their study, Mutinda and Wawire (2019) considered decentralized administrative structures as the independent variables while strategic leadership practices; resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement were treated as the dependent variables. This current study, however, focuses on strategic leadership practices as the independent variable, with resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder

involvement being considered as sub-constructs or dimensions within the broader construct of devolved administrative structures which is the dependent variable.

By examining the relationship between strategic leadership practices and these specific aspects of governance, this study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how strategic leadership practices can influence resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement. It recognizes the importance of strategic leadership practices in shaping these sub-constructs and ultimately contributing to overall organizational performance in service delivery to its citizenry. In their study, Mutinda and Wawire (2019) emphasize the importance of strategic leadership practices and decentralized administrative structures in improving organizational performance. They highlight the need for investing in capacity building for county leadership to enhance their strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures.

However, their study focused on strategic leadership and decentralized administrative structures as independent variables, while resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement were considered as dependent variables. In the current study, strategic leadership practices are treated as the independent variable, with resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder involvement as sub-constructs. In their work, Rigii, Ogutu, Awino, and Kitiabi (2019) highlighted the importance of integrating strategic leadership and innovative employee training within county leadership for enhanced service delivery. However, their study had a limited scope, as it did not specifically address the topics of resource allocation and the execution of policy regulations within the devolved units.

Building upon their work, the current research aims to investigate the potential influence of strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures. By examining the relationship between strategic leadership and devolved administrative structures, this study seeks to shed light on how effective leadership can shape and impact the structures and processes of governance at the county level. It endeavors to provide insights into the role of strategic leadership practices in fostering the development and effectiveness of devolved administrative structures within the context of county governments. This however gave emphasis to the study by Rigii, Ogutu, Awino, and Kitiabi (2019).

2.2.3 Resource Allocation Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

In a study on the experiences of a devolved setup, specifically the politics of health sector devolution, Atienza (2018) identified several challenges faced by local government units in the Philippines. These challenges included the politicization of the management of public health resources, constraints in improving and constructing health facilities, and a lack of health personnel and facilities. Atienza (2018) concluded that these problems were partially caused by the lack of comprehensive deliberations, poor design, and hasty implementation of health sector devolution.

In contrast to Atienza's study, the current research focuses specifically on the influence of the budgetary processes, formulation of plans, and execution of policies on the devolved administrative structures, with a specific focus on operationalization. By narrowing the scope to the devolved administrative structures, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how resources allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder's involvement practices impact the performance of devolved administrative structures in operationalization and delivery of services. Atienza's (2018) study on the

politics of health sector devolution in the Philippines found common problems in the management of public health resources, construction of health facilities, and availability of health personnel and also lack of thorough deliberations, poor design, and rushed implementation of health sector devolution. The current study aims to examine the influence of budgetary processes, plan formulation, and policy execution on the performance of devolved administrative structures, specifically focusing on the health sector.

In a study conducted by Bossert *et al.* (2016) in Chile and Colombia, the association between decentralization and equity of health resource allocation was investigated. The findings of the study revealed that increased levels of funding directly translated to increased service utilization. Moreover, it was observed that devolution facilitated and maintained an equitable allocation of health resources across different devolved units with varying income levels. However, the current study diverges from examining equitable health resource sharing among devolved units and instead focuses on resource allocation processes, plans formulation, and execution within devolved administrative structures. By shifting the focus to the allocation process, itself, this study aims to explore how resources are allocated and distributed among different sectors or departments within devolved administrative structures. The goal is to understand the impact of budgetary processes, planning strategies, and policy execution on resource allocation within the context of devolved governance (Mutinda & Wawire, 2019).

Furthermore, Bossert *et al.* (2016) conducted another study in Zambia, investigating resource allocation and district performance within a decentralization framework. They discovered that the allocation formula, which was based on population size and hospital

beds, resulted in almost equal per capita expenditure across different districts. This highlights the importance of understanding how allocation formulas and criteria can impact resource distribution and potentially influence district performance within a decentralized system. The study by Bossert et al. (2016) investigated the association between decentralization and equity of health resource allocation in Chile, Colombia, and Zambia.

In Chile and Colombia, increased funding was found to contribute to higher service utilization, and devolution helped maintain an equitable distribution of health resources across different devolved units. The study by Bossert et al. (2016) in Zambia revealed that the allocation formula based on population size and hospital beds resulted in almost equal per capita expenditure across different districts. The current study focuses on resource allocation processes, plan formulation, and execution within devolved administrative structures to establish their impact on health resource allocation. It is worth noting that this current study does not specifically investigate revenue generation but rather focuses on resource allocation within devolved administrative structures. The aim is to examine how resources are allocated and distributed among different sectors or departments within the devolved governance framework. By understanding the challenges and processes involved in resource allocation, it becomes possible to identify areas for improvement and enhance the effectiveness of resource utilization (Bossert et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Moindi (2014) conducted a study on resource distribution methods under devolved systems of government in selected counties in Kenya. The study revealed that even when resources are available, counties face numerous challenges in formulating

and implementing resource allocation plans. This underscores the complexities and difficulties associated with resource management and highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the resource allocation process within devolved administrative structures. The study found that decentralization provided autonomy for internal resource allocation and expenditure within each district. However, disparities existed in revenue generation, with wealthier districts meeting their targets while poorer districts struggled to reach their targets despite utilizing their maximum allocations. The current study focuses on resource allocation within devolved administrative structures and does not investigate revenue generation (Moindi, 2014).

Another study by Moindi (2014) revealed that counties in Kenya faced challenges in formulating and implementing resource allocation plans, even when resources were available, under the devolved systems of government. The study conducted by Moindi (2014) focused on resource allocation strategies in Kiambu, Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, and Nakuru counties. It employed optimization techniques to maximize efficiency and address the unique objectives and changing environments of each county. The allocation of resources in these counties was primarily based on long-term projects initiated by the national government rather than short-term projects by the county government. The aforementioned studies provide valuable insights into resource allocation practices in different counties within Kenya. However, there is still a gap in understanding the specific effects of resource allocation practices on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni counties.

This current research aims to bridge that gap by investigating the impact of resource allocation practices on the functioning and performance of the devolved administrative

structures in these two counties. By examining the specific context of Taita Taveta and Makueni counties, this study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of resource allocation practices within the devolution framework in Kenya. The study conducted by Ngigi and Busolo (2019) found out that inadequate resource allocation was a significant hindrance to the institutionalization of devolved governance strategies by county governments in Kenya. However, their focus was more generalized, providing an overview of resource allocation across counties. On the other hand, the study by Tsofa *et al.* (2017) specifically concentrated on the health department in Kilifi County.

In contrast, the present study delves into the specific context of Public Procurement Oversight Counties, investigating resource allocation practices related to the formulation of plans, policies, and regulations as well as the execution of allocation processes and budgets. By narrowing the focus to these specific aspects of resource allocation, this study aims to provide a detailed examination of the relationship between resource allocation practices and the functioning of devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni counties. The study by Ngigi and Busolo (2019) found that inadequate resource allocation was a major hindrance to the institutionalization of devolved governance strategies by county governments in Kenya. On the other hand, the study by Tsofa *et al.* (2017) focused specifically on the health department in Kilifi County. While Tsofa *et al.* (2017) provided a more specific view of resource allocation in one county, Ngigi and Busolo (2019) offered a broader perspective on county resource allocation. This current study specifically examines resource allocation in Public Procurement Oversight Counties, with a focus on formulation of plans, policies and regulation execution and the allocation process/budget.

2.2.4 Public Accountability Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

The study conducted by Forrer *et al.* (2014) focused on public-private partnerships (PPPs) and the question of public accountability in the United Kingdom (UK). The study emphasized the importance of performance measurement in ensuring accountability in PPPs. Specifically, the researchers highlighted the need for a strategy that is both efficient and effective in the collaborative process between the public and private sectors. This strategy should include monitoring and evaluation processes that assess the achievement of value-for-money standards, aligning them with the expectations of the government and citizens (Forrer *et al.*, 2014). By incorporating these elements, the study aimed to enhance public accountability in PPPs within the UK context.

This research investigated devolved administrative structures and their performance with greater emphasis placed on access to information, social audits, and citizen's budgeting, an area that had not been looked into before by Forrer *et al.* (2014). Devolution was meant to increase government transparency and accountability for marginalized and poor people, increasing the connection between citizens and the state (Deshingkar, Johnson & Start, 2015). Deshingkar *et al.* (2015) conducted a study on devolution as it relates to development in India and found that it had caused local elite groups to secure a greater portion of the public resources to the disadvantage of those who were less well off. In South Africa, Munzhedzi (2017) studied the role of the legislature in maintaining public accountability.

Results revealed that one of the main responsibilities of parliament was to oversee the activities of the executive branch and ensure that decisions, programs, and policies were

executed as approved. However, the legislature is held back by the political power of the ruling party, which leaves MPs hesitant to hold the executive to account out of fear of being reprimanded. The study conducted by Munzhedzi (2017) targeted the national government in terms of governance and focused on legislature's role in accountability. In contrast, the current study focuses on County governments as the target level of governance and examines accountability towards the citizens within the respective counties. This shift in focus allows for a more specific analysis of the devolved administrative structures and their role in promoting public accountability.

In the case of Ibietan's study (2017) on corruption and public accountability in Nigeria, the research findings highlighted the ineffectiveness of existing external and internal mechanisms for achieving accountability. The study pointed out that weak sanctions and lack of political goodwill contributed to the persistence of corruption. However, this current study diverges from Ibietan's focus on the reasons for corruption and instead explores strategic leadership practices as they relate to public accountability within the context of devolved administrative structures. By examining the role of strategic leadership practices, the study aims to shed light on how these practices can contribute to enhancing public accountability and performance in the devolved administration.

The study conducted by Munzhedzi (2017) examined accountability towards the national government and legislature, while this current study focuses on accountability within County governments towards the citizens. In Nigeria, Ibietan (2017) investigated corruption and public accountability, and found out that existing mechanisms lacked political support and had weak sanctions, leading to the persistence of corruption. In contrast, this study diverges by focusing on strategic leadership practices and their

impact on public accountability and the performance of devolved administrative structures. The challenges faced by devolved units in Kenya are indeed significant and have led to calls for the dissolution of county governments. These challenges include issues of legitimacy, declining levels of accountability and transparency, inadequate access to devolved public services, and persistent inequalities in the distribution of county resources (Minja, 2017). These problems have hindered the effective implementation of plans and programs within the devolved system.

One major factor contributing to these challenges is poor leadership, particularly involving politicians and certain management administrators. Lack of effective leadership has resulted in setbacks and hindered progress in implementing development plans. Additionally, county bosses have faced impeachment motions related to accountability and resource allocation issues, further exacerbating dissatisfaction among citizens. Accountability mechanisms play a crucial role in addressing these challenges. Both formal and informal means are utilized to hold the executive branch accountable. County assemblies, driven by either self-interest or the need to exert control over executive power, play a significant role in ensuring accountability (Dyzenhaus & Cheeseman, 2018). This is essential for fostering transparency and addressing the concerns raised by citizens. Efforts to address these challenges and strengthen accountability in devolved units are crucial for improving the overall performance and effectiveness of county governments in Kenya.

Devolved units in Kenya are currently facing numerous challenges that have led to calls for the dissolution of county governments. These challenges include issues of legitimacy, declining levels of accountability and transparency, inadequate access to

public services, and persistent inequalities in resource distribution that lack accountability, equity, and transparency. The poor leadership, mainly involving politicians and some people in the management, has been a significant factor contributing to setbacks in the implementation of development plans in Kenya over the past four decades. Impeachment motions are frequently initiated against county leaders due to concerns about accountability and responsible resource allocation and dissatisfaction of county staff, arising from delays in salary payments. To address these issues, formal and informal methods are employed to hold the executive accountable, with county assemblies often playing a role in demanding accountability, either motivated by self-interest or the desire to control executive power (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015).

Despite the progress made by county governments, there remains a lack of trust between members of county assemblies and executives, with the citizens viewing devolution as an extension of corrupt national government. Power battles between the two groups have caused issues of transparency and stability when it comes to development planning (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015). Wa Gĩthĩnji and Holmquist (2016) saw the need for horizontal and vertical accountability, with the former related to checks and balances associated with transactions between branches of government and the latter related to government's responsibility to citizens. While horizontal accountability exists to some degree, vertical accountability is largely none existent (Wa Githinji *et al.*, 2016). According to Ochieng (2017), accountability for Kenya's devolved health sector rests mainly with the counties, yet decisions involving the sector and resource management are still handled by the national government. To achieve the most efficient cooperation between levels of government, the study proposed means of

achieving leadership accountability, including communication, access to information, social audits and the publication of citizens' budgets.

2.2.5 Stakeholder Involvement Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Stakeholder and public involvement play a vital role in the decision-making process and the success of organizational policies and activities. Nyang'au (2014) highlights the importance of engaging stakeholders and the public in decision-making to avoid conflicts and ensure the long-term success of planned strategies. Concerning public-private partnerships (PPPs), Forrer *et al.* (2014) emphasize the significance of clear and consistent communication with stakeholders. Effective communication helps to build trust, transparency, and understanding among all parties involved, which in turn increases engagement and collaboration. When stakeholders are well-informed and feel involved in the process, they are more likely to support and contribute to the success of the partnership (Forrer *et al.*, 2014).

Kim and Lee (2018) further emphasize the importance of communication in public-private partnerships. They argue that transparent communication fosters mutual understanding, reduces information asymmetry, and promotes cooperation between partners. By maintaining open lines of communication and providing clear information to stakeholders, public-private partnerships can establish a foundation of trust and enhance their chances of success. In the context of devolved administrative structures, involving stakeholders and the public in decision-making processes and ensuring effective communication are crucial for building accountability, trust, and transparency. By actively engaging stakeholders and promoting open dialogue, devolved units can garner support, address concerns, and achieve their goals more effectively (Kim and Lee, 2018).

However, in addition to communication, this study investigated whether there existed 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 an undesirable extent when devolution dealings were rolled out in England. In addition, even with the desire from political leaders to discharge their mandates quickly, deeper forms of consultation in the form of mini-public deliberations would have been necessary so as to get informed public opinion on priority areas, thus legitimizing local governance reforms process (Kim and Lee, 2018).

The study by Prosser *et al.* (2017) highlights the issue of insufficient public involvement in governance processes, which is often as a result of leaders' preference for tight control. This finding suggests that public participation is limited and not given adequate attention by government leaders at both national and local levels. However, it is important to note that this study focused primarily on public participation and did not explore other forms of stakeholder engagement. In this research, in addition to public participation, the study aims to investigate the influence of other stakeholder engagements on the performance of devolved administrative structures. This broader perspective recognizes that effective governance requires engaging a range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, community groups, private sector entities, and other relevant actors (Kim and Lee, 2018).

The focus on the health sector in Uganda by Razavi, Kapingiri, Abelson, and Wilson (2019) sheds light on stakeholder participation in priority setting. Their study reveals

that vulnerable groups were not adequately involved in stakeholder participation processes, and conflicting priorities, values, and interests posed challenges to effective stakeholder involvement in local priority setting. This highlights the importance of addressing these challenges and ensuring that all relevant stakeholders, including vulnerable groups, are actively engaged in decision-making processes to improve governance outcomes (Prosser *et al.*, 2017). By considering stakeholder engagement beyond public participation and exploring the role of financing of stakeholders' involvement exercises, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the influence of stakeholder engagement practices on the performance of devolved administrative structures.

Prosser *et al.* (2017) found that insufficient public involvement in governance processes was not due to its undesirability but rather a preference for tight control by government leaders at both national and local levels. However, their study solely focused on public participation, which is deemed inadequate in this current research. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of stakeholder engagement and the availability of financing for stakeholder involvement on the performance of devolved administrative structures, in addition to public participation. Razavi *et al.* (2019) examined stakeholder participation in priority setting in the health sector in Uganda and established that vulnerable groups were excluded from stakeholder involvement. Conflicting priorities, values, and interests were also noted as major challenges in local priority setting processes.

This study ensured that different group inputs are incorporated in evaluating stakeholder involvement to find out whether it is the same case with the Kenyan context

or not. The current study also incorporated all ministries under devolved government instead of focusing on health sector alone as Razavi et al. (2019). 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 in the implementation of formulated strategic plans in the County government of Kisii were financial resources and the involvement of stakeholders for proper decision making in the governance of the County. These revelations prompted the scholars to make a recommendation that, a similar study but with a wider scope be conducted nationwide in order to have clear understanding of what governance requires. As Juma *et al.* (2014) advised, all stakeholders should guard against a repeat of past governance mistakes if they are to improve Kenya through devolution.

The study by Khaunya *et al.* (2015) highlights mistrust among stakeholders as a significant challenge faced by County governments in achieving their objectives. This mistrust can hinder effective collaboration and cooperation between different stakeholders, thereby hindering the successful implementation of devolution. Muli's (2014) research on the challenges of implementing devolution in the Nairobi City County administration reveals various difficulties encountered. These are political challenges and physical environment, resistance from Members of the County Assembly, and the attitude of employees, the business community, and the electorate. These factors contribute to the complexities of the obstacles faced in the process of implementation of devolution (Muli, 2014).

The study also established the importance of stakeholder participation in reducing resistance at all levels of the implementation process. Engaging stakeholders in

decision-making processes and ensuring their involvement can help address concerns, build trust, and enhance cooperation. Additionally, Muli (2014) highlights the importance of having explicit rules and guidelines governing the execution of the devolution plan to minimize misunderstandings and conflicts. These findings underscore the significance of stakeholder engagement and clear communication in mitigating challenges and fostering successful implementation of devolution strategies. By involving stakeholders, addressing their concerns, and establishing transparent guidelines, devolved administrative structures can enhance trust, collaboration, and the overall effectiveness of governance processes (Muli, 2014).

Khaunya *et al.* (2015) noted that mistrust among stakeholders poses a significant challenge for County governments in achieving their objectives. Meanwhile, Muli (2014) conducted a study on the difficulties of implementing devolution in the Nairobi City County administration. The study revealed that challenges posed by the political and physical environment, resistance from Members of the County Assembly, employees, business community, and the electorate hindered the implementation of the devolution strategy. To mitigate resistance, stakeholder participation and clear rules governing the devolution process were deemed crucial by Muli (2014).

Research by Nyang'au (2014) on public participation and the effectiveness of strategy implementation is also illuminating, as it showed that when Kenya's Ministry of Devolution and Planning involved the public in strategy implementation, there was reduced time and resistance from stakeholders. This also ensured proper utilization of resources by scaling down corruption and unnecessary expenditure. Further, the engagement raised the morale of citizens and facilitators, increased the ease of doing

work and bolstered service delivery through efficiently utilized public resources. This study sought to find out whether stakeholders' engagement plans, financing for stakeholder involvement and citizen participation have been incorporated in the governance practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

2.2.6 Legal factors and Devolved Administrative structures

Devolved administrative structures have been implemented in many countries around the world, often as a means of decentralizing power and promoting local governance. The legal framework determines the extent of devolved powers, the relationship between the central government and the devolved units, and the overall governance structure. The legal framework typically includes constitutional provisions or statutes that establish the devolved administrative structures and define their scope of authority. These laws outline the specific functions and responsibilities that are devolved to the local level, such as service delivery, planning, and budgetary controls (Muli, 2014).

By defining the powers and responsibilities, the legal framework also establishes mechanisms for coordination and cooperation between the central government and the devolved bodies. This includes provisions for intergovernmental relations, fiscal transfers, and dispute resolution mechanisms. In addition, the legal framework ensures accountability and transparency by setting rules and regulations for financial management, procurement, and public participation. It may also establish oversight bodies or mechanisms to monitor the performance of devolved administrative structures and address any breaches or misconduct. By providing a legal foundation, these frameworks provide clarity and stability to devolved governance systems, promoting effective local governance, and ensuring a balance of power between the central government and the devolved bodies (Opano, Shisia, Sang & Josee, 2015).

The Constitution or other governing documents play a fundamental role in establishing devolved administrative structures and defining their legal powers and functions. These documents serve as the highest legal authority and provide the framework for devolution within a country. In the case of the United Kingdom, the Scotland Act 1998 and the Wales Act 1998 are key legislative instruments that established devolved bodies in Scotland and Wales respectively (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford & Flinders, 2017). These acts delineate the specific powers that are devolved to these bodies, including in areas such as health sector, education sector, and local government. They also outline the relationships between the devolved bodies and the central government, clarifying issues such as funding mechanisms, legislative powers, and decision-making processes (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford & Flinders, 2017).

Additionally, as construed by Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders (2017), these legislative instruments may cover provisions for the protection of devolved powers and the mechanisms for amending or repealing them. They also often define procedures for any changes to the devolution settlement, ensuring that any modifications to the powers of devolved bodies are made through a formal and transparent process. The legal framework provided by these Acts and other governing documents is essential in maintaining the stability, legality, and constitutional integrity of devolved administrative structures. It enables the allocation of powers, establishes accountability mechanisms, and safeguards the rights and interests of both the central government and the devolved bodies (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

The legal factors that significantly impact devolved administrative structures include the constitution or governing document that establishes these structures. In various

countries like the United Kingdom, devolved bodies are formed through legislative instruments or Acts of parliament that outline their authority, responsibilities, and interactions with the central government. The Scotland Act 1998 and the Wales Act 1998 established the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government, and the National Assembly for Wales, respectively. These Acts serve as the legal framework governing the functioning of these bodies and defining the scope of their powers (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

The distribution of powers between the central government and devolved bodies is a crucial legal factor that shapes the operation and functioning of devolved administrative structures. In federal systems, power is constitutionally divided between the central government and subnational entities, such as states or provinces. The constitution typically outlines the specific powers that are granted to each level of government. The central government retains authority over matters of national importance, such as defense, foreign affairs, and currency, while the devolved bodies have autonomy in areas assigned to them, such as education, healthcare, or transportation. This distribution of powers is intended to strike a balance between centralization and regional autonomy (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

In unitary systems, the central government holds ultimate authority, and devolved bodies are granted specific powers within defined policy areas. The extent of these powers may vary, depending on the country and the specific devolution arrangement. The central government usually retains authority over matters of national importance and has the power to set policies and provide guidelines for the devolved bodies. The distribution of powers can give rise to challenges, particularly when there are

overlapping or conflicting responsibilities between the central government and devolved bodies. In such cases, coordination and cooperation mechanisms, such as intergovernmental agreements, may be necessary to ensure effective governance and avoid duplication or gaps in service provision. The legal framework defining the distribution of powers is essential for clarifying the respective jurisdictions and responsibilities of the central government and devolved bodies. It helps maintain a balance between central control and local autonomy, ensuring the smooth functioning and cooperation of different levels of government within the overall governance structure (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders, (2017).

According to Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders, (2017), the distribution of powers between central governments and devolved bodies is a crucial legal factor in governance systems. In federal systems like the United States, power is divided between the federal government and individual states, allowing states to have significant autonomy in certain areas. On the other hand, in unitary systems like the United Kingdom, devolved bodies may be granted specific powers over certain sectors while ultimate authority remains with the central government (McEwen & Wilson, 2017). The allocation of powers has a substantial influence on the functioning of devolved structures, especially in cases where there may be overlaps or conflicts in responsibilities.

The legal frameworks that regulate the relationship between devolved bodies and central government are crucial for ensuring effective governance and cooperation. These frameworks provide mechanisms for resolving disputes, promoting consultation, and facilitating cooperation between different levels of government. In countries with

a federal system, such as the United States, the legal framework often includes a judiciary with the power to interpret the constitution and resolve disputes between the federal government and individual states. The Supreme Court, as the highest court in the land, plays a significant role in interpreting the constitutional division of powers and settling legal conflicts between the federal government and state governments (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders, 2017).

In unitary systems, legal frameworks may establish specialized bodies or mechanisms to facilitate consultation and cooperation between the central government and devolved bodies. These mechanisms aim to foster dialogue, coordinate policies, and address areas of shared concern. The Joint Ministerial Committee in the United Kingdom is one such example, bringing together representatives from the UK government and devolved administrations to discuss matters of mutual interest and resolve any disagreements or conflicts that may arise. Furthermore, legal frameworks may also include provisions for financial arrangements and fiscal transfers between the central government and devolved bodies. These provisions determine the funding mechanisms and resource allocations to support the operation of devolved administrative structures. The legal frameworks that regulate the relationship between devolved bodies and central government are essential for ensuring effective governance, addressing disputes, promoting cooperation, and upholding the principles of accountability and transparency in the devolution process. Legal frameworks play a crucial role in regulating the relationship between devolved bodies and central government. They encompass mechanisms for dispute resolution and arrangements for consultation and cooperation between different levels of government (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders, 2017). Examples include the Supreme Court in the United States and the Joint

Ministerial Committee in the United Kingdom. These legal provisions help govern the interactions and address common concerns between devolved bodies and central government (Prosser, Renwick, Giovanni, Sandford and Flinders, 2017).

The Constitution of Kenya, specifically Chapter Eleven, provides the legal foundation for the establishment and operation of devolved administrative structures in the country. The functions and powers of devolved governments, as well as their relationship with the national government, are clearly defined in this chapter. According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010), devolved governments have specific powers and functions that are assigned to them. These include matters to do with agriculture, health services, transport, trade, and county planning, among others. The Constitution delineates the areas in which devolved governments have authority and control. However, in cases of competing or conflicting interests between the national government and devolved units, the authority of the national government takes precedence. This means that the national government's authority is superior to that of the devolved units in such situations. Despite the clear guidelines provided in the Constitution, tensions have indeed often emerged between the national and county governments in Kenya. These tensions arise due to disagreements over the interpretation of constitutional provisions, clashes over jurisdiction and authority, disputes over resource allocation, or differing policy priorities (Kangu, 2015).

Addressing these tensions and ensuring effective cooperation between the national and county governments is an ongoing process in Kenya's devolution journey. This requires ongoing dialogue, negotiation, and coordination between the two levels of government to ensure harmonious governance and the delivery of services to the citizens. Efforts

have been made to resolve these tensions and strengthen the relationship between the national and county governments (Kangu, 2015). This includes mechanisms for intergovernmental consultations, such as the Intergovernmental Relations Act, which provides a framework for cooperation, consultation, and dispute resolution between the national government and devolved units.

While the Constitution provides a clear framework for the powers and functions of devolved governments in Kenya, addressing tensions and promoting effective collaboration between the national and county governments remains an ongoing challenge that requires a solution in the form of continuous dialogue and cooperation. One of the critical legal factors in the establishment of devolved administrative structures is the constitutional framework. The constitutional framework sets out the legal basis for the establishment and operation of devolved structures. In Kenya, for example, the 2010 Constitution established 47 county governments with devolved powers in areas such as health, agriculture, and education (Kinyanjui, 2015). Similarly, the United Kingdom's Scotland Act 1998 established the Scottish Parliament and Executive, which have devolved powers in areas such as education, health, and housing (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution delineates the powers and functions of both the federal government and the 36 states. The legal framework that regulates the relationship between the central government and subnational units is a crucial factor in the functioning of devolved administrative structures (Jibril, 2016). The Nigerian Constitution specifies the powers and responsibilities of the federal government as well as those of the state governments. It outlines the areas in which the federal government

has exclusive jurisdiction, such as defense, foreign affairs, and currency, while also defining the powers of the states in areas such as agriculture, education, health, and local government administration (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

The Nigerian Constitution also provides guidelines for the allocation and distribution of financial resources between the central government and the states. It sets out the mechanisms for revenue sharing, including the derivation principle which ensures that a percentage of revenue from certain natural resources is allocated to the states in which those resources are located. The legal framework established by the Constitution helps to define the powers and responsibilities of both the federal and state governments, ensuring a clear delineation of authority. It serves as a basis for the functioning of devolved administrative structures in Nigeria and helps to maintain a balance between the central government and subnational units (McEwen & Wilson, 2017).

However, it is important to note that tensions and conflicts can still arise between the central government and the states, particularly in cases where there are disputes over resource allocation, policy implementation, or conflicts of interest (Jibril, 2016). Efforts are continually being made to address these challenges and improve the effectiveness of the legal framework governing the relationship between the central government and the devolved structures in Nigeria (Jibril, 2016). Furthermore, the legal framework governing the relationship between the central government and subnational units may also determine the extent of financial autonomy and the independence enjoyed by the subnational units (Jibril, 2016). In Kenya, for example, the County Governments Act 2012 establishes a framework for the allocation and disbursement of funds to county governments (Mwangi & Kamau, 2017).

Similarly, the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2017 in Nigeria provides for the establishment of a Fiscal Responsibility Commission to oversee the fiscal affairs of the federal state, and local governments (Onyeukwu & Onwe, 2019). The study conducted by Juma, Rotich, and Mulongo (2014) focused on devolution and governance conflicts in the Kenyan context and made recommendations for effective governance in the devolved system. The study emphasized on the importance of respecting principles of socio-economic and political justice, embracing constitutionalism, implementing the allocated devolved funds to counties, and fostering a uniform governance culture. However, the study did not specifically delve into the influence of legal factors on strategic leadership in devolved administrative structures. Legal factors, such as the constitutional framework, and other laws governing devolution play a significant role in shaping the practice of strategic leadership within these structures (Ria, Muhammad & Shinta, 2017).

The legal framework establishes the powers, functions, and responsibilities of devolved administrative structures as well as their relationship with the central government. It provides the legal authority and boundaries within which strategic leadership operates. For example, legal provisions may define the decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, and limitations on the exercise of power by leaders within the devolved structures. Furthermore, the legal framework can establish guidelines for stakeholder engagement, public participation, and transparency, which are essential components of strategic leadership (Ria, Muhammad & Shinta, 2017). It can also provide mechanisms for resolving conflicts and disputes that may arise within the devolved system.

To fully understand the effects of legal factors on strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures, further research and analysis are needed. Exploring how the legal framework interacts with strategic leadership practices, how it shapes decision-making processes, and how it influences accountability and transparency would provide valuable insights into the relationship between legal factors and strategic leadership in the devolved context. Juma, Rotich, and Mulongo (2014) recommended that governments should uphold principles of socio-economic and political justice, adhere to constitutionalism for development, implement the designated percentage of devolved funds to counties without fiscal stress, and foster a uniform governance culture for development. Strategic leadership, which relies on legal support, is crucial for establishing a governance culture. However, the study by Juma *et al.* (2014) did not specifically examine the influence of legal factors on strategic leadership within devolved administrative structures.

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 SACCOs 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, but this study covered the two counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. Hence, this study made a thoughtful conclusion to the question "What is the

effect of Strategic Leadership practices on performance of operationalized devolved administrative structures (County Governments) in Kenya?”

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Resource-Based View theory

The Resource-Based View theory (RBV) advanced by Barney in 1991 draws upon the works of Wernerfelt (1984) that conceptualized an enterprise as a collection of resources and competencies. This implies that the absence of resources and competencies at the firm level can hinder certain functions and strategy formulation. Grant (2001) categorizes internal resources as financial, physical, human, technological, reputation, and organizational resources. It is argued that specific resources or combinations thereof can play a critical role in achieving sustained export performance.

Grant (2001) asserts that an organization's capabilities are measured by what it can achieve with the resources at its disposal. Powell (1992) adds that resources must generate economic value, be scarce, difficult to imitate, non-replaceable, and not easily accessible in the factor market to generate competitiveness. According to Barney (1991), a company's success is largely determined by its ability to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the acquisition and utilization of inimitable, non-imitable, non-transferable, and company-specific resources. Litz (1996) supports Barney's (1991) conceptual work on the unique nature and characteristics of resources.

RBV theory is a strategic management framework that emphasizes the importance of firm-specific resources and capabilities in gaining and sustaining competitive

advantage. It focuses on the critical role of firm-specific resources and capabilities in shaping a company's competitive advantage and long-term success (Prieto-Sandoval, Jaca, Santos, Baumgartner & Ormazabal, 2019). RBV asserts that a firm's unique resources, including tangible and intangible assets, along with its distinctive capabilities and competencies, form the foundation for achieving a competitive edge with respect to other related firms.

According to RBV, resources are the tangible and intangible assets that a company possesses, such as physical infrastructure, intellectual property, brand reputation, and human capital. By capabilities, on the other hand, RBV refers to the firm's ability to deploy and integrate these resources to create value and achieve strategic objectives. RBV emphasizes that not all resources are equally valuable or rare, and it identifies the attributes of value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN) as key determinants of a resource's competitive advantage potential (Maket & Korir, 2017). In the context of strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory offers valuable insights and guidance to strategic leaders. RBV suggests that strategic leaders should direct their attention towards the identification, development, and effective utilization of the distinctive resources and capabilities present within their organization. It emphasizes the importance of strategic leaders assessing their firm's resource portfolio, evaluating the value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN) characteristics of those resources, and aligning them with the organization's strategic goals and market opportunities (Maket & Korir, 2017).

This entails strategic decision-making regarding resource allocation, investment, and the cultivation of organizational capabilities. Strategic leaders must prioritize the nurturing and enhancement of resources and capabilities that provide a competitive advantage, while also considering the dynamic nature of the business environment and evolving market conditions. By effectively leveraging their organization's unique resources and capabilities, strategic leaders can enhance the firm's competitiveness, adaptability, and ability to seize strategic opportunities, ultimately driving sustainable success and achieving their strategic objectives. RBV offers valuable insights for strategic leaders in relation to strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures. It emphasizes the identification, development, and effective utilization of unique organizational resources and capabilities, enabling informed decision-making and driving competitiveness and success (Maket & Korir, 2017).

In addition, RBV also underscores the significance of fostering a culture of resourcefulness and continuous improvement within the organization. Strategic leaders are crucial in cultivating an environment that promotes and nurtures innovation, knowledge sharing, and learning among employees (Afsar, Masood & Umrani, 2019). By empowering and engaging individuals at all levels of the organization, strategic leaders encourage active participation and contribution to the identification and development of valuable resources and capabilities. This inclusive approach not only enhances the organization's ability to leverage its existing resources effectively but also stimulates a sense of ownership and commitment among employees, leading to increased motivation and the potential for sustainable competitive advantage (Maket & Korir, 2017).

By embracing the principles of RBV, strategic leaders make informed decisions regarding resource acquisition, deployment, and leveraging. This enables them to create a sustainable advantage by utilizing their unique resources and capabilities effectively. Moreover, RBV guides strategic leaders in adapting and evolving their resource base in response to changing market dynamics, technological advancements, and competitive pressures (Chumphong, Srimai & Potipiroon, 2020). By leveraging the insights offered by RBV, strategic leaders can drive organizational success and maintain a competitive edge in a dynamic landscape.

Additionally, RBV highlights the importance of strategic leaders in aligning and integrating resources and capabilities across different administrative units. By effectively coordinating and integrating resources, leaders can achieve synergy and maximize the overall value of the organization's resource portfolio (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021). Strategic leaders play a critical role in fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and cross-functional cooperation, enabling the organization to effectively leverage its resources and capabilities. Furthermore, RBV emphasizes the continuous development and renewal of resources and capabilities through strategic leadership practices. Leaders should focus on building dynamic capabilities that allow the organization to adapt and respond to changing market conditions and competitive landscapes (Schoemaker, Heaton & Teece, 2018). This involves fostering a culture of learning, innovation, and continuous improvement within the organisation.

In summary, the RBV theory provides a framework for strategic leaders to identify, leverage, and develop resources and capabilities within devolved administrative structures. By aligning strategic leadership practices with the principles of RBV,

organizations can effectively capitalize on their unique strengths and create a sustainable devolved administrative structure. Thus, RBV informed the first and second objectives that focused on resource allocation and public accountability (Mahdi & Nassar, 2021).

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership theory advanced by James Macgregor Burns in 1978 focuses on creating positive change within an organization. It emphasizes the importance of caring for the interests of others and working towards the collective goals of the group. According to Manzoor, Wei, Nurunnabi, Subhan, Shah, and Fallatah (2019), transformational leadership aims to enhance morale and performance by aligning employees' self-worth and identity with the organization's collective identity. This can result in increased motivation, engagement, and commitment among employees.

Orabi (2016) argues that Transformational Leadership theory positions leaders as inspirations and role models who foster open communication, encourage participation in decision-making processes and provide space for consultation. By challenging the status quo, transformational leaders empower employees to think creatively and step out of their comfort zones, ultimately fostering innovation and growth (Hu *et al.*, 2018). Transformational Leadership theory emphasizes the importance of leaders in creating a positive and inspiring work environment where individuals are motivated to achieve both personal and organizational goals. It encourages leaders to build relationships, empower their teams, and foster a shared vision that motivates employees to excel (Hu *et al.*, 2018).

Transformational Leadership theory encourages the creation of positive change within an organization by caring for each other's interests and the achievement of group goals. It focuses on boosting morale and aligning individual self-worth with the collective identity of the organization. Transformational leaders inspire, provide space for consultations, and serve as role models. They empower employees, encourage participation in decision-making, motivate towards long-term goals, and foster creativity by challenging the status quo and stepping out of comfort zones. This leadership style aims to bring about significant and impactful transformations in individuals and organizations (Orabi, 2016).

Further, transformational leadership, as defined by Ngcobo-Mthembu (2017), creates a culture within the organization that is characterized by purpose, mutual respect, and a sense of unity like a family. This leadership style has been associated with several positive outcomes in various studies. Ribeiro, Yücel, and Gomes (2018) found that transformational leaders are perceived as sensitive to interpersonal relationships, high performers, and more effective in their leadership roles, which increases their chances of getting promoted. Transformational leadership has also been correlated with positive employee outcomes, such as high levels of production, creativity, employee satisfaction, and lower turnover rates (Sun & Wang, 2017).

Eichelberger (2017) identifies four facets of transformational leadership: idealized influence (charisma), intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized attention. These facets contribute to the overall effectiveness of transformational leaders in inspiring and influencing their followers. Overall, transformational leadership fosters a positive work environment by inspiring and

motivating employees to achieve higher levels of performance. By embodying the desired values and vision of the organization, transformational leaders create a sense of purpose and unity among their followers, leading to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and innovation (Sun & Wang, 2017).

Transformational leadership is characterized by creating a culture of purpose, respect, and unity within an organization, according to Ngcobo-Mthembu (2017). It has been linked to positive outcomes such as higher chances of promotion, increased productivity, creativity, job satisfaction, and lower turnover rates. Transformational leaders are known for their sensitivity to interpersonal relationships and their effectiveness in leading teams (Ngcobo-Mthembu, 2017). Overall, transformational leadership has a significant impact on organizational success and employee well-being. This study adopted the Transformational Leadership theory in exploring the impact of strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in Kenya. In addition, it sought to establish accountability effects, impact of stakeholders' involvement and legal issues arising from strategic leadership practices (Ngcobo-Mthembu, 2017).

2.3.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory that was proposed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1983 sees an organization as an interconnected set of entities that rely on each other to form a multifunctioning system. As Anderson (2016) explains, the theory concerned itself with examining the mutual dependence of various elements of the system, and the actions that managers should take to ensure their efficacy. Moreover, the concept builds on the idea of an organization as a social system and asserts that it should draw on the resources of its environment and contribute to it in return. Lammers and Garcia (2017)

note that part of the theory is focused on the assigning of particular responsibilities to the parts of the system, thereby streamlining productivity of the organization as a whole.

Institutional theory, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of organizations within a broader social and economic system, provides valuable insights into the functioning of devolved administrative structures. The theory highlights the importance of interpersonal behavior and group dynamics in fostering collaboration and integration (Ramosal, 2014). In the context of this study, the application of Institutional theory helps to conceptualize devolved administrative structures as a result of collective strategic leadership practices. These practices are spearheaded by the County Executive and extend to Members of County Assembly, staff, and various stakeholders. By adopting an institutional perspective, the study recognizes the significance of integration and unity among the constituent elements of an organization. This includes promoting effective communication and establishing connections both internally among different levels of the county government and externally with external stakeholders. The goal is to align the efforts of various actors towards the realization of the organization's overarching objectives (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

In examining the effects of resource allocation, public accountability, stakeholders' involvement, and legal issues, the study acknowledges the role of institutional factors in shaping leadership practices within the county governments. Institutional theory provides a lens through which to analyze how the established norms, values, and expectations of the institutional environment influence the decision-making processes, behaviors, and relationships within the devolved structures. By considering the institutional context, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex

dynamics that shape leadership practices in the context of devolved governance (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

The study draws on Institutional theory to investigate the impact of the collective strategic leadership practices within devolved administrative structures of County governments. Institutional theory emphasizes the integration and collaboration of various stakeholders within an organization and their connections to the larger social and economic system (Ramosal, 2014). The study examines the effects of resource allocation, public accountability, stakeholders' involvement, and legal factors on the leadership practices of County governments. By considering the insights of Institutional theory, the study aims to understand how these factors influence the functioning of devolved administrative structures and their ability to achieve organizational goals.

The theory posits that managers should adopt a holistic approach and concentrate on the interdependent functions performed by each component of an organization rather than dealing with them in isolation (Hannagan, 2002). It recognizes that organizations do not exist in isolation but are part of a larger system, such as the societal or economic system in which they operate. The systems approach emphasizes both the interpersonal and collective behavioral aspects that contribute to a cooperative and integrated system (Ramosal, 2014). In this study, Institutional theory serves as a framework to better understand the strategic leadership practices and their implications within the devolved administrative structures in Kenyan counties. These county governments are intricate systems that comprise the County Executive, Members of County Assembly (MCAs), staff, and various stakeholders (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

By applying Institutional theory, the study aims to shed light on how the collective behaviors and interactions within these structures contribute to the overall functioning and effectiveness of the devolved governance system. By examining the interplay of strategic leadership practices and the institutional context, the study seeks to uncover the ways in which the established norms, values, and expectations of the county government system shape the decision-making processes, behaviors, and relationships among the different actors involved. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending the complexities of devolved governance and its impact on service delivery, resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholder engagement (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

The application of Institutional theory helps to illuminate the interdependence and interconnectedness of the various components within the devolved administrative structures. It provides a lens through which to analyze the cooperative system and collective behaviors that influence the functioning and performance of Kenya's county governments (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018). The study adopts a systems approach to analyze the strategic leadership practices and their impact on devolved administrative structures in Kenyan County governments. The systems approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of different components within an organization and their alignment with the larger societal and economic context (Ramosal, 2014). By utilizing Institutional theory, the study aims to gain insights into how strategic leadership practices function within the complex structures of County governments, involving the Executive, MCAs, staff, and various stakeholders. The focus is on understanding the cooperative system and the implications of strategic leadership for

the devolved administrative structures in Kenya (Barasa, Rogo, Mwaura & Chuma, 2018).

2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature and Research Gaps

There is plenty of literature on the subject organizational performances and strategic leadership (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016), but few studies on the effects of strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Kenya. Saboe *et al.* (2015) argued that most of the previous studies on transformational leadership by its dimensions and expectations. Limited researches have focused on strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Kenya. This research aims to bridge the gap by establishing the scope of strategic leadership practices in relation to the devolved administrative structures.

Table 2. 1 Summary of Research Gaps

Author and Year	Title of the study	Research Findings	Research gaps
Prosser et al. (2017)	Citizen participation and changing governance: Cases of devolution in England	Citizen consultation (involvement) had been insufficient to undesirable extent in devolution dealings rolled out in England.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study only focused on citizen participation which this study intends to additionally investigate other stakeholder involvement and evidence of financing for stakeholder involvement exercises. • It used Stakeholder theory while the current study has used Transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Florian and Becirevic (2014)	Requirements for the achievement of decentralization in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.	Financial devolution, legislative processes and framework, HR development and mobilization of public participation were significant towards the success of devolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It did not account for strategic leadership and accountability in the success of Devolution. • No theory while the current study has used Transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory
Bossert et al. (2016)	Decentralization and equity of resource allocation: evidence from Colombia and Chile	Increase in funding increased health service utilization and maintained equitable allocation of health resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This study deviated from equitable sharing of national health resources to local resources allocation practices in devolved units. • The study used Resource Based View Theory while the current study has used Transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Wang, Zhang and Jia (2017)	Personal characteristics of strategic leaders and firm performance	The characteristics were personality, personal experience, cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not focus on collective institutional strategic leadership influence or on

		styles, values and leadership behaviour	<p>a Devolved administrative setup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study used Behavioural theory while the current study used Transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Atienza (2018)	The Municipalities' Experiences in a Devolved Set-Up: Examining the Politics of Health Devolution in the Philippines.	Politics around public health resources, health facilities improvement and construction constraints and lack of personnel were challenges facing local government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrowed only to health sector, which the current study intended to expand to also other sectors under the direct control of devolved government. • The study used Political theory while the current study has used Transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Deshingkar et al. (2015)	Grounding the State: Panchayat Devolution and Development in India	The decentralization of power resulted in wealthier people and classes taking a larger portion of public resources, leaving the less fortunate without enough. Financial supports granted to those of modest means helped to further empower impoverished and at-risk individuals in India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study did not focus on communication and access to information on devolved units which this study investigated. • The study used Resource Based View theory while the current study has used transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Algarni and Male (2014)	Leadership in Saudi Arabian public schools: time for devolution?	The current education system views educational leadership as a single individual's responsibility suggesting maintenance as compared to development and management in contrast to leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study focused on the education system in public ischools, while this study focused on devolved administrative structures. • Further this study investigated the effect of strategic leadership practices on the performance of devolved units while the current study is on strategic

			leadership practices and devolved administrative structures.
Munzhedzi (2017)	The Function of Separation of Powers in Securing Public Accountability in South Africa: Policy Versus Practice	The legislature faces the obstacle of dealing with political seniority while overseeing the executive branch of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study did not focus on County government. This study investigated accountability on citizens not the legislative houses in national and county governments while the current study is on strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures.
Bossert et al. (2016)	Decentralization in Zambia: resource allocation and district performance	Each District was granted autonomy in the allocation and expenditure of internal resources thanks to decentralization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study investigated revenue generation and sharing while this study investigated resource allocation in counties. • The study used Resource Based View theory while the current study has used transformational leadership theory and Institutional theory.
Ofori and Atiogbe (2014)	Strategic planning in public universities: a developing country perspective.	The target population was the public universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It only focused on strategic planning, overshadowing strategic leadership accountability while the current study is on strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures.
Ravazi et al. (2019)	Who is in and who is out? An examination of stakeholder engagement in determining health priorities in three districts in Uganda	Vulnerable groups were never involved in stakeholder participation. Conflicting priorities, values and interest were among the main challenges facing stakeholder involvement in local priority setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study focused on one sector. This study expanded the scope of the sectors; the current study is on strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures.
Forrer et al. (2014)	Public-Private Partnerships and the	Performance measures are essential in assisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study did not investigate devolved units.

	Public Accountability Question	managers assess, engage and improve organizational performance.	
Odero, Egesa and Oseno (2019)	Legal variables the association between strategic leadership practices and the success of deposit-taking SACCOs in Kenya.	Legal factors were moderator with effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study focused on financial institution but not devolved units which this study investigated.
Opano, Shisia, Sang and Josee (2015)	Strategic planning and implementation practices at the Kisii County Government.	Participation of stakeholders and financial resources were the primary factors of the strategic plans' execution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of strategic leadership was not covered. Only covered Kisii County, which this study expanded to two counties in Eastern and Coast regions.
Masungu et al. (2015)	Impact of strategic leadership on the success of Kakamega County's decentralized government system	Strategic leadership in devolved government improves the level of performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only focused on Kakamega County, the current study opened two other Counties; Taita Taveta and Makueni.
Ndunge (2014)	Strategic leadership and change management at the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)	Identified staff re-training, strategy formulation, branding of parks and reserves and culture change as change programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KWS setup is completely different from County government setup, hence not directly reflecting a solution to the county operations.

Source: Researcher (2022)

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

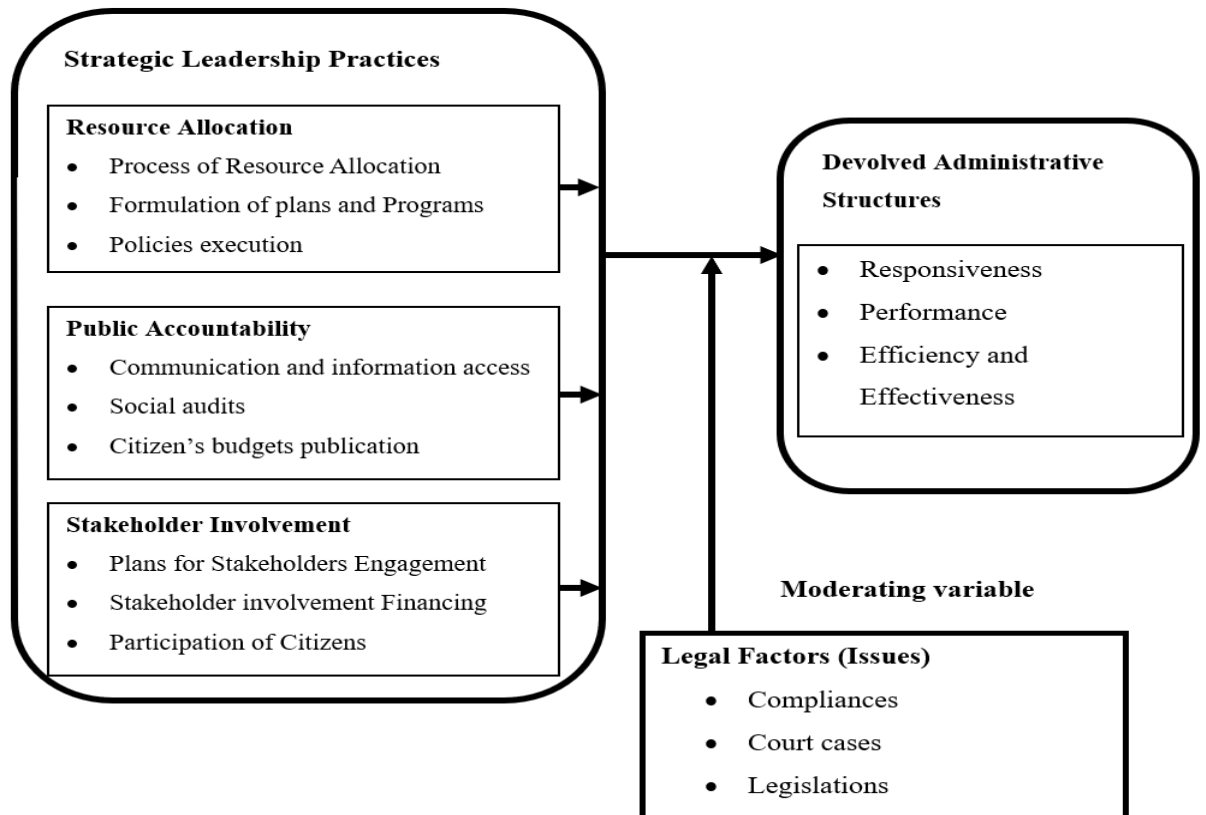


Figure 2.1 - Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2022)

As observed both in empirical and theoretical review, the conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 shows clear connection amongst the study variables. It portrays that Strategic Leadership practices remained hypothesized towards the independent variables which comprised Resources Allocation practices, Public Accountability Practices and Stakeholders involvement practices while the moderating variable was the legal factors in addition to dependent variable which was the devolved administrative structures. While several studies had investigated the link between the strategic leadership and the organizational performances (Asencio & Mujkic, 2016),

there have been very few studies that had focused on the strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in semi-arid counties. Previous studies on transformational leadership, as pointed out by Saboe *et al.* (2015), have focused more on the concept as a whole than on aspects that brings the leadership. The goal of this study was to bridge that gap by establishing the four-fold roles that strategic leadership practices play in devolved administrative structures.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the study's guiding philosophy and methodology used and also includes the units of analysis, target population, sampling techniques and mechanisms, the sample size that was used, data collecting tools, pilot research, and validity and reliability of instruments. In addition, the chapter examines the technique for data collection, data analysis, diagnostic testing and ethical issues.

3.2 Research philosophy

The study adopted pragmatism research philosophy, which emphasizes the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods as well as analytical approaches that are deemed appropriate for social research. This choice aligns with the view of Morgan (2014) that pragmatism supports a pluralistic approach to research, taking into account historical, political, and social contexts that form the basis of inquiry.

Pragmatism as a research philosophy recognizes the importance of practical consequences and common sense in assessing actions and their implications. It acknowledges the need to consider real-world outcomes and practical implications of research findings. This is in line with the perspective put forward by Kaushik and Walsh (2019) that pragmatism takes into account the practical aspects of research and the contextual factors that shape the research process. By adopting pragmatism research philosophy, the study aimed to integrate different research methods and perspectives to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Rahi, 2017).

This approach allowed for flexibility in selecting appropriate data collection methods, analytical techniques, and interpretation of findings, taking into consideration the

practical implications and real-world context of the research topic. By adopting a pragmatic stance, the study aimed to produce relevant and applicable insights that could inform decision-making and practice in the field of devolved administrative structures.

This type of philosophy challenges the implicit notion that our practices are obviously inadequate and therefore requiring a backup from a given principle that is way beyond them (Rescher, 2016). The study embraced this type of research to collect data that reflected the reality of the phenomenon under study, since locally it has been used by different scholars, among them Akanga (2014) and Juma (2018). Also, pragmatism allows for the adoption of both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods (Mixed-methods).

3.3 Research Design

This study used a descriptive research design. The design 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 objective of descriptive study design is to determine who, what, where, when, and how much. The design aimed to answer questions pertaining to what, where, and when the phenomenon was taking place. It was deemed fit to employ a mixed-methods approach to research, involving both qualitative and quantitative analysis. This was done in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the context and build an accurate profile of relevant factors, events, and circumstances (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Morgan (2014) stated that such a mixed-methods approach is believed to be essential for valid social research.

3.4 Variables (Units of Analysis)

The focus of this study was on the strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in two Semi-Arid Counties in Kenya. The individuals under investigation included Governors, Deputy Governors, County Assembly speakers, Assembly members, County Executive Committee members, chief officers, County Public Service Board members, Directors/Managers, Sub County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Village Administrators, all of whom were drawn from the two semi-arid Counties.

3.5 Location of the Study

The research takes place in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, situated in the Coast and Eastern regions respectively. Taita Taveta County, which is part of the former Coast Province, serves as the study site and spans approximately 17,083.9 square kilometers (as shown in appendix VII) within the Coastal region. Makueni County, on the other hand, is located in the Eastern region, formerly known as the Eastern Province, and covers an approximate area of 8,008.9 square kilometers (as presented in appendix VIII).

3.6 Target population

Table 3.1 Target Population for Selected Semi-Arid Counties in Kenya (Taita Taveta and Makueni)

Designation	Total opulation
Governor	2
Deputy Governor	2
Speaker of County Assembly	2
Member of County Assembly	83
County Executive Committee Members	17
Chief Officers	22
Clerk of County Assembly	2
County Service Board Members	13
Directors' and Managers	140
Sub County Administrators	10
Ward Administrators	65
Village Administrators	142
Total	500

Source: Researcher (2022)

The population surveyed was specifically drawn from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, with the top leadership from those two county governments being purposefully chosen to represent all 45 county governments, as seen in Table 3.1.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.7.1 Sampling Techniques

A total of 223 top-level officials from the two semi-arid counties were surveyed for this study, drawn both purposefully and randomly from the target population of 500. The respondents included the Governor, Deputy Governors, Speakers of County Assembly, Members of County Assemblies, County Executive Committee members, chief officers, County Public Service Board members, Directors/Managers, Sub County

administrators, Ward administrators, and the village administrators. Purposive and systematic random sampling techniques were used for selecting respondents for the survey. The highest-ranking people that needed to be included were the Governors, Deputy Governors, Speakers of County Assemblies, and Clerks of Assemblies. These were chosen using the Purposive Sampling method. Systematic random sampling was used for the selection of Members of County Assemblies, County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers, etc. who held leadership roles in the Taita Taveta and Makueni County governments.

3.7.2 Sample size

Table 3.2 Sample Respondents Distribution for Selected Semi-Arid Counties in Kenya (Taita Taveta and Makueni).

Leadership Position	Population	Sample Respondents $n = N/(1 + N(e^{-2}))$
Strategic Level		
Governor	2	1
Deputy Governor	2	1
Speaker of County Assembly	2	1
Member of County Assembly	83	37
County Executive Committee Members	17	8
Chief Officers	22	10
Clerk of County Assembly	2	1
Functional Level		
County Service Board Members	13	5
Directors' and Managers	140	62
Operational Level		
Sub-County Administrators	10	5
Ward Administrators	65	29
Village Administrators	142	63
Total	500	223

Source: Researcher (2022)

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

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

Whereby;

n - Sample size,

e —Equals to 0.05, the margin of error allowed and

N - Size of the population.

The study's sample size was;

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

Additionally, Table 3.2 was generated by employing Cochran's (1977) formula, which allows for proportional allocation of the sampled respondents. This formula ensured that it accurately represents the sample being studied. By employing Cochran's formula, the study accounted for the variability within the target sample and obtained reliable data for analysis. The formula is presented as follows:

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

Where;

n_i Sampled respondents in stratum i ,

n Actual sample size,

N Target population and,

N_i The population in stratum i .

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

In this research, the researcher employed a Likert Scale as a measurement tool for questionnaires, along with interview schedules to collect primary data. To complement the primary data, secondary data was sourced from various documented materials such as books, reports, and other published sources. To gather primary data, the researcher

distributed research instruments to individuals selected from the population. These research instruments included questionnaires using a Likert Scale, which allowed respondents to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements on a pre-determined scale. This approach provided a quantifiable measure of respondents' attitudes, opinions, or perceptions.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted key informant interviews using a structured interview format. The structured interviews consisted of both open-ended and closed questions. The closed-ended questions were specifically designed to assess and rate different qualities or attributes, thereby streamlining responses and ensuring more precise information. On the other hand, the open-ended questions allowed participants to provide additional information beyond the structured questions, enabling the researcher to gain insights and perspectives that might not have been captured through the closed-ended format alone. By incorporating both closed-ended and open-ended questions, the researcher was able to gather comprehensive data that encompassed both quantitative ratings and qualitative insights. This multi-method approach enhanced the richness and depth of the data collected, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the research topic.

3.9 Pilot Study

In the initial phase of the research, Kajiado County was strategically selected as a valuable resource for gaining insights into potential challenges that could arise during actual data collection. This phase aimed to assess the cost of data collection and estimate the approximate time required for the entire data-gathering process. By conducting this research in Kajiado County, valuable information was gathered, shedding light on critical aspects of the study. One of the primary objectives of this

research was to understand how participants would comprehend and engage with the items presented in the research tool. Additionally, it aimed to determine the time needed for participants to satisfactorily complete the questionnaire and assess the overall efficiency of the instrument during field work.

To achieve this, a selected sample of 20 individuals was drawn from the same organisation through systematic random sampling. Each participant was assigned a unique label or identifier to ensure that there was no duplication of responses within the survey. The outcomes of this phase revealed that the administered questionnaires were perceived as overly complex by the participants, leading to difficulties in providing accurate and timely responses. As a result, it became evident that a revision of the questionnaire was necessary to ensure that participants could effectively understand and respond to the survey items. This crucial feedback from the initial phase of the research allowed for adjustments to be made to the questionnaire design, enabling participants to provide more adequate and punctual responses in subsequent data collection efforts. By addressing these issues, the research process was refined, enhancing the quality and reliability of the data gathered for analysis.

In summary, the first phase of the research utilized Kajiado County as a valuable resource to gain insights into potential challenges in real data collection, the associated costs, and the estimated time required for the entire data-gathering process. This phase was crucial for understanding participants' comprehension of the research tool, the time taken to complete the questionnaire, and assessing the instrument's efficiency during fieldwork. A group of 20 individuals from the same organization participated in the study, ensuring unique labelling to avoid duplication in the survey. The findings

revealed that the complexity of the administered questionnaires posed difficulties for participants, highlighting the need for revision to enable them to respond adequately and punctually.

3.9.1 Validity

Ensuring that the research instrument accurately aligns with the study objectives and encompasses the relevant constructs under investigation was crucial for maintaining the validity of the research. In order to achieve this, seeking input from the researcher's supervisor and subject matter experts in the field becomes invaluable. These individuals possessed the expertise and knowledge to critically evaluate the research tool and provide valuable feedback. Following the pilot study, where a small-scale version of the research is conducted, adjustments to the research tool were necessary. This interactive process allowed researchers to identify areas where improvements were needed, ensuring the instrument remained relevant to the research topic and minimized the possibility of ambiguous responses.

By carefully analyzing the pilot study results and incorporating the feedback received, the researcher refined the research instrument to enhance its validity and reliability. If, during the evaluation process, it was determined that the instrument failed to accurately reflect the study objectives or adequately define key terms, it was crucial to rework and refine it before it was used in the actual study. This iterative refinement process involved revising the wording of questions, modifying response options, and adding clarifying instructions to ensure the instrument was accurate and effectively captured the intended information. By considering the feedback provided by experts and conducting a thorough pilot study, the researcher fine-tuned the research instrument to

align with the study objectives, cover the necessary constructs, and accurately measure the variables of interest.

This rigorous approach helped to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, ultimately contributing to the overall quality and integrity of the research findings. As such, the validity of a study required the research instrument to accurately reflect the study objectives and encompass the relevant constructs. To achieve this, the assistance of the researcher's supervisor and field experts was sought to evaluate the research tool, after which necessary adjustments were made to the instrument to ensure it was relevant to the topic and prevent ambiguity in responses. If the instrument failed to accurately align with the study objectives or terms, it underwent revisions to ensure accuracy before its actual use.

3.9.2 Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha, was employed to assess the internal consistency of responses obtained from questionnaires and interviews. This analysis aimed to evaluate the reliability and quality of the data generated by these instruments. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or higher is widely acknowledged as an acceptable threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability. This viewpoint is supported by esteemed researchers, such as Field (2017) and Cooper and Schindler (2014). On the other hand, if the calculated Cronbach's Alpha value fell below 0.7, it would indicate potential issues with the instrument's reliability. In such cases, additional questions, modifications, or repetitions within the questionnaire would be addressed and rectified to improve the instrument's internal consistency and enhance the overall quality of data collected. This would be the point at which any extra questions, alterations, or repeats in the questions would be fixed.

Table 3.3 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Items(N)	Alpha	Comments on Results
Resource Allocation Practices	8	0.7881	Acceptable Reliability
Public Accountability Practices	6	0.7291	Acceptable Reliability
Stakeholders Involvement Practices	6	0.8158	Acceptable Reliability
Legal Factors	5	0.8034	Acceptable Reliability
Devolved Administrative Structures	10	0.8179	Acceptable Reliability

Source: Research Data (2022)

Cronbach's Alpha was generated for each of the study constructs as illustrated on Table 3.3. Cronbach's Alpha values indicated the extent to which all items measure the same construct, that is, if there is evidence of internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha index scale ranges from 0 to 1, with the acceptable range being above 0.7. As shown in Table 3.3, the Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess the internal consistency of responses obtained from questionnaires and interviews. This analysis aimed to evaluate the reliability and quality of the data generated by these instruments.

A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or higher is widely acknowledged as an acceptable threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability. This viewpoint is supported by esteemed researchers, such as Field (2017) and Cooper and Schindler (2014). On the other hand, if the calculated Cronbach's Alpha value fell below 0.7, it would indicate potential issues with the instrument's reliability. In such cases, additional questions, modifications, or repetitions within the questionnaire would be addressed and rectified to improve the instrument's internal consistency and enhance the overall quality of data

collected. This would be the point at which any extra questions, alterations, or repeats in the questions would be fixed.

In Table 3.3 above, the Cronbach's Alpha values for Resource Allocation Practices, Public Accountability Practices, Stakeholders Involvement, Legal factors and Administrative Structures constructs were 0.7881, 0.7291, 0.8158, 0.8034 and 0.8179 respectively, being evidence that they were within the acceptable range to back adequacy and reliability of data collected, data that could produce reliable information upon further analysis. Trustworthiness of research apparatus was tested by the use of the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The summation of outcome (results) from the research is tabulated as reflected on Table 3.3.

3.10 Data Collection Techniques

Data was gathered using questionnaires and interview schedules, and the data collected were restricted purely to demographic information of the respondents as was earlier indicated and the research objectives. In obtaining the data, approval of the study was issued to the researcher by Kenyatta University Graduate School and then authorization research permit from Kenyatta University. The researcher then sought licence from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for purposes of being safe in carrying out data collection. The researcher then visited the Counties to facilitate the process of data collection by booking appointments where necessary and securing the respondents' consent to administer the research instruments. The questionnaires were distributed by a method that allowed participants to drop them off or pick them up, granting them a month to complete them. Individuals selected to be interviewed had face-to-face conversations while those

chosen to complete questionnaires had the option to take them away and submit them later in order to provide adequate time to fill them out.

3.11 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, then it's later analysed in the STATA. The analysis of quantitative data had involved both the descriptive and inferential statistics. Under this descriptive statistics of the research study, the analysis involved measures of central tendency which are frequency and means, measures of dispersion which are standard deviation and the measures of association which are 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, assessing the magnitude and nature of the relationship, whether it be direct or inverse. This allowed for the individual effects of each independent variable on the performance of devolved administrative structures (Zhang, 2017). The model's significance and the proportion of variation in the response variable was then calculated through goodness of fit statistics (R-squared statistics). Additionally, the composite index of the variables was worked out through the harmonic mean formula (Wilson, 2019).

$$C_i = \sum f_i w_i + \sum f_i$$

Where,

C = Represents the Composite Index.

f = Represents the total respondents

w_i = Represents the Relative Weight for each particular variable.

i = Represents the total components.

As was recommended by Field (2027), when checking for relationships between predictor response variables, normality, linearity, multicollinearity and heteroscedacity should be used in carrying out the testing, which was done in this study. In regards to qualitative data analysis, thematic analysis and direct quotes (participants' voices) were adopted.

3.11.1 Regression Tests (Diagnostic)

In order to establish the assumptions necessary for developing regression models using the ordinary least squares method, various tests were conducted to assess normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. These tests are detailed in Section 4.5 of Chapter Four, where the study variables are described alongside the respective tests they underwent. The normality test was employed to examine whether the distribution of the variables followed a normal or Gaussian distribution. This assumption is crucial as it allows for accurate estimation of the regression coefficients and proper inference. The linearity test assessed the linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, ensuring that the relationships are adequately captured by the linear regression model.

Multicollinearity, a condition where independent variables are highly correlated, was examined to prevent issues such as inflated standard errors and unstable coefficient estimates. This test aimed to identify any problematic correlations among the independent variables that could affect the reliability and interpretability of the

regression results. Heteroscedasticity, which refers to the unequal variance of residuals across different levels of the independent variables, was also examined. Detecting and addressing heteroscedasticity is essential to ensure the reliability of the model's assumptions and the validity of statistical inferences.

Section 4.5 of Chapter Four provides a comprehensive account of the specific tests conducted to evaluate these assumptions. By subjecting the study variables to these tests, the research aimed to validate the appropriateness of the ordinary least squares method and ensure the reliability and validity of the regression models developed.

a) Normality Test

This test checks whether the data to be analysed follows a normal distribution. The tests are whether the distribution is non-skewed and non-kurtic, that is, its skewness and kurtosis values range between -0.1 and +0.1 respectively (Das & Imon, 2016). In addition, Shapiro Wilk test for normality was conducted. The null hypothesis under Shapiro-Wilk test is that data is normally distributed, while the alternative hypothesis is that data does not follow a normal distribution. These tests are crucial because in modelling, assumptions are taken and therefore the assumption here is that data follows a normal distribution (Field, 2017).

b) Linearity Test

Wooldridge (2000) recommended Pearson's Correlation Coefficient as the test for linearity. Linearity implies that the explanatory variables give a linear relationship amongst themselves with respect to the dependent variable. It also provides the direction and strength of that linear relationship. A positive Pearson's correlation value shows a direct relationship, whereas a negative Pearson's correlation value indicates an inverse relationship. Direct relationship implies that an increase in the explanatory variables' value (s) leads to a corresponding increase in the dependent variable's value.

On the other hand, for an inverse relationship, an increase in the explanatory variables' value (s), there will be a proportional decrease in the dependent variable's value (Field, 2017).

c) Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity implies that explanatory variables are correlated. Thompson, Kim and Becker (2017) outlined that in testing for multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) that is above 10 and tolerance of below 0.1 indicates the presence of multicollinearity (Hair, 2010). For this study, multicollinearity informed whether the link between the predictor and response variable is purely a cause-effect relationship or there is intrinsic collinearity between the independent variables.

d) Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity presence in data implies that there is unequal scatter, which is obtained from the residuals (error term). This test utilizes Breusch-Pagan test where the null hypothesis was that the residuals have constant variance (Cattaneo, Jansson & Newey, 2018). The assumption is that, the scatter is equal or constant error term (homoscedasticity) which is indicated by the p-value that is greater than 0.05 (Warner, 2008). The influence of the explanatory variables was also determined to be either significant or not. Then the Stata Version 11.0 was used to conduct Breusch-Pagan test, and thereafter Tables were also used in summarizing, organizing and presenting the data that was collected and analysed. The findings and discussions are presented in Chapter four.

3.12 Empirical Model

Field (2017) reported that there are several models which can be used to analyze quantitative data, such as Probit, Logit and Regression models (Njoroge, Muathe & Bulla, 2015). In this research, multiple linear regression analysis was used to probe the

impact of the dependent variables on the independent one (s) as can be seen from the models below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{11}Ra + \beta_{12}Pac + \beta_{13}Sin + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots$$

Equation 3.1

Where,

Y = Devolved Administrative Structures

β₀ to β₃ = Constants

β₁₁ to β₁₃ = Regression coefficients (The Slope)

Ra = Resource allocation practices

Pac = Public accountability practices

Sin = Stakeholder involvement practices

ε = Error Term

3.12.1 Relationship between regressor variables and moderating variable on Devolved administrative structures

To determine the effect of Legal Factors as the moderating variable on the relationship between Strategic Leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures or establish whether it is simply an explanatory variable. First, Model (3.2) provided the baseline model for checking the association between the independent variable effects on the dependent variable. Secondly, Model (3.3) has Legal Factors as the moderating variable as reflected in Equation 3.3.

$$\text{Devolved administrative structures} = \beta_0 + \beta_1Slp + \beta_4Lf + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots$$

Equation 3.2

Where,

Slp = Strategic Leadership Practices

Lf = Legal factors

Model (3.2) indicated the magnitude and directional effect of Legal Factors and Strategic Leadership Practices and its cumulative effects on the Devolved Administrative Structures.

$$\text{Devolved administrative structures} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Slp} + \beta_2 \text{Lf} + \beta_3 \text{Lf. Slp} + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots$$

Equation 3.3

Where;

Lf. Slp= is the interaction between Legal Factors and Strategic Leadership Practices.

Finally, Model (3.3) indicated the magnitude and directional effect of Legal Factors, Strategic Leadership Practices and the interaction term (legal factors and strategic leadership practices) on Devolved Administrative Structures. If Legal Factors is significant after being introduced into Model (3.3), then it explains the initial condition of a saturated model (Mackinnon *et al.*, 2015; Njoroge, 2020). Model (3.4) estimated the effect of interaction between Legal Factors and Strategic Leadership Practices, hence estimating the moderating effects. Additionally, another method of assessing moderation would be an observable increment in R^2 from Step One to Step Two due to the introduction of the interaction term (Mackinnon *et al.*, 2015).

When the coefficient in Model (3.3) will not be significant while the Legal factors in model (3.4) will not be significant, then there will be evidence of none moderating effect (Mackinnon *et al.*, 2015). In that way, Legal Factors will just be an independent variable. To determine whether Legal Factors moderated the predictor variables and the response variable, then two models will have to be used to give estimation as recommended by Baron and Kenny in 1986 (Aguinis, Edward & Bradley, 2017). Model 3.2 was used as the base model to determine the estimated link between the independent

variable (Strategic Leadership Practices) and dependent variable (Devolved Administrative Structures).

3.13 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The following considerations and measures in relation to the study were made before proceeding to the field. Each and every response from the respondents was treated with uttermost confidentiality. This was geared towards safeguarding the rights of the respondents and also in insulating study participants from any harm, intimidation or victimization and to protect the rights of research participants, this study guaranteed that the research process and outputs/results were going to be secret, anonymous and that unrequested informed consents were obtained. Before conducting this study in the field, the researcher got consent and introduction letters from the Graduate School and the research license from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the research analysed according to the objectives, in which both the quantitative and qualitative analysis were presented as found. The found results were presented in form of tables and figures. The chapter covers the following: Response rate, Demographic characteristics, Correlation analysis, hypothesis testing and eventually multiple linear regression.

4.2 Response Rate

The research surveyed 500 people in top leadership positions from Taita Taveta County (Coastal region) and Makueni County (Eastern region). The top tier of leaders from each County Government was chosen purposefully, including the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker and County Assembly Members, County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers, and Clerk of Assembly, County Service Board Members, Direct and Managers, Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Village Administrators. The response rate is shown on Table 4.1.

Table 4. 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: Research Data (2022)

The sample in this study comprised 500 top leaders from Taita Taveta County in the Coastal region and Makueni County in the Eastern region. These individuals were

purposely selected and were drawn from the administrative and political levels of county government, meaning strategic, functional, and operational levels. Specifically, the top leadership at the strategic level included the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the County Assembly, Members of the County Assembly, County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers, and Clerk of the County Assembly. Those at the functional level were the County Service Board Members, Directors, and Managers. The operational level comprised Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Village Administrators (Table 4.1). An impressive response rate was obtained.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics

Table 4.2 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics.

Table 4. 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 (2022)

In terms of gender, majority (67%) of the respondents were male, while 33% of the participants were female out of all the participants. This is because men are the majority of the employees in the two county governments, reflecting a familiar gender disparity

at the workplace. More than half (59%) of the participants had attained a Bachelor's degree, 26% had attained a Certificate or Diploma level, whereas 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 difficult in accessing higher education since independence. When it comes to 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.

4.4 Descriptive Statistics

To understand Resource Allocation Practices, Public Accountability Practices, Stakeholders Involvement, Legal Factors and Administrative Structures constructs, this study evaluated the participants' level of agreement with the postulated statements on Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5 and in sections 4.3.1.1, 4.3.1.2, 4.3.1.3 of Table 4.3.

4.4.1 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 supposed 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), 5 (to a very large extent) which resources allocation practices were used.

Resource Allocation Practices

Resource Allocation Practices		Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
B1	To what extent does the county government cruited human resources?	0	6	32	54	8	3.64	.716
B2	County government strategies are used to tap potential resources 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, 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 develoed specific action plans guided by well established	3	15	31.5	32.5	18	3.475	1.046

	procedures on allocating resources strategically.							
Aggregate value for County Government's Resources Allocation Practices							3.29	.366

Source: Research Data (2022)

As shown on Table 4.3, more than half (54%) of the respondents indicated that county government strategy applied recruiting human resource to a large extent, whereas 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 to a very large extent and to a small extent respectively. The mean of 3.64 and the shown standard deviation of 0.716 imply that, respondents were generally of the opinion that the county government strategy, applied recruiting human resource to a large extent. The above findings differed from those of Tsofa (2017) concerning political interference and discrimination during the award of contracts or recruitment of staff in county government.

The majority of respondents (65.5%) reported that County government strategies are highly effective in tapping potential from county personnel to realize intended outcomes, 25% of the participants indicated that they were moderately effective, 8% deemed them to be extremely effective, while only 1.5% viewed them as minimally effective. The overall mean of 3.8 and standard deviation of 0.593 shows that generally, the participants were in agreement that County government strategies were highly effective in leveraging potential from county personnel in order to achieve desired results.

The majority of respondents (68%) reported that the County Government had developed adequate processes through the implementation of plans to significantly support change, 20.5% of the participants thought that these processes were moderate, 10% of the respondents regarded the processes to be too long, while 1% thought the processes were small. The mean of 3.88 and the standard deviation of 0.581 suggest that overall, respondents perceived the County Government's processes to be effective in promoting change. Further, majority of the respondents (46.5%) were of the view that leaders in the County Government generally allocated resources strategically to stakeholders to a moderate extent, 22% believed that the allocation was done to a small extent, 12% believed it was done to a large extent, 10.5% to no extent, while 9% believed that leaders allocated resources to a very large extent. The survey results suggest that the average opinion is that resources will be strategically allocated to stakeholders to a moderate extent. The results of the study are in agreement with the research conducted by Bossert *et al.* (2016), which showed that augmenting the funding for health services yielded a corresponding increase in utilization of these services.

Furthermore, devolution was shown to permit equitable distribution of medical resources over regions that differ in their levels of income. 37.5% of the participants surveyed in the study stated that the vision of the County Government had a moderate effect on the development of strategic planning processes, and that resources were allocated accordingly. 26.5% of the participants indicated that the vision of the County Governments directly influences the development of the strategic planning processes, with a small extent of allocated resources. 15.5%, 14.5% and 6% of the respondents indicated that the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning processes, with a bearing in which

interphases to the 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 suggest that respondents largely felt that the vision of the County Government had a moderate impact on the strategic planning process and the use of resources.

The results of this study suggest that while resources may be available to counties, there are still many challenges when it comes to mobilizing and utilizing them. According to the survey, 37.5% of participants reported County Government plans have to a moderate extent been used to generate various outcomes from allocated resources. Another 30.5% indicated that the plans have been used to a small extent, and 13%, 12%, and 7% to no extent, to a large extent, and to a very large extent, respectively. Responses to the assertion that plans have been used to generate outcomes to a moderate extent resulted in a mean of 2.695 and standard deviation of 1.067. This agrees with the findings of Moindi (2014) that counties face numerous challenges when mobilizing and utilizing allocated resources.

Contrasting the findings of Ngigi and Busolo (2019) that a lack of sufficient resource allocation was the primary hindrance to institutionalized devolved governance strategies by County Governments in Kenya, this study investigated the extent to which the leaders of County Governments have actualized specific action plans guided by well established procedures for the strategic allocation of resources. 32.5%, 31.5%, 18%, 15%, and 3% of the participants responded that action plans were in place to a large, moderate, very large, small, and no extent, respectively. The overall sentiment expressed by respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties is that the county

governments have taken steps to strategically allocate resources, though not to a very high degree. This view is represented in the aggregate value of 3.29, with a standard deviation of 0.366, which is in line with the mean value of 3.475 and standard deviation of 1.46.

b. Public Accountability Practices

Survey participants were asked to assess the extent to which public accountability measures were executed in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties when evaluating public accountability practices. Respondents were expected to:

1 (Strongly Agree), 2(Agree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Disagree) with public accountability practices carried out.

Table 4.3 Public Accountability Practices

Public (Leadership) Accountability Practices	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
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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: Research Data (2022)

Table 4.4 shows that over half of the participants (56%) believe that the strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner, 23% of the participants were indifferent, 8.5% strongly agreed, while 8.5% disagreed with the assertion.

At the same time, 4% of the survey respondents stated that the government's strategies were not conveyed to stakeholders and teams in a timely manner. The average score of 2.435 and standard deviation of 0.911 reveals that the majority of respondents were in agreement that the strategies were communicated in an appropriate manner. This conclusion corroborates the argument of Said, Alam, and Aziz (2015) that improved public services are a result of increasing accountability within the public sector. These findings are in support of Schillemans' (2016) view that governments should concentrate on accountability to strengthen and enhance the performance of public entities.

Majority (66.5%) of the survey respondents indicated that information is continuously circulating among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members, 20% had a neutral opinion on this matter, 7% agreed with the assertion, while 6% strongly agreed with it. Only a small fraction (0.5%) expressed disagreement with the postulated statement. The overall mean (2.295) and standard deviation (0.707) shows that respondents mainly concurred that information circulates among those parties. The majority of the respondents (60.5%) were of the view that County leadership is prompt in validating responses given by county government employees, 27.5% remained neutral, 5.5% disagreed with this statement, while 5% were strongly in agreement with it. Notably, only 1.5% strongly disagreed with this assertion. The mean score of 2.38 and standard deviation of 0.734 suggest that respondents were generally confident about the County leadership's ability to validate responses in a timely manner.

The results of the survey indicate that a large majority (66%) of the respondents agreed that county leadership had increased transparency, trust, and honesty through regular communication to the public, 18% had no opinion, 10% strongly agreed, 5.5% disagreed, while only 0.5% strongly disagreed. The mean of 2.2 and standard deviation of 0.7 show that most respondents believed transparency, trust, and honesty were fostered by county leadership. This corroborates the findings of Van Genstel and Van Lochem (2020) that accountability requires the principles of transparency, responsiveness, and participation.

The survey results show that the majority of the respondents 59% disagreed with the statement that networking with other counties' stakeholders was being promoted by County leadership as part of a public information dissemination process, 27% of the respondents were neutral, 8.5% strongly agreed, 4% agreed, while 1.5% strongly disagreed. The average rating of 3.41, and the standard deviation of 0.931 indicate that generally, respondents were neutral when it came to the performance of the County leadership in this regard. Most of the respondents (61.5%) were in agreement that communication between organizational leaders helped create team commitment which eventually benefited citizens, 8.5% of the participants strongly agreed with this assertion, 24.5% were indifferent and 3.5% disagreed with it. The mean of 2.29 and standard deviation of 0.754 indicates that the respondents were generally in agreement with the view that communication between leaders facilitated team commitment with beneficial outcomes for the citizens.

The research findings revealed that the citizens in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties had a neutral view concerning the way public accountability was practised in both counties. This is evident from the mean of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.293 and it

contrasts Deshingkar *et al.*'s (2015) conclusion that devolution put the local leaders in the advantaged position of grabbing a large portion of the public resources at the expense of the poor.

c. Stakeholder Involvement Practices

Respondents were required to show the extent to which stakeholder’s involvement 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) as they give their view of how stakeholder involvement practices were carried out.

Table 4. 4 Stakeholder’s Involvement Practices

Stakeholder Involvement Practices	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
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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: Research Data (2022)

As shown in Table 4.5, more than half (64%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that there were timely communication from the top leadership and stakeholders involved. 29.5% of the respondents were in agreement that there was timely communication of leadership practices and strategies to local

citizens that involved the stakeholders. 4.5% of the respondents disagreed that there was timely communication in public leadership practices and the stakeholders involvement. In addition, 2% of the respondents strongly agreed that there was timely communication by the leadership as part of the practices and the strategies to local citizens that involved them as the stakeholders during the time of decision making. The mean of 2.71 and standard deviation of 0.581 showed that the respondents were generally neutral, that there was timely communication of top leadership which brought public accountability and strategies to local citizens and stakeholders involved. 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.

Concerning information flow from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders, majority (67%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that there exists a continuous information flow from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders. 25.5% of the respondents agreed that there exists a perpetual information flow from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders, but 6.5% of the respondents held a contrary view. The mean of 2.79 and standard deviation of 0.563 imply that respondents were generally neutral in responding to the assertion that there exists a continuous flow of information right from the top leadership, to county government employees and other stakeholders.

With regard to the timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, majority (73%) of the respondents were neither agreed nor disagreed with the view that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, especially from different administrative teams to the public. 22.5% of the respondents agreed that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, especially from different administrative teams to the public. However, 4.5% of the respondents disagreed that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, especially from different administrative teams to the public. The mean of 2.82 and standard deviation of 0.489 imply that respondents were generally neutral when it came to the assertion that there is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership, especially from different administrative teams to the public.

Findings show that 47.5% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. 33.5% of the participants were of the view that leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. But 9% and 6.5% of the respondents were disagreed with the view that leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement. The mean of 2.815 and standard deviation of 0.891 show that respondents were generally neutral concerning the assertion that leaders in the County Government strategically allocated resources for stakeholder involvement.

The research results support Jooste and Hamani's (2017) view that leader-driven strategic resource allocation, commitment to ethical practices, establishment of organizational goals, and implementation of protocols and smart use of resources to cultivate a healthier corporate culture all positively affect the performance of a business.

As for transparency, trust and honesty concerning communication between county leadership and the public, 47% of participants did not express a particular opinion, 31.5% believed it had been improved, and 2.5% agreed.

The results of the survey suggested that roughly 8.5% and 10.5% of the respondents did not consider transparency, trust and honesty between the county leadership and the public to be enhanced. The mean of 2.93 and standard deviation of 0.959 indicated that respondents generally felt neutral about this subject. These findings are in line with Opano, Shisia, Sang and Josee (2015) results which showed that key determinants to the implementation of development strategic plans in county governments were financial resources and the involvement of stakeholders. Moreover, regarding enhanced communication and team commitment, majority (62%) of the respondents agreed with the assertion that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to foster a sense of unity among the team, which ultimately benefits the locals. Also, 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to foster a sense of unity among the team, which ultimately benefits the locals.

However, 4% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the assertion that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to foster a sense of unity among the team, which ultimately benefits the locals. The mean of 1.7 and standard deviation of 0.539 shows that respondents generally agreed with the view that enhanced communication enabled organizational leaders to foster a sense of unity among the team, thus benefitting the locals. The findings above corroborate the view of Serfontein, Kruger and Drevin (2019) that firm performance was a function of communication, processes, autonomy, knowledge, organizational performance values on self-reporting,

adaptive leadership and systems. The mean score of 2.628 and the standard deviation of 0.271 indicate that there was generally a neutral response from participants from both Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties with respect to stakeholder involvement practices in the two regions.

4.4.1 Legal Factors

Respondents were required to indicate legal factors in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. They were expected to choose from 1(Strongly Agree), 2(Agree), 3(Neutral), 4(Disagree) and 5(Strongly disagree) to indicate their view of legal factors' impact.

Table 4. 5 Legal factors

Legal factors	Strongly Agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly Disagree (5)	Mean	STD
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F1	The County leadership has special considerations from the constitution in its daily administrative operations to local citizens and stakeholders involved, which the courts are sometimes invited to make advisory opinions.	34	56.5	9.5	0	0	1.76	.614
F2	The County Government administration has been subjected to litigation in the Court of law for compliance (court cases)	13.5	41	30	15.5	0	2.48	.913
F3	The National Government Administration is involved when the Devolved administration is formulating its policies or legislations.	10.5	34	36	19.5	0	2.65	.913
F4	Transparency, trust and honest in communication has been enhanced by leaders within the county and to the Public by following the communication laws of the Country.	10.5	46.5	31.5	11.5	0	2.44	.831
F5	The National Government supports the County Government to access information needed by Leaders in the County as per the Local and international authorities' laws legislated.	15.5	39.5	29.5	15.5	0	2.45	.934
Aggregate Value for Legal factors							2.35	.370

Source: Research Data (2022)

As indicated in Table 4.6, more than half (56.5%) of the participants agree that the County leadership considers the provisions of the constitution in its day-to-day administrative decisions by involving the locals and other stakeholders, decisions that the courts are sometimes invited to make advise on. 34% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, while 9.5% of the respondents were neutral but no one totally disagreed with the assertion. The mean of 1.76 and standard deviation of 0.614 show that respondents generally felt that the County leadership considered the provisions of the constitution in making its administrative decisions, involving locals and other stakeholders, whether this involves seeking the interpretation of the courts to do so. This is in line with the view of Banerjee *et al* (2020) who argue that the functionality

of devolution requires cultural, social and economic aspects that are deemed to promote accountability, besides administrative, political and legal aspects. Utilization of government resources in service delivery at the local level requires responsible local leaders and the participation of locals in planning and implementation of programs.

These revelations are contrary to the view of Kangu (2015) that even with carefully crafted guidelines in our Constitution, national governments are not convinced that county governments always discharge their functions and exercise their powers as required by the law. On whether the County Government administration had been subjected to litigation in the Court of law for non-compliance with the law, 41% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 13.5% strongly agreed, 30% were neutral, while 15.5% of the respondents disagreed that County Government administration had been subjected to litigation in the Court of law over compliance with the law. The mean of 2.48 and standard deviation of 0.913 imply that respondents generally agreed that County Government administration had been taken to the Court of law over compliance.

Concerning whether the National Government administration is involved when the devolved administration is formulating its policies or legislations, a proportionate size (36%) of the respondents were neutral, 34% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 10.5% strongly agreed, while 19.5% of the respondents disagreed that national government administration is involved when the devolved administration is formulating its policies or legislations. The mean of 2.65 and standard deviation of 0.913 imply that respondents were generally neutral in response to the assertion that National Government Administration is involved when the Devolved administration is formulating its policies or legislations.

A big proportion (46.5%) of the participants agreed that trust and honesty in communication had been enhanced by leaders within the county and to the public by following the communication laws of the Country, 31.5% of the respondents were neutral in their response to the assertion, 10.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, while 11.5% disagreed with the statement. The mean of 2.44 and standard deviation of 0.831 show that respondents were generally in agreement that trust and honest in communication has been enhanced by leaders within the county and to the public by following the communication laws of the Country. The above findings corroborate the findings of Rusyiana and Sujarwoto (2017) that transparency, citizen participation in political affairs, an informed citizenry, presence of groups that are social in nature and effective political institutions at the local level earn local public services an exemplary performance.

In addition, 39.5% of the respondents agreed that the National Government supports the County Government to access the information needed by leaders in the County as per the local and international authorities' laws, 29.5% of the respondents were neutral, 15.5% of the participants strongly agreed, but 15.5% of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that National Government supports the County Government to access information needed by Leaders in the County as per the Local and international authorities' laws. The mean of 2.45 and standard deviation of 0.934 imply that respondents generally agreed that the National Government supports the County Government to access information needed by Leaders in the County as per the Local and international authorities' laws. Therefore, the respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties agreed with the Legal factors, as exercised in both Counties, as

shown by the mean of 2.35 and standard deviation of 0.370 from the computed aggregate value for Legal factors in the table above.

4.4.2 Devolved Administrative Structures

Respondents were requested to show the degree to which they agree with the posited assertions regarding devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. This was done so that the results of the assessment of devolved administrative structures could be accurately interpreted.

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 4.6 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: Research Data (2022)

According to Table 4.7, the majority of participants (50.5%) agreed that there are adequate administrative structures within the County Government, 32.5% strongly agreed, 13% were neutral, and 4% disagreed with the assertion. The mean and standard deviation of 1.89 and 0.778 respectively suggested that respondents generally agreed that there are acceptable administrative structures in the County Government. These results corroborate Glaser's (2017) assertion that the success of devolution relies on appropriate systems, policies, and structures of administration as well as strategies to promote local community involvement.

A majority of the respondents (43%) disagreed that devolved administrative structures in the County government have been answering to the public's concerns and complaints, with 17.5% strongly disagreeing, 20.5% agreeing, 10.5% strongly agreeing and 8.5% being neutral. The mean and standard deviation suggested that most people were indifferent about the assertion. A big proportion (43%) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion that in the county, administrative structures' initiatives are influenced by strategic leadership, 24% of the respondents strongly disagreed, 15.5% agreed, 7.5% strongly agreed, while 10% of the respondents were neutral that administrative structures' initiatives in the County were influenced by Strategic leadership practices. The mean of 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.219 imply that, respondents generally disagreed that administrative structures' initiatives in the County are influenced by Strategic leadership.

About 45% of the respondents viewed the devolved administrative structures within the County positively in terms of their contribution to the achievement of the Leadership's desired objectives. This view was shared by 21% of the respondents who agreed that devolved administrative structures had contributed to the achievement of the leadership's desired objectives, and 17% who strongly agreed. However, 17% disagreed with the assertion that these structures had made such a contribution. The mean score of 2.62 and standard deviation of 0.959 suggest that generally, the respondents were neutral on the subject, though there is evidence that the structures have had a role in the realization of the desired goals and objectives of the leadership. Previous research has indicated that decentralized administrative structures are beneficial in achieving balanced political representation, allowing minority

communities who were formerly marginalized to have a say in local government initiatives and thus enhance political stability and reduce the possibility of power misuse (Faguet, 2017). Upon investigating the success of devolved administrative structures over the past 8 years, 47.5% of the respondents held a neutral view, whereas 28% agreed that these structures had been effectively exploited in their county.

The findings of the survey suggested that 15.5% of the responders strongly believed that the county had successfully implemented devolved administrative structures in the past 8 years. However, 9% of the respondents disagreed with that statement. The mean score of 2.50 and a standard deviation of 0.862 showed that most respondents were neutral to the assertion regarding the success of devolved administrative structures in the county. This is in line with the experiences of devolution in other Commonwealth Independent States that suggest mobilization, development of human capital, and legislative frameworks play a significant role in the success of devolution (Florian & Becirevic, 2014). Moreover, the majority of respondents (75%) agreed that effective leadership impacted the performance of devolved administrative structures, with 23% strongly agreeing with that sentiment.

Only 2% of the respondents were neutral in response to the assertion that effective leadership is able to influence the performance of devolved administrative structures. The average rating of 1.79 alongside a standard deviation of 0.455 demonstrates that the respondents were generally in agreement that leadership qualities play a role in the success of those structures. This is further backed up by the research of Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2016), who suggested that having flexibility, envisioning, thinking strategically, anticipating, and encouraging innovative ideas are all essential ingredients

of a successful organization. Concerning the assertion that formulation of unique strategies to support the devolved administrative structures is the responsibility of the top leadership, over half (51.5%) of the respondents expressed neutrality, 30% of the participants agreed with the assertion, and 18.5% strongly agreed with it.

This outcome demonstrates that the respondents largely share the view that formulation of unique strategies which aid in the effective running of the devolved administrative structures is primarily the responsibility of the leadership. The mean result of 2.33 and the standard deviation of 0.77 indicate a general agreement. Approximately 45.5% of the people were neutral concerning whether these structures had operated efficiently in the delivery of County services, while 26% disagreed with the assertion. Roughly a 16% and 9% of those who participated in the survey agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that devolved administrative structures in County government had delivered services efficiently. On the other hand, 26% and 3.5% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This data suggests that most were neutral as shown by the mean of 2.99 and standard deviation of 0.962.

Concerning whether administrative structures followed legal processes and procedures, 45.5% had a seemingly indifferent stance, 23.5% disagreed with the assertion, 7.5% strongly disagreed, 9% strongly agreed, while 13.5% agreed. The mean of 3.07 with a standard deviation of 1.015 shows that the general view taken by the respondents was one of neutrality. Survey of respondents from Taita Taveta and Makueni indicated that the public was split in their opinion regarding the effectiveness of their County's devolved structures in delivering services, 35% of people disagreed that they were effective, 27% were neutral, 23.5% strongly disagreed, while 7.5% disagreed. As

indicated by the mean and standard deviation of 2.71 and 0.31 respectively, the public was divided on the issue.

4.5 Diagnostic Analysis

The study further evaluated the data against the assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation technique for regression, and the tests conducted were Normality, Linearity, Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity as described below.

4.5.1 Normality

The study evaluated normality by using the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Table 4. 7 Nomality Test by use of Shapiro-Wilk statistics

Variable (Observation)	Observation (N) = Df	Shapiro-Wilk Test		Observed Conclusions
		Statistics (t)	Sig. Level (P-value)	
Resource allocation	200	0.99811	0.99818	Normality observed
Public accountability	200	0.99669	0.94784	Normality observed
Stakeholder involvement	200	0.98931	0.14121	Normality observed
Legal factor	200	0.99777	0.99427	Normality observed
Devolved Administrative structures	200	0.99666	0.94548	Normality observed

Source: Research Data (2022)

The results by the Shapiro-Wilk test hypotheses were that the data followed normal distribution hence postulating a null hypothesis while data in the other circumstance did not follow a normal distribution, portraying an alternative recommended by Das and Imon (2016). Table 4.8 shows the respective *P-values* for the study variables. The Resources allocation practices, public accountability practices, Stakeholder involvement practices, legal factors and the devolved administrative structures were normally distributed at a range of -0.1 to +0.1(Das and Imon, 2016). This is as shown by the respective which are greater than 0.05 levels of significance reflected in Table 4. 8 where variables’ normality is shown.

Where (*P_value* of 0.99818>0.05; *P_value* of 0.94784>0.05; *P_value* of 0.14121>0.05; *P_value* of 0.99427>0.05; *P_value* of 0.94548>0.05). Since resource allocation practices (Ra), public accountability practices (Pac), Stakeholder involvement practices (Sin), legal factors (Lf) and devolved administrative structures were normally distributed at 95% level of confidence, the assumption of normality is upheld being evidence that the centralized limiting theorem proves as follows; that the ordinary least square remains

consistently whenever numbers of variable units of analysis are sufficiently large (Field, 2017).

4.5.2 Linearity using Pearson’s correlation

The coefficient of Pearson’s correlation in linearity testing was in line with the Devolved Administrative structures, resource allocation practices, public accountability practices and stakeholders’ involvement practices. When it comes to the linearity assumption for regression, the P_{value} is 0.0003.

Table 4. 8 Linearity Test Results (Using Pearson’s Correlation)

Number of Observations (Variables)		Devolved Administrative Structures		Conclusions on observation
Resource allocation	Pearsons Correlation	0.1181		Linearity observed
	Sig. (2-tailed; P-value)	0.0059	= 0.01	
	N(Observation)	200		
Public accountability	Pearsons Correlation	0.2715		Linearity observed
	Sig. (2-tailed; P-value)	0.0001	= 0.00	
	N(Observation)	200		
Stakeholder involvement	Pearsons Correlation	0.0392		Linearity observed
	Sig. (2-tailed; P-value)	0.0011	= 0.00	
	N(Observation)	200		
Legal factors	Pearsons Correlation	0.0047		Linearity observed
	Sig. (2-tailed; P-value)	0.0475	= 0.01	
	N(Observation)	200		

Source: Research Data (2022)

Table 4.9 represents the general significance of the base regression model (showing the resource allocation practices with P_{value} of $0.0059 < 0.05$, public accountability practices with a P_{value} of $0.0001 < 0.05$. Stakeholder Involvement Practices with a

P_value of $0.0011 < 0.05$ on devolved administrative structures was significant. The P_value of 0.0003 indicated that Resource Allocation Practices, Public Accountability Practices and Stakeholder Involvement Practices is linearly related to devolved administrative structures (Field, 2017).

4.5.3 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity was tested using VIF and Tolerance ($1/VIF$). Thompson, Kimand Becker (2017) that in testing for multicollinearity, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) that is found to be above 10 and the tolerance of below 0.1 indicates the presence of multicollinearity. As illustrated in Table 4.10, the VIF values were lower than 10, and Tolerance ($1/VIF$) values more than 0.1. Further, the mean VIF was also lower than 10, indicating that multicollinearity was absent.

Table 4.9 Multicollinearity Results (Using VIF and Tolerance)

Variable	Multicollinearity statistics		Conclusions on observation
	VIF	Tolerance(1/VIF)	
Resource allocation	1.92	0.520621	Multicollinearity absent
Public accountability	1.01	0.990113	Multicollinearity absent
Stakeholder involvement	1.04	0.963401	Multicollinearity absent
Legal factors	1.94	0.515987	Multicollinearity absent
Mean (VIF and Tolerance)	VIF =1.48	Tolerance =1.495061	
Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures			

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 4.10, Resource Allocation Practices' VIF is 1.92, public accountability practices' VIF is 1.01, and the VIF of Stakeholder involvement is 1.04. It follows that the mean VIF for all observable variables is 1.48. This therefore shows that the variables have a mean VIF less than 10 and tolerance value more than 0.1. This means that there is no likelihood of the presence of multicollinearity, implying that there was no multicollinearity problem amongst the variables and hence the level of multicollinearity in the model can be endured.

4.5.4 Heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan test was utilised to check for heteroscedasticity. The null hypothesis under Breusch-Pagan test was that the residuals have constant variance (Cattaneo,

Jansson&Newey, 2018). The assumption is that, the scatter is equal or constant error term (homoscedasticity) which is shown by the P-value that is lesser than 0.05. From Table 4.11, where the P_{value} of 0.0000 was lesser than the threshold of 0.05, which was implying that the research fails to reject the null hypothesis of constant residual variance, hence the evidence to support the existence of heteroscedasticity was not present (Warner, 2008).

Table 4.10 Breusch-Pagan / Cook – Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity

Breusch-Pagan / Cook – Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity	
Ho:	Constant variance
Variables:	Fitted values of SLP
Chi2 (1)	36.58
Prob > Chi2	0.0000

Source: Research Data (2022)

Thus, from the aforementioned diagnostic tests, the study constructs upheld the assumptions of OLS estimation for regression. That is, the study constructs assume a normal distribution, and upheld linearity, hence no evidence of multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity. The non-violation of the assumptions of OLS estimation entrenches the adoption of regression modelling (Warner, 2008).

4.6 Inferential Analysis

4.6.1 Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Practices

The study computed composite indices for Strategic Leadership Practices (derived from composite indices of resources allocation practices, public accountability practices and stakeholders' involvement practices) and Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. Then, the coefficient of determinants (R^2) was generated to describe the proportion of variation in Devolved Administrative Practices

that has been accounted for by Strategic Leadership Practices (resources allocation practices, public accountability practices and stakeholders' involvement practices), which were the regressors. The regression model summary, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and model coefficients' outputs generated.

Table 4.11 Model Summary for strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative practices

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.304 ^a	.092	.078	.2975598
a. Predictors: (Constant), Aggregate Value for Stakeholders Involvement, Aggregate value for Public Accountability practices, Aggregate value for Resource allocation practices				

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the model summary in Table 4.12, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .092$) indicates that 30.4 percent of the variation in Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties was jointly explained by the changes in the three Strategic Leadership Practices (resources allocation practices, public accountability practices and stakeholders' involvement practices). This shows that the three Strategic Leadership Practices accounted for a significant variation in Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. In terms of the overall significance of the regression equation, Table 4.13 presents the $F_{\text{statistic}}$ and P_{value} used to test the null hypothesis. H_0 : There is no significant statistical effect of strategic leadership practices on Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

Table 4.12 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Statistics	Sig.
1	Regression	1.761	3	.587	6.629	.000 ^b
	Residual	17.354	196	.089		
	Total	19.115	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Aggregate Value for Performance of Devolved Administrative Structures						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Aggregate Value for Stakeholders Involvement, Aggregate value for Public Accountability practices, Aggregate value for Resource allocation practices						

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 4.13, the *F-statistic* was 6.629 and the associated *P-value* = 0.000. Since the calculated *P-value* was less than $\alpha = 0.05$, there is evidence against the null hypothesis, that there is no significant statistical effect of strategic leadership practices on the Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. As such, the rejection of the null hypothesis implies that strategic leadership practices had a significant effect on Devolved Administrative Practices in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. The eventual regression model was generated from model coefficients output in Table 4.14.

Table 4.13 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 (2022)

From Table 4.14, the regression equation is as presented in Equation 4.1 below.

$$Y = 1.581 + 0.166Ra + 0.280Pac \dots\dots\dots$$

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.

Moreover, the results provide evidence that strategic leadership practices had a significant effect on Devolved Administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, hence supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). The researcher also conducted interviews with those selected for their particular expertise: the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the County Assembly, and various Clerks. The respondents said:

“Strategic leadership has been progressive, although selfish interests kept manifesting and hindering the positive progress of the County.” (IS011)

“It has enhanced service delivery through the devolved units by reaching more people at the grassroots, them at their point of need.” (IS018)

“Strategic leadership has lately been used by most organizations in my county to position them competitively in an ever changing and turbulent environment. It is gaining popularity in both the profit making and not-for-profit organizations.” (IS07)

“Promotes efficiency and accountability in resource management.” (IS0 9)

"There is dearth of evidence on how strategic leadership affects performance of organizations.

Strategic leadership is one of key drivers that have performance influence over organizations through strategic decision-making.

Regardless of their title or organization's function, strategic leadership has substantial decision-making capabilities that cannot be delegated." (IS05)

The respondents (the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the County Assembly, and various Clerks) were further asked to identify the stumbling blocks to the practice of strategic leadership in their respective counties (Taita Taveta and Makueni) on devolved administrative structures operations. They responded as follows:

"Self-interests, politicized resource allocation, especially to the regions that supported the current government. Appointments which are meant to reward loyalists." (IS01)

"Corruption and misappropriation of funds as leaders take the government money allocated to various projects for personal use." (IS012)

"There is lack of skills in strategic leadership, i.e there is barrier to access high-quality training and coaching" (IS013)

"1. Late disbursement of funds by the national government makes it challenging to effectively provide services locally.

2. Corruption cases, though not much, tend to drag the overall progress due to resource misuse and inability to account for the loss there of." (IS04)

"Poor goal setting, lack of alignment, inability to track progress, people not connected to the strategy, no measurements or leading indicators" (IS015)

The responses suggested that the implementation of resource allocation had improved the devolved administrative systems in the counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni, and this was the view shared by all the survey respondents (100%). Furthermore, 80% of the participants confirmed that public accountability had reinforced the devolved administrative structures. However, 20% did not agree with this statement while 100% of the participants stated that the county government had been unsuccessful in responding to public and stakeholders' issues promptly.

Studies conducted in the past had results similar to the current study. For example, Aluko and Aina (2015) conducted a study on the challenges of devolution of power and leadership in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The study found that strategic leadership practices are crucial in managing the challenges that arise in a devolved system of governance. Ayaga (2019) studied the effect of strategic leadership practices on decentralization and service delivery in Nairobi City County government. The study found that strategic leadership practices positively impact decentralization and enhance service delivery. Oyugi and Ndemo (2019) investigated the effect of strategic leadership on the implementation of devolved governance in Kenya's county governments. They found that strategic leadership practices significantly affect the implementation of devolved governance. Chongo (2017) researched the impact of strategic leadership, decentralization, and local government performance in Zambia. The study found that strategic leadership practices have a positive effect on the performance of local governments under a devolved system of governance (Chongo, 2017).

However, other studies got results that were different from the current findings. Maravanyika and Maphosa (2021) found that while strategic leadership practices were positively associated with decentralization, the relationship was not significant. Oyugi and Okello (2019) found that strategic leadership practices had a significant negative effect on decentralization in Kenya. Madikiza and Moyo (2017) found that while strategic leadership practices had a positive effect on decentralization in South Africa, the effect in Kenya was not statistically significant. Kudaisi and Mensah (2016) found that strategic leadership practices had a significant positive effect on decentralization in Ghana. These findings suggest that the relationship between strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures can vary with different contexts.

4.6.2 Legal Factors and the relationship between Strategic Leadership Practices on Devolved Administrative Structures

The fourth objective in the study was to determine the effect of legal considerations on strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in the counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. In doing so, the study conducted a three step multiple regression model, with the aim of ascertaining whether legal factors had a moderating effect on the link between the strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures in the Counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. The study computed the aggregate values for strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures.

Again, the study computed an interaction term between strategic leadership practices and legal factors. Correlation coefficient (r) was computed to describe the strength and direction of the effect on the devolved administrative structures from strategic leadership practices or legal factors or the interaction term. Coefficient of determination

(R^2) was computed to describe the proportion of variation in the devolved administrative structures accounted for by strategic leadership practices or legal factors and the interaction, which are the regressors. In step one, the study tests whether there exists an effect on the aggregate value for strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

The hypothesized relationships were: **H_{04a}**: There is no significant effect from strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. From the model summary in Table 4.15, 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, which were accounted for by strategic leadership practices ($R^2 = .056$) with a standard error of **0.32**. 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.

Step One:

Table 4.14 Model Summary for strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.237 ^a	.056	.051	.3018779
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices				

Source: Research Data (2022)

In determining whether to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, ANOVA was conducted where the *F-statistic* and the associated *P-value* were used for determination. From Table 4.16, $F_{-statistic} = 11.755$ and the

associated $P_{-value} = .001$, leads the research to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant effect from strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In essence, the research concludes that there was a significant effect from the strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

Table 4.15 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures

Model		Sum of R Squaess	df	Mean of R Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.071	1	1.071	11.755	.001 ^b
	Residual	18.044	198	.091		
	Total	19.115	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Leadership Practices						

Source: Research Data (2022)

Strategic Leadership Practices on devolved administrative structures was quantified as represented in Table 4.17 by the regression coefficients developed. Strategic leadership practices had a significant direct effect on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties ($\beta_1 = .390, P_{-value} = .001$).

The eventual regression is as presented in Equation 4.2.

Table 4.16 Regression Coefficient for strategic leadership practices on the devolved administrative structures

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. B
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.609	.320		5.024	.000
	Strategic Leadership Practices	.390	.114	.237	3.429	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures

Source: Research Data (2022)

$$Y = 1.609 + .390SLP \dots\dots\dots$$

Equation 4. 2

Equation 4.2 indicates that for a unit increase in strategic leadership practices, there will be an associated direct increase in effect of devolved administrative structures by 39%, holding other factors constant. The study concludes that there is a significant effect of strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures. In Step One, legal factors (the moderator) are introduced. The individual significance of strategic leadership practices and legal factors on devolved administrative structures was then evaluated. The hypothesized relationships were:

H_{04b}: There is no significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices and legal factors on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

Step Two:

Table 4.17 Model Summary for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.272 ^a	.074	.064	.2997870
a. Predictors: (Constant), Legal factors and Strategic Leadership Practices				

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the model summary in Table 4.18, 7.4% of the variation on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties was accounted for by strategic leadership practices and legal factors ($R^2 = .074$) with a standard error of .299. In determining whether to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, ANOVA was conducted, where the *F-statistic* and the link P_{value} were used. The results conform to the findings by Serfontein *et al.* (2019) that strategic leadership has a direct association with operational strategy. The results above are also in harmony with the findings of Masungu *at el.* (2015) that strategic leadership led to improvement on performance of devolved government system.

Table 4.18 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model		Sum of R Square	df	Mean of RrSquare	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.410	2	.705	7.845	.001 ^b
	Residual	17.705	197	.090		
	Total	19.115	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Legal factors and Strategic Leadership Practices						

Source: Research Data (2022)

In Table 4. 19, $F_{statistic} = 7.845$ and the associated $P_{value} = .001$, leads the study to reject the null hypothesis that there was no significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices and legal factors on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties based on the operationalization in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In essence the study concludes that there was significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices and legal factors on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. The results conform to the findings by Serfontein *et al.* (2019) that strategic leadership had a direct association with operational strategy. The results above are also in harmony with the findings by Masungu *et al.* (2015) that strategic leadership led to improvement on performance of devolved government system.

Table 4.19 Regression Coefficients for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model		Unstandardized R Coefficients		Standardized R Coefficients	t	Sig. B
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.552	.319		4.860	.000
	Strategic Leadership Practices	.519***	.131	.315	3.961	.000 ^b
	Legal factors	-.129	.067	-.154	-1.942	.054
a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures						

Source: Research Data (2022)

Strategic leadership practices and legal factors on devolved administrative structures as operationalized was quantified as represented in Table 4.20 by the regression coefficients that was developed. Strategic Leadership Practices therefore had a significant direct effect on devolved administrative structures ($\beta_1 = .519, P_{value} = .000$), but legal factors had to have a non-significant inverse effect on the devolved administrative structures ($\beta_1 = -.129, P_{value} = .054$).

Step Three:

Table 4.20 Model Summary for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices, Interaction term and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate
1	.274 ^a	.075	.061	.3003030
a. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction term (Strategic Leadership Practices * Legal Factors), Strategic Leadership Practices and Legal factors				

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the model summary in Table 4.21, 7.5% of the variation in devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties was accounted for by Strategic Leadership Practices, Legal Factors and the interaction term ($R^2 = .075$) with a standard error of .300. In Step Three, interaction between strategic leadership practices and legal factors (the moderator) is introduced to Equation 4.3. The individual significance of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction on the devolved administrative structures was then evaluated. The hypothesized relationships were:

H_{04c}: There is no significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction terms, on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

$$Y = .528 + 1.837SLP - 972SLP * Lf$$

.....Equation 4. 3

Table 4.21 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices, Interaction term and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model		Sum of R Squares	df	Mean R Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.439	3	.480	5.320	.002 ^b
	Residual	17.676	196	.090		
	Total	19.115	199			
a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Interaction term (Strategic Leadership Practices * Legal Factors), Strategic Leadership Practices and Legal factors						

Source: Research Data (2022)

In determining whether to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, ANOVA was conducted, where the *F-statistic* and the associated *P_{value}* were used. From Table 4.22, $F_{-statistic} = 5.320$ and the associated $P_{value} = .002$, leading the study to reject the null hypothesis that there was no significant cumulative association of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction term on part of the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties in favour of the alternative hypothesis. In essence the study concludes that there was significant cumulative relationship of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction term on part of devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

In addition, the effect of strategic leadership practices, legal factors and the interaction term on devolved administrative structures was quantified as presented in Table 4.23 by the regression coefficients developed. Individually, strategic leadership practices

had a significant double-fold direct relationship on devolved administrative structures ($\beta_1 = 1.837$, $P_{value} = .018$), legal factors had an insignificant effect on devolved administrative structures ($\beta_2 = .376$, $P_{value} = .688$) and the interaction term had a significant effect on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties ($\beta_3 = -.972$, $P_{value} = .030$). The eventual regression is therefore as presented in Equation 4. 4.

Table 4.22 Regression Coefficients for Legal factors, Strategic Leadership Practices, Interaction term and Devolved Administrative Structures

Model	Unstandardized R Coefficients		Standardized R Coefficients	t - statistics	Sig. B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.528	1.829		.289	.773
	Strategic Leadership Practices	2.198	.657	1.837	3.346	.018
	Legal factors	.315	.784	.376	.402	.688
	Interaction term (Strategic Leadership Practices * Legal Factors)	-1.826	.278	-.972	-6.569	.030
	a. Dependent Variable: Devolved Administrative Structures					

Source: Research Data (2022)

$$Y = .528 + 1.837SLP - 972SLP * Lf \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 4. 4}$$

Equation 4.4 indicates that for a unit increase in strategic leadership practices, there will be an associated direct increase in effect on devolved administrative structures by 52.8%, holding all other factors constant. Also, for a unit increase in the interaction term (strategic leadership practices * legal factors), there will be an associated decrease in effect of devolved administrative structures by 97.2%, holding other factors constant. In the second step, legal factors solely did not have a significant effect on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

4.6.3 Decision Criteria for Moderation

For moderation to occur, the interaction term should be significant (Kenny & Baron, 1986). Moreover, in the case of a partial moderation, the moderating variable should be significant in Step Two, otherwise a complete moderating effect suffices. According to the current study, Strategic Leadership Practices was significant in Step One and Two. Legal factors were significant in Step Two. The interaction was also significant in Step Two. Additionally, another method of assessing moderation would be an observable increment in R^2 from step one to Step Two due to the introduction of the interaction term (Mackinnon *et al.*, 2015). As such, in Step One, $R^2=.074$ after the introduction of the interaction term $R^2=.075$, being evidence that moderation has taken place. Thus, the study observed that the Legal factors deployed had a complete moderating effect on the link between the strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in both Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties in regards to their operationalization.

A study by Arku and Mensah (2020) explored the relationship between legal factors, strategic leadership and devolution in Ghana. The results showed that legal factors had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between strategic leadership and

devolution. Specifically, the study found that the legal environment influenced the extent to which strategic leadership practices affected devolution. On the contrary, other studies suggest that legal factors do not have a complete moderating effect on the link between strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures. Owusu and Ansah (2019) found that legal factors have a partial moderating effect on the relationship between decentralization and local governance performance. Abdullah *et al.* (2019) found that legal factors were important for the success of decentralization in Pakistan, but did not have a complete moderating effect on the relationship between decentralization and local government performance. Mabe and Maruping (2016) found that legal factors that were deployed in the study were critically important for the success of decentralization in South Africa, but did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between decentralization and service delivery.

Finally, Shulika (2020) found that legal factors were important for the success of decentralization in Ukraine, but did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between decentralization and local government performance. On the question of legal issues, 80% of the respondents who were interviewed (the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the County Assembly, and the Clerks) indicated that the legal issues had effects on the devolved administrative structures operations in the counties as it slowed the operationalization of the County plans that had been put into place. Although, 20% of the respondents indicated that the legal issues had no effects on the devolved administrative structures operations in the counties. Moreover, 60% of the respondents affirmed that leadership in the county had legal issues that affected service delivery by the devolved administrative structures. Nevertheless, 40% of the respondents did not

affirm that leadership in the county had legal issues that affected service delivery by the devolved administrative structures.

4.7 Effectiveness of County Operations in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties

The results of the survey revealed that 80% of respondents reported that involving stakeholders had rendered the county's operations effective. On the Contrary, 20% did not find it to be so. Furthermore, 60% of the respondents said that following strict laws had aided in improving the devolved structures of counties, whereas 40% of them said it had not contributed in aiding the improvement. Additionally, the respondents were asked to assess the county's operations in terms of their efficiency and effectiveness, and the answers they gave were as follows:

“If I were to rate the effectiveness and efficiency of County operations on a scale of 1 to 10, then it will be at 4. That is, there is to some extent efficient and effective operations but not at the expected moderate rate.” (IS02)

“The operations are relatively good. The citizens are able to access services from the county government though the overlap from the national government, untimely disbursement of county funds and nderfunding causes conflict.” (IS06)

“My county establishes important local laws (ordinances) and enforces laws that protect citizens from harmful behaviour. They also encourage citizens and businesses to get involved in their communities. Yes, they are efficient and effective.” (IS03)

“Devolved county administration to the grass roots. Quite effective, but still a work in progress.” (ISO4)

“Yes, they are less effective: however, they are better placed to deliver and address local needs effectively. County governments do not exist just to provide services.” (IS011)

4.8 Summary of Thematic Analysis

The summary of thematic analysis condensed the key findings and themes derived from the qualitative analysis done. It presents a representation of the main insights and patterns discovered during the analysis of qualitative data. The respondents for the interview schedule were the Governor, Deputy Governor, Speaker of the County Assembly, and various Clerks. The summary is as presented in Table 4.24 below.

Table 4.23 Qualitative Data Analysis

Themes adopted	Narrative description
Strategic Leadership	The progress of strategic leadership in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties has been noteworthy, albeit hampered by self-interests. However, devolved units have boosted service delivery by bringing it to the most vulnerable communities and meeting their requirements.
Challenges to Strategic Leadership Practices	The respondents of the counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni reported that the following are obstructions in the exercise of strategic leadership in devolved administrative structures: Self-Interest, politicized resource distribution, especially those areas that sustained the present county authorities, corruption and deprivation of funds, as leaders seize government money that is set aside for particular tasks, inability to gain access to high-quality training and coaching, postponement in disbursement of money from the government diminishes ability to efficiently handle and run local services, inadequate goal setting and incompatibility, inaccuracy in monitoring progress, and people being detached from the plan.

Resource Allocation and Devolved Administrative Structures	The respondents were asked to say whether the implementation of resource allocation improved the decentralized administrative structures in the two counties of Taita Taveta and Makueni. All of them felt that the allocation of resources had indeed led to the enhancement of these structures.
Effectiveness of County Operations	80% of the respondents surveyed stated that the county's operations had been successful due to their investment in stakeholder involvement, whereas 20% of the survey participants did not agree with this.
Legal Issues	80% of the respondents who were interviewed indicated that legal issues had effects on the devolved administrative structures operations in the counties. While 20% of the respondents indicated that the legal issues had no effects on the devolved administrative structures operations in the counties, 60% of the respondents affirmed that leadership in the county had legal issues that affected service delivery by the devolved administrative structures. However, 40% of the respondents did not affirm that leadership in the county had legal issues that affected service delivery by the devolved administrative structures.

Source: Research Data (2022)

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's results, conclusions and suggestions for knowledge addition to many industries and future research fields. The study aimed at examining the effect of strategic leadership practices and devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya, specifically to establish the effects of resource allocation, accountability, stakeholders' involvement and whether legal factors moderate the relationship between strategic leadership practices on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya.

5.2 Summary of findings

In this research, generic pragmatism served as the underpinning principle when it came to the collection of data that accurately represented the phenomenon being studied. A descriptive design was used in order to draw a sample of 500 people from both Taita Taveta County in the Coastal area and Makueni County in the Eastern area. Three tiers of leadership were observed: strategic, functional, and operational. On the strategic level, the research looked at the Governor, Deputy Governor, and Speaker of the County Assembly, Members of the County Assembly, County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers, and the Clerk of County Assembly. At the functional level, it examined County Service Board Members, Directors, and Managers. The operational tier was composed of Sub-County Administrators, Ward Administrators, and Village Administrators.

Concerning gender, majority of the participants were male. More than half 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 or O/A level of education. In terms of the position the respondents occupied in the County government, 46% were CECMs, 22% were CO's and 16% were Directors in the County governments of Taita Taveta and Makueni. When it came to the years the respondents had worked in the respective County governments, 47.5% had worked for the County government for between 3 to 5 years, and 29.5% had worked for up to 3 years, while only 18% of the respondents had worked in the County government for between 6 to 8 years.

The findings from correlation analysis shows that the sub-constructs for strategic leadership practices (Resource Allocation Practices, Public Accountability practices and Stakeholder Involvement practices) were all positively correlated to devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. During the evaluation of the study hypotheses, multiple regression equation was developed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) part in this study was used as the criterion for rejecting or failing to reject the null hypothesis.

The study hypotheses and decisions arrived are as presented below, based on the objectives of the study: In Objective one; to establish the effects of resources allocation practices on performance of devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya where the decision was that the Null hypothesis be rejected. In Objective two; to determine the effects of public accountability practices on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya where the decision was that Null hypothesis rejected, while in Objective three was to establish the effects of stakeholders' involvement practices on devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, where

the decision arrived at was the rejection of the Null hypothesis. In Objective four; to determine the moderating effect of Legal factors on strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties, Kenya-the decision was that Null hypothesis rejected.

In summary, there was a significant effects of the resource allocation practices on the devolved administrative structures in both Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. Also, significant effects of public accountability practices on the administrative structures were realized in both Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties. In addition, there was a significant effect of stakeholders' involvement practices on the devolved administrative structures in Counties. Concerning the interaction between strategic leadership practices and legal factors which is the moderator, significant and cumulative association between strategic leadership practices, the legal factors and the terms of interaction on these devolved administrative structures in both Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties were manifested. Thus, the legal factors have moderating effect on the association between the strategic leadership practices and the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.

The findings of the qualitative survey suggest that strategic leadership has increased service delivery through devolved units, thereby providing the people in rural areas with access to what they need. However, biased allocation of resources in favour of counties that aligned with the current central government, together with a lack of proper training in strategic leadership, prevented it from fully taking effect in Taita Taveta and Makueni. The citizens of those counties were nonetheless able to access services from

the county government, although delays in disbursing county funds as well as underfunding posed challenges.

5.3 Conclusion

From the first objective, the research concluded that resource allocation practices had a significant impact on the devolved administrative structures in Taita Taveta and Makueni. From the second objective, research 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 practices on 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. The qualitative analysis highlighted how the execution of effective strategic leadership has increased the delivery of services through the devolved units. This expansion has provided citizens at the local level with access to the county government, even though delays in fund allocation and inadequate resources have been sources of conflict.

5.4 Contributions of the study to the Body of Knowledge

First, the empirical studies conducted on organizations have consistently recognized the significant impact of strategic leadership practices on the operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. Building upon this existing knowledge, the current research specifically focused on three key aspects of strategic leadership

practices, which are: resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholders' involvement, and their influence on the operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya.

The research findings confirmed the constructive role played by strategic leadership practices in the operationalization of devolved administrative structures. The allocation of resources when guided by effective strategic leadership ensures that the necessary financial and material support is provided to the devolved administrative structures, enabling them to effectively carry out their functions and deliver services to the public. Public accountability, another crucial aspect of strategic leadership, ensures transparency, integrity, and responsible decision-making within the devolved administrative structures. By establishing mechanisms for public oversight and reporting, strategic leaders promote trust, legitimacy, and effective governance in the implementation of devolved policies and programs.

Stakeholders' involvement, the third focus of the research, highlights the importance of engaging various stakeholders, such as community members, civil society organizations and other relevant actors, in the decision-making processes of devolved administrative structures. Strategic leaders recognize the value of diverse perspectives, collaboration, and collective problem-solving, leading to more inclusive and effective decision-making. By recognizing and examining the constructive role of strategic leadership practices in resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholders' involvement, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of how these practices contribute to the successful operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya.

The findings can inform policymakers, leaders, and practitioners in implementing strategies that enhance the performance and effectiveness of devolved systems of governance. Also, the present research has explored an uncharted field of study by examining the impact of strategic leadership practices on the operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. In doing so, this research provided pragmatic evidence that effective strategic leadership practices can contribute to an effective operationalization of devolved administrative structures.

The findings of this research indicate that strategic leadership, encompassing resource allocation, public accountability, and stakeholders' involvement, play a vital role in ensuring the successful functioning and performance of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. By highlighting the importance of strategic leadership practices, the research underscores the significance of leadership in shaping and guiding the implementation of devolved governance systems. Furthermore, this research contributes to the theoretical understanding of the relationship between strategic leadership practices and the operationalization of devolved administrative structures in Kenya. By delving into this relatively unexplored area, the study expands upon existing knowledge and adds new insights to the literature.

This divergence from previous studies, which have predominantly focused on strategic leadership practices or the perspective of devolved administrative structures in Kenya, fills a crucial gap in the literature. The research offers a comprehensive examination on the influence of strategic leadership practices on the operationalization of devolved administrative structures, shedding light on the interconnectedness and interplay between these elements. Additionally, the present research explored the effect of 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 relationship. Fourth, the research necessities transformational leadership theory that promotes understanding of performances, creating the equilibrium amid the efficiency, efficacy, significance and competence. In addition, the research takes into account the propositions of Stakeholder Theory; that organizations partake associations through numerous component assemblages and must consequently endeavour to sense of balancing their appropriate safeties for purposes of preserving the sustenance after these assemblages.

5.5 Recommendations for Policy Implication

The findings of the research indicate that an improvement in strategic leadership practices positively contributes to the enhanced operationalization of devolved administrative structures. Therefore, it is crucial for strategic leaders to establish structures and processes that foster executional creativity and ensure that responsibilities are connected to policies. Additionally, effective information flow and communication channels should be established to facilitate efficient and continuous exchange of information. In light of the significant role played by strategic leadership practices in the operationalization of devolved administrative structures, it is imperative for the top leadership of County Governments to recognize and reward initiatives that promote the effective functioning of these structures. This can be achieved by acknowledging and appreciating efforts that contribute to the successful implementation of devolved governance.

Furthermore, the administration and policymakers must develop programs and initiatives that ensure strategic decision-making and actions are guided by sound judgment and practical considerations. In particular, it is important to involve experts and professionals from relevant fields to provide their knowledge and insights in the delivery of services and implementation of policies. By emphasizing the importance of strategic leadership practices and highlighting the need for appropriate structures, recognition of efforts, and expert involvement, the research offers practical recommendations for improving the operationalization of devolved administrative structures. These recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of devolved governance systems in Kenya, ultimately leading to improved service delivery and overall development at the county level.

The study revealed that enhancing strategic leadership practices positively impacts the operationalization of devolved administrative structures. It emphasizes the need for strategic leaders to establish supportive frameworks that encourage innovation and align responsibilities with policies. Efficient and continuous information flow is crucial in this process. The findings highlight the importance of recognizing and rewarding improvements in operationalization by County Government top leadership. The study also calls for the development of programs that facilitate the expertise and professionalism necessary for effective service delivery. Overall, the research underscores the significance of strategic leadership in optimizing the functioning of devolved administrative structures.

The research highlights the importance of granting significant independence to administrators in determining resource allocation for the effective implementation of

service delivery in devolved administrative structures. This autonomy allows administrators to make informed decisions based on the specific needs and priorities of their respective areas. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the need for a strong system of public accountability. This entails regularly addressing emerging challenges and adapting to technological advancements, financial changes, and demographic shifts. By promoting transparency and accountability, the devolved administrative structures can effectively respond to evolving circumstances and ensure the efficient use of resources.

The research also recommends that major decision-making processes within strategic work relations align with prescribed guidelines and adhere to proper behavioral standards. This includes adhering to established principles and ethical considerations that serve as the foundation for these decision-making processes. In addition, strategic leaders in top leadership positions should actively engage in communication and accountability practices, fostering open and transparent interactions. This involves maintaining clear lines of communication and ensuring accountability principles are consistently upheld. By implementing these recommendations, the research suggests that devolved administrative structures can achieve improved decision-making, enhanced resource allocation, and greater accountability. These actions contribute to the overall effectiveness and success of the devolved governance system in Kenya.

The research suggests that administrators in devolved structures should have independence in resource allocation to effectively deliver services. It emphasizes the need for regular public accountability to address emerging challenges and adapt to technological, financial, and demographic changes. The study recommends that major

decision-making processes adhere to prescribed guidelines and be guided by proper behavior and clear principles. Strategic leaders at the top level should actively engage and communicate with stakeholders, ensuring accountability and effective implementation of strategies.

The research emphasizes the importance of stakeholders' involvement in the operationalization of devolved administrative structures. Strategic leaders and administrators are encouraged to create opportunities for personnel to actively participate in decision-making processes and contribute their ideas and perspectives. This fosters a sense of ownership and engagement among employees, leading to increased motivation and productivity. County government top leadership is urged to implement strategies that promote a productive and inclusive working environment, where diverse perspectives are valued and collaboration is encouraged. This can be achieved through initiatives such as team-building activities, open forums for discussion, and recognition of employees' contributions.

Furthermore, the research highlights the need for strategic leaders and administrators to identify and reward exemplary talent while providing opportunities for career advancement. This helps to retain skilled personnel and incentivize continuous professional development. Additionally, the research advocates for stakeholders' involvement as a means of building human capital, which is a valuable asset for the effective functioning of institutions. By engaging stakeholders, such as local communities, civil society organizations, and other relevant actors, the devolved administrative structures can tap into their expertise, resources, and support.

The research was conducted at a time when decentralized units in Kenya had reached a stage of development and maturity. These structures had been established following the enactment of the 2010 Constitution and the subsequent general election in 2013. As these structures aimed to stand on their own and gain traction, the research provides insights into the significance of stakeholders' involvement in their operationalization. Overall, the involvement of stakeholders, coupled with the implementation of strategies that promote inclusivity, talent recognition and professional development can contribute to the success and sustainability of devolved administrative structures in Kenya.

The research highlights the importance of stakeholders' involvement in the context of devolved administrative structures. Strategic leaders and administrators are encouraged to create opportunities for personnel to actively participate and contribute to the organization's goals. It is suggested that County Government leaders should establish conducive working environments that promote productivity and open-mindedness in leadership aspects that can service delivery. Furthermore, recognizing and rewarding talented individuals while providing career development opportunities is emphasized. Stakeholders' involvement is viewed as a means of building human capital, which is crucial for the successful functioning of institutions. The research was conducted during a period when decentralized units in the country were reaching maturity and striving for self-sufficiency, following the implementation of the 2010 constitution and the subsequent general election of 2013.

The findings of the study provide policymakers and government players in the National and County government sectors with constructive views for further research. The

research provides potential beneficiaries with insights into a variety of issues that impede the county governments' operationalization of decentralized administrative systems. The policy actors ought to use the suggested results that emerge from the study to provide solutions to the obstacles encountered by county governments. This research increased knowledge and expertise in executing the administrative systems in Counties as stipulated in the 2010 Kenyan Constitution.

The research outcomes were purposely used towards the National Government by identifying findings that could stimulate execution of policies by county governments in Kenya. The accomplishment of Vision 2030 relies entirely on the recital performance and accomplishment of execution of policies by the county administrations, these being guided by Vision 2030, which acts as the blue print 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.

5.6 Recommendation for Further Research

It is prudent to explore the potential of undertaking studies like this one on other Counties in Kenya, even though doing so requires significant time and resources. Moreover, an exploration of ethical considerations should be carried out to establish potential influence on the implementation of strategic leadership practices. This research investigated the effects of strategic leadership practices across the devolved administrative structures. Nevertheless, an insignificant variation on how these structures were applied indicated that there were possible outside factors that may have impacted them. For future studies to be effective, it is essential to take these external variables into account.

The outcomes of this study could determine the focus of forthcoming academic studies on strategic leadership practices and how they can be put to use in devolved administrative structures or organizations and premeditated tactics by county governments. The resulting literature could provide valuable insight and be of great help to different scholars who could take advantage of the discoveries as a starting point in structuring their research. That way, their research could further expand existing knowledge regarding the functioning of county governments in Kenya and other nations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

This is Andrew Shangarai Jumanne, a Ph.D candidate at Kenyatta University. For the degree to be conferred on me, am required to conduct a study purposely to fill an empirical gap in a given area. Am conducting research on “Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures in Kenya: A case of Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties.” You’ve been selected as a respondent in this study and would like you to spare your time to respond to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of four sections A, B, C, D, E, F and G.

Kindly respond to each question based on your acquired skills and experiences.

I give assurance that all your responses are utilized strictly for academic purposes only and will be treated with utmost confidence.

Participating in this research study is voluntary.

Please sign below if you consent to participate as a respondent.

Signature..... Date

Thank you for participating in this research.

NB:

Nowhere in the questionnaire is your name required.

PART A: Background Information

Please tick (✓), mark(x) or numbers in the appropriate box that closely matches your view or alternatively write on the spaces provided where necessary.

A0. County Government. Makueni County [] Taita Taveta []

A1. Gender. Female[]

 Male []

A2. Level of Education?

 O/A level [] Certificate/Diploma [] Bachelors [] Post graduate []

A3. Position in the county

 Director [] CO [] CECM []

A4. Indicate the number of years you have served this county government?

 0-3 [] 3-5[] 6-8[]

PART B: Resources Allocation Practices

Kindly tick appropriately against those statements below. You are only required to tick once in each of the statement.

Using a scale of 1-5, where (1-Not at all, 2-small extent, 3-moderate extent, 4-large extent and 5- very large extent)

	County Government’s Resources Practices	1	2	3	4	5
B1	To what extent does the county government strategy applied recruiting human resource?					
B2	County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes.					
B3	To what extent does the County Government develop processes through implementing plans to support change?					
B4	Given the opportunity, to what extent has leaders in your County Government strategically allocated resources to the stakeholders?					
B5	To what extent does the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources?					
B6	To what extent, in your County Government scenario, has planning been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources?					
B7	To what extent does leaders in your County Government develop specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically.					
	County Government’s Resources Practices	1	2	3	4	5
B1	To what extent does the county government strategy applied recruiting human resource?					
B2	County government strategies are used to tap potential from the county personnel in order to realize intended outcomes.					
B3	To what extent does the County Government develop processes through implementing plans to support change?					

B4	Given the opportunity, to what extent has leaders in your County Government strategically allocated resources to the stakeholders?					
B5	To what extent does the vision of the County Government directly influences the development of strategic planning process with allocated resources?					
B6	To what extent, in your County Government scenario, has planning been used to generate various imagined outcomes, based on allocated resources?					
B7	To what extent does leaders in your County Government develop specific action plans guided by well established procedures on allocating resources strategically?					

B8: Your County Government have targets to be achieve at any given time based on allocated resources. Please rate how often.

Never [] Rarely [] Sometimes [] Frequently [] Always []

PART C: Public (Leadership) Accountability Practices

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statements below relating to your organization.

(1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

	Public (Leadership) Accountability Practices	1	2	3	4	5
C1	The strategies of the county government are communicated to stakeholders and county teams in a timely manner.					
C2	Information continuous circulate among senior leadership, key stakeholders and county government team members.					
C3	County leadership always validate responses given by county government employees in a timely.					
C4	Transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication is enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public.					
C5	Networking with other counties’ stakeholders is enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement.					
C6	With the help of communication, organizational leaders are able to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens.					

PART D: Stakeholder Involvement Practices

In this part indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statements below relating to your organization.

(1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

	Stakeholder Involvement Practices	1	2	3	4	5
D1	There is timely communication of leadership practices and strategies to local citizens and involved stakeholders.					
D2	There exists perpetual information flow right from the top leadership, county government employees and other stakeholders.					
D3	There is timely validation of responses by the County Government leadership more especially from different administrative teams to the public.					
D4	Leaders in your County Government strategically allocate resources for stakeholder involvement.					
D5	Transparency, trust and honesty through regular communication is enhanced by county leadership within and to the Public.					
D6	Networking with other counties' stakeholders is enhanced by County leadership as a public information dissemination process requirement.					
D7	Enhanced communication enables organizational leaders to establish team commitment which later benefit the citizens.					

PART E: Legal factors

Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statements below relating to your organization.

(1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

	Legal factors	1	2	3	4	5
E1	The County leadership has special considerations from the constitution in its daily administrative operations to local citizens and stakeholders involved, which the courts are sometimes invited to make advisory opinions.					
E2	The County Government administration has been subjected to litigation in the Court of law for compliance (court cases)					
E3	The National Government Administration is involved when the Devolved administration is formulating its policies or legislations.					
E4	Transparency, trust and honest in communication has been enhanced by leaders within the county and to the Public by following the communication laws of the Country.					
E5	The National Government supports the County Government to access information needed by Leaders in the County as per the Local and international authorities' laws legislated.					

PART F: Devolved Administrative Structures

Lastly, indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the statements below relating to your organization.

(1 – Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Disagree, 5 – Strongly Disagree)

	Devolved Administrative Structures	1	2	3	4	5
F1	There are acceptable levels of Administrative Structures in your County Government.					
F2	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been responsive to public concerns and complaints					
F3	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been responsive to takeholder concerns and complaints					
F4	Administrative structures’ initiatives in your County are influenced by Strategic leadership.					
F5	The Administrative structures in the County has contributed to the achievement of the desired goals of Leadership.					
F6	Devolved administrative structures have successfully been operationalized in your County in the last 8 years.					
F7	Devolved administrative structures performance is influenced by effective leadership.					
F8	Formulation of unique strategies that foster performance of the devolved administrative structures is the preserve of the top leadership.					
F9	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been efficient in the delivery of County services					
F10	The leadership implements administrative structures in line with the legal processes and procedures.					

F11	The devolved administrative structures in your County government have been effective in the delivery of County services					
-----	---	--	--	--	--	--

PART G: Opinion Questions

G1	Based on your own experience, what could spur the success of devolved administrative structures in your home County Government? ----- ----- -----
G2	Again, based on your own opinion, what hinders the initiative operationalization of devolved administrative structures initiative? ----- ----- -----
G3	Based on the experience you have, where does the success of devolved administrative structures from? ----- ----- -----

THE END

Thank you for your time.

Appendix II. Interview Schedule

1. Give your views on the state of strategic leadership in your county.

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.....

2. What are the stumbling blocks to the practice of strategic leadership in your county on devolved administrative structures operations?

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.....

3. Has the practice of resource allocation enhanced the devolved administrative structures of the county?

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.....
.....

4. Has the practice of public accountability enhanced devolved administrative structures of the county?

.....
.....
.....

5. Has the County government been timely in responding to the public and stakeholders' concerns and complaints?

.....
.....
.....

6. Have the county's operations been effective through the practice of stakeholders involvement?

.....
.....
.....

7. Has the practice of working under the strict laws boosted the devolved administrative structures of your county?

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.....
.....

8. Give us the nature of this county's operations. Are they efficient and effective?

.....
.....
.....

9. Has the legal issues had effects on the devolved administrative structures operations in your county?

.....
.....
.....

10. Has the leadership in your county had legal issues that affected the service delivery by the devolved administrative structures?

.....
.....
.....

THE END

Appendix III: Questionnaire and Interview Respondents codes

Instruments Number	Questionnaire(s)/Interview(s)	Date when conducted
01	IS01	5 th November 2021
02	IS02	5 th November 2021
03	IS03	5 th November 2021
04	IS04	5 th November 2021
05	IS05	5 th November 2021
06	IS06	5 th November 2021
07	IS07	8 th November 2021
08	IS08	10 th November 2021
09	IS09	10 th November 2021
010	IS010	8 th November 2021
011	IS011	26 th November 2021
012	IS012	26 th November 2021
013	IS013	27 th December 2021
014	IS014	27 th December 2021
015	IS015	20 th November 2021
016	IS016	20 th November 2021
017	IS017	20 th November 2021
018	IS018	13 th November 2021

**Appendix IV: Approval of Research Proposal Letter from Kenyatta University,
Graduate School**



4

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 57530

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School **DATE:** 2nd September, 2021
TO: Andrew Shangarai Jumanne **REF:** C82/CTY/27282/2018
C/o Public Policy & Administration Department.
Kenyatta University

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

=====

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board, at its meeting of 25th August, 2021, approved your Ph.D Research Proposal Entitled, "Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures in Kenya: A case of Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties".

You may now proceed with data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the progress report forms. The supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

By a copy of this letter, The Registrar (Academic) is hereby requested to grant you substantive registration for your Ph.D studies.

Thank you.

HARRIET ISABOKE
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Department of Public Policy and Administration
Registrar (Academic)

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Jane Njoroge
C/o Department of Public Policy & Administration
Kenyatta University
2. Dr. Edna Moi
C/o Department of Public Policy & Administration
Kenyatta University

HI/mn

Appendix V: Graduate School Authorization Letter



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 020-8704150

Our Ref: C82/CTY/27282/2018

DATE: 2nd September, 2021

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
& Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

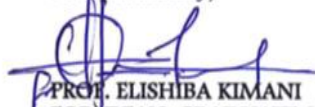
RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MR. ANDREW SHANGARAI JUMANNE – REG. NO. C82/CTY/27282/2018

I write to introduce Mr. Andrew Shangarai Jumanne who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. He is registered for Ph.D Degree programme in the **Department of Public Policy and Administration**.

Mr. Jumanne intends to conduct research for Ph.D. Proposal entitled, “**Strategic Leadership Practices and Devolved Administrative Structures in Kenya: A Case of Taita Taveta and Makueni Counties**”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. ELISHIBA KIMANI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

EE/nn

Appendix VI: Permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **563240** Date of Issue: **14/October/2021**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. Andrew Shangarai Jumanne of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Makueni, Taita-Taveta on the topic: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND DEVOLVED ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES IN KENYA: A CASE OF TAITA TAVETA AND MAKUENI COUNTIES for the period ending : 14/October/2022.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/21/A3201**

563240
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013

The Grant of Research Licenses is Guided by the Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period
2. The License any rights thereunder are non-transferable
3. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research
4. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies
5. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials
6. NACOSTI may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project
7. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) within one year of completion of the research
8. NACOSTI reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice

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Website: www.nacosti.go.ke

Appendix VII: Map of Location of Taita Taveta County in Kenya



Map of Kenya

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

Appendix VIII: Map of Location of Makueni County in Kenya



Map of Kenya

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.