Leadership Practices, Stakeholder Involvement and Performance of National Government Departments in Kenya

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Abstract

The performance in most of the National Government departments in Kenya has been average over the years leading to disparities in access to resources and quality services. There is scanty literature on leadership practices and the performance of the departments available. Thus, this study assessed the influence of leadership practices on the performance of the departments moderated by stakeholder involvement. The study adopted quantitative and qualitative mixed research design guided by positivism research philosophy. It used a validated semi – structured questionnaire for data collection from a sample of 195 respondents drawn from National Government Heads of Departments in the Counties. The resultant data was analyzed to generate descriptive and inferential statistics which were used to draw inferences. The study established that leadership practices significantly influence the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya moderated by stakeholder involvement. To improve on the performance, the management should review the stakeholder involvement management and the leadership practices adopted with a view of re – engineering the implementation process to provide for a performance improvement framework. The respondents were drawn from the National Government Departments in the Counties which excluded the views of Heads of Departments based at the headquarters of the National Government Departments. This is the first study on leadership practices, stakeholder involvement and performance of the National Government departments in Kenya to the best of the researchers. It added knowledge on the leadership practices and stakeholder involvement influence on the performance of public sector organizations.

Keywords: implementation drivers, leadership practices, national government departments, performance of departments, stakeholder involvement

1. Introduction

Successful strategy implementation is a major organization achievement but remains a challenge in organizations. Implementation, though a major and significant stage in the management process, is the most difficult and problematic in organizations (Ramadan, 2015). The strategy implementation process is a critical component in organizational performance and it involves interaction of multiple variables (Kamande & orwa, 2015). Fundamentally, inappropriate strategy implementation or failure may result in disparity in performance. Success requires compliance to statutes, goals and directives, achievement of specific success indicators as well as the political environment (Paudel, 2009; Ramadan, 2015).

In the management of organizational functions, institutions are responsible for transforming strategies into actions and departments are established to implement the strategies but their achievement remain a major challenge (Obeidat, 2008). In the public sector, it is the responsibility of the institutions to deliver the required services (Makanyeza et al., 2013). Thus, in Kenya, the national leadership establishes departments (which were 49 at the time of the study) as government institutions that play a key role in the achievement of the government agenda whose success depends on the implementation of the various set strategy (PSC(K), 2021).

1.1 Leadership Practices

Leadership practices influence the orientation an organization takes as well as determining how it achieves its goals (Mutole, 2019). The leadership practices are strategies and practices that leaders adopt and implement consistently to assist their teams better themselves (Lewis, 2003). They entail articulating organizational mission (leading with a purpose), unleashing the productivity of the people, that is, mobilization of individual actors to do more with less, generating loyalty in stakeholders which is aimed at satisfying customers, inspiring trust, helping customers to succeed. They revolve around strategic actions and decision implementation, impacting on organizational management and influencing the performance of the managers (Hagen, Hassan & Amin, 1998).

The literature reviewed show that leadership practices is one of the strategy implementation drivers (Jooste & Fouries 2009; Kihara, 2016; Sorooshian, Norzima, Yusof & Rosnah, 2010; Ramadan, 2015). The practices capture the nature of interactions in the implementation process and without their consideration, an organization business may be incomplete in addressing real business situations (Mullins, 2010; D'Souza, 2011). They motivate employees to achieve objectives, mutual trust and cooperation of employees, coordination and organization of work activities as well as establishing the support and cooperation from stakeholders (Yukl, 2013). However, the extent to which the leadership practices influence the performance of the National Government departments could not be ascertained.

1.2 Stakeholder Involvement

Organization stakeholders may be a group or individuals who can exert influence or affect or may be affected by the achievement of organization objectives (Bal, 2014). Depending on the organization, the stakeholders' degree of influence on the strategy achievement relies on their interests, the power they hold, their degree of cooperation or threat (Kinyua, 2016) and the strategy. They are concerned with the decisions made by the organizations, how they affect them, the environment, the community, the government or the direction an organization takes. Thus, correct identification and involvement of stakeholders in the strategy implementation process and creating dialogue with them is essential.

Stakeholder involvement is a regulatory mechanism, which seeks stakeholder views on organizational performance improvement and it emphasizes the engagement to be not only inclusive but also balanced and far reaching (Amaeshi & Crane, 2006). The involvement may be viewed as actions from an outside party impacting on the performance or as the process in which the groups or individuals affected or affecting the organization activities are engaged (Sloan, 2009). However, the extent to which the stakeholder involvement influence the performance of the departments could not be ascertained from the literature reviewed.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Kenya has a successful strategy implementation as an important management agenda geared towards a successful socio – economic development (GoK, 2007; GoK, 2010). A review of several performance evaluation reports showed that the performance of the departments has been average over time. For instance, in the 2019/2020 performance evaluation, performance for the Departments evaluated was in the range 3.0 to 4.0 on a scale of 5 (poor) to 1(excellent), which was a decline from the previous year's performance index of 17.3 percent (PSC(K), 2019). To improve on this performance, the government continue to budget a lot of resources for implementation of remedial strategies such as the adoption of performance contracting (GoK, 2016a; Ogola & Nzulwa, 2018).

Despite all the measures put in place, the performance does not support the expected access to resources or services (KNBS & SID, 2013). Hence, this study assessed the influence of leadership practices on the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya moderated by stakeholder involvement. It was restricted to the performance of the National Government departments in the Counties as they are the main actors in the implementation of the National Government functions in Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

    H$_{o1}$: Leadership practices has no significant influence on the performance of National Government departments in Kenya.

    H$_{o2}$: Stakeholder involvement has no significant influence on the relationship between leadership practices and the performance of National Government departments in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the contingency and stakeholder theories as there was no single theory that was found to be sufficient for study.

2.1.1 Contingency Theory

The contingency theory of leadership is predicated on the view that there does not exist any best way to organize which is the core of the approach adopted by governments to improve public service (Andrews et al., 2012). It assumes that there is no simple one right way to organize and as such performance can be influenced by several factors some of which may not be contingent to the situation. Performance varies, not only with the person or group that is being influenced, but it also depends on the task, job or function that needs to be accomplished. The management constantly rides on a wave of change while working to create, maintain and grow an environment which optimizes implementation with contingency theory being applied during the management interventions (Andrews et al., 2012).

To implement strategies, governments do roll out programmes that apply to different departments and the performance becomes a product of leadership and management. Based on this theory, the departments can implement changes as dictated by environmental variables. The departments operate in this environment and leadership is a key attribute determining their performance (Andrews et al., 2012). Hence, this theory supports the assessment of leadership practices interaction with stakeholder involvement and their influence on the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya within the prevailing environment.

2.1.2 Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory guides organization management to understand and take into consideration the interests of their stakeholders. That is, the theory is about how organizations interact with individuals or groups affecting them. It provides for insights and understanding of the interaction of an organization and its stakeholders (Elbanna et al., 2016). The theory underpins the importance of the organizational management taking into consideration the business environment. It suggests that addressing the stakeholder's interests improve organizational performance.

Organizations should be concerned with stakeholders who strive to improve strategy implementation as well as those who seek to sabotage its success (Kinyua, 2016). Continuous stakeholder analysis is essential to understand the type of stakeholders the strategy implementers are dealing with to be able to handle their interests and the competing demands to the organization. The Friedman and Miles (2002) perspective of stakeholder and organizational relationship which takes into consideration why and how changes in the relationship between stakeholders and the organization informed the choice of stakeholder involvement as a moderating variable for the current study. Hence, this study relied on the stakeholder theory to explain the stakeholder involvement moderating influence on the relationship between the leadership practices and the performance of the departments.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the leadership practices was conceptualized to influence the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya, moderated by stakeholder involvement, as outlined in Figure 1.
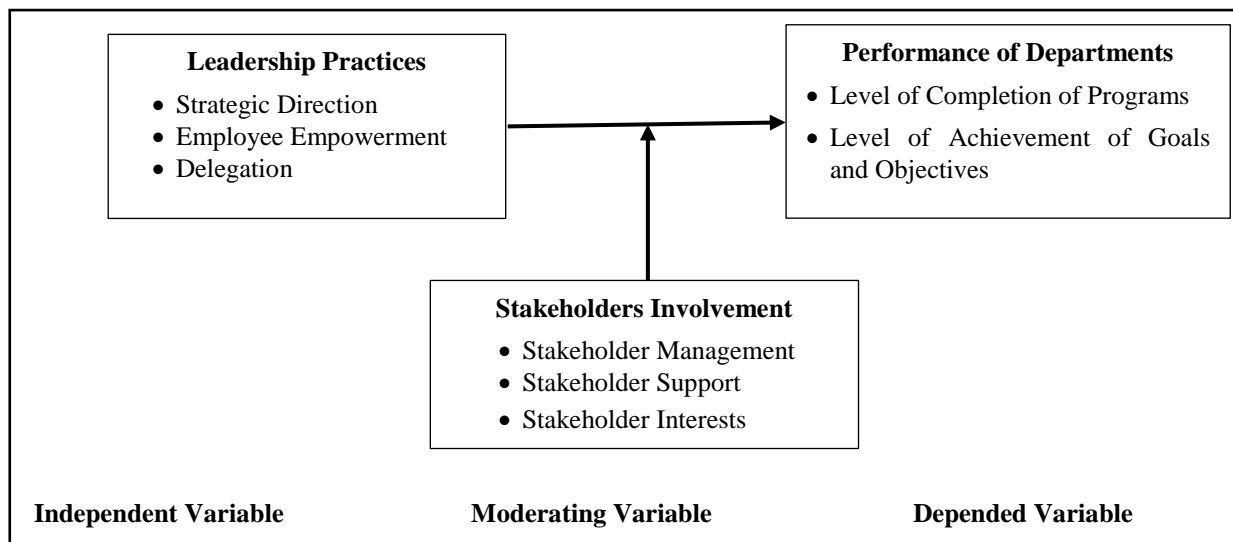

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Leadership Practices and Performance of Departments

Leadership actions positively influence strategy implementation; the most important actions being determining the strategic direction, exploitation and maintenance of core competence and human capital empowerment (Jooste & Fouries, 2009). Thus, in this study the leadership practices was measured using strategic direction, employee empowerment and delegation as indicators. Strategic direction is about defining the long term vision of an organization which may be determined by the organizational strategic intent, goals, objectives, mission and vision (Kitonga, 2017). While the employee empowerment is a collection of knowledge, competencies, personal attributes and skills that create value in the organizational workforce and organizations need to develop their human capital to perform their activities successfully (McIsaac, Park & Toupin, 2013). The empowerment is a leadership practice that influences organizational performance, with flexible human resource management having direct relation with organizational performance (Sekhar, Patwardhan and Vyas, 2017).

On the other hand, delegation is about having one person act on behalf of another; it influences strategy formulation and implementation. The design of delegation instruments which include governance systems and managerial incentives is mainly internal looking (Sengul, Gimeno & Dial, 2012). However, delegation decisions may be both internally oriented for efficient strategy formulation and implementation as well as externally oriented to shape the competitive interactions. The way the top management delegates enhances the organization performances, strongly influencing the performance (Mutole, 2019). However, at times it is difficult to delegate especially if an organization does not have good communication channels that also allow employees to give feedback. Organizations may overcome this by bringing in the employees into the implementation process at an early stage to enable them understand the scope of the process, measurable goals, agreed deadlines and expected reporting timelines.

Most of the studies reviewed were in the private sector and it was established that leadership practices influence organizational performance. The public sector organizations just like the organizations in the private sector require leadership as essential in their performance. In the public sector, the practices assist in building dedicated institutions that are pivotal in strategy implementation. They are not solely about public officers but also about those who shape public actions and debate (Hartley, 2018). The practices are critical for successful strategy implementation with the leadership characteristics determining the implementation (Kagumu, 2018). They help to transform strategies for equity in development and focus on those with formal authority in the public service and government. That is, the political leaders at all levels and the professional public officers in the government and public service (Hartley, 2018).

2.2.2 Stakeholder Involvement and Performance of Departments

Stakeholders influence the implementation process and their involvement was measured using stakeholder management, stakeholder support and stakeholder interests. The stakeholder management assists in goal achievement in a predetermined direction while the stakeholder support provides the necessary resources, knowledge and skills for strategy implementation whose lack may lead to failure or poor performance (Bal, 2014). It is necessary to engage the stakeholders and build good relationships for better ways of doing business. The stakeholder interest which could be casual interests, governance interests, ownership or those interests that could be affected by the organizational actions, or of legal or moral claim, influence activities in different ways. They are multifaceted and connect to each other and thus failing to take care of them may jeopardise the strategy implementation (Bal, 2014) and at times may result into competing interests (Pigmans, Doorn & Aldewereld, 2017).

The circumstances surrounding the public sector strategy implementation is unique and stakeholders play a key role in the management of the organizational business. Their interests may affect the implementation of the goals and activities or they can be manipulated, affecting the organizational performance; this may be a factor leading to low actualization of national values and principles (PSC(K), 2017). However, the stakeholders demands have high economic benefits and a relationship with key stakeholders creates intangible resources for competitive advantage (Berrone, Surroca and Tribó, 2007).

On the other hand, the stakeholder engagement is dependent on the existing management policies and for sustainable performance it is necessary to engage all stakeholders (Bal, 2014). Munene (2013) in her study, established that stakeholder involvement was essential in the performance. Further, Twaissi and Aldehayyat (2021) in their study conducted on the manufacturing companies in Jordan, established that the organization performance changes positively with stakeholder involvement as a moderator and varying stakeholder involvement affects the performance such that high involvement leads to improved performance.

2.2.3 Performance of National Government Departments in Kenya

Performance is the actual output or results as compared to the intended output (Tomal & Jones, 2015). It may take different forms and may be considered to be the carrying out, producing, fulfilling, accomplishing or completing a given task (Paudel, 2009). The performance of the departments is the continuous achievement of the departmental goals and objectives in an efficient and effective manner and it contributes into achievement of the country's mission and vision (MICNG, 2019). The heads of departments are responsible for implementation of the departmental goals and strategies though influential stakeholders may push for their priorities and interests.

Key performance indicators (KPI) are used to measure the performance of the departments with financial or non – financial indicators being recognized as measures of the degree of achievement of the goals and objectives (Nurcahyo et al., 2015). In this study, non-financial performance measurements were adopted for qualitative and quantitative measurement of the performance. These are more futuristic and are suitable measurements, implementable across an organization (Ahmad & Zabri, 2016). In particular, the degree of achievement of goals and objectives and the degree of completion of programs were used as the performance indicators. The progress of success in completion and achievement is evaluated on a quarterly basis as per the implementation guidelines.

The completion of programs is about the extent to which implementation is finalized and it deals with whether all aspects of the strategy are being implemented. The degree of completion of organizational programs may be high, medium or low. On the hand, achievement which may also be high, medium or low indicates how far what has been implemented meets what was intended and it is a main criterion for measuring strategy implementation (Miller, 1997). It is possible that some of the parts of a strategy are implemented leaving out others and thus, leading to unsuccessful or unintended outcome (Miller, 1997).

A strategy may be implemented completely but remain unsuccessful if it does not get the intended results as success is about whether the implementation works as expected. The strategy implementation could also be complete, achieving more than what was intended but end up being unacceptable. However, the constitution of Kenya provides for management of performance through creation of linkages and communication within and across departments anchored on consultations with the public and the key stakeholders. This provides for public participation to encourage ownership of implementation activities the government intends to achieve (Owino & Etyang, 2017).

2.3 Research Gap

Strategy implementation aims at realising the set goals and it defines the organization performance. From the studies reviewed, good organizational performance has remained elusive despite different methods being recommended by various scholars. Most these studies are in the private sector in developed economies with little emphasize in the public sector within developing countries (Anchor & Aldehayyat, 2016). Further, there is no evidence on the relationship between leadership practices, stakeholder involvement and the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya. It is against this background that the researchers assessed the influence of leadership practices as a strategy implementation driver on the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya with stakeholder involvement as a moderator.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research design which provides a conceptual structure within which a research is done (Kothari, 2004) was a combination of quantitative and qualitative research designs; chosen guided by positivism research philosophy. This is a mixed design which is a triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The design constituted a blueprint for collection of data, measurement and analysis (Kothari, 2004). This kind of approach has been used in similar studies as it increases the validity of the outcome and it compensates for the weakness of each method through their counter balancing strength (Hameed, 2020; Kihara, 2016).

3.2 Target Population

The target population of the study was 535 heads of departments, drawn from the sampled National Government departments in Counties of Kenya. The National Government heads of departments were chosen to form the target population as they are the ones in charge of coordination, interpretation, dissemination and implementation of the National Government functions in their respective units. This makes them to be the most significant actors in the implementation process and operations (Ahearne, Lam & Kraus, 2014) and the most appropriate persons to respond to questions on strategy implementation and the performance of the departments.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size for the study was 195 heads of departments drawn from the target population using simple random sampling. This is 36.4 percent of the target population and since the target population was small (it is below 1,000), it was sufficient for the study as a good representation should be at least 30 percent of the target population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). A pilot sample of 20 HoDs was used to validate the data collection instrument.

3.4 Data Collection Tool and Procedure

A semi structured questionnaire was used to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents. It was chosen as a tool for the study as it can cover a lot of content within a short time, it is comparatively easy to analyse and it provides responses free of the interviewer's bias (Kothari, 2004). Structured questions tend to be restrictive in nature and hence, the open-ended items were used to generate non – restrictive responses which were used as balancing data to the quantitative data (Heale & Forbes, 2013). A list of the various heads of departments was obtained from the County Commissioners' offices after the necessary authorization. The sampled HoDs were then contacted and requested to be respondents in the study before the instrument was administered to them through a drop and pick method.

3.5 Variable Measurements

The extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with the structured items representing the independent and moderating variables was measured using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 where 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Not Sure, 2 = Disagree and 1= Strongly Disagree. While the information on the performance of the departments was based on the percentage range of below 20 to 100. This was later coded with indices 1 to 5 where 1 (Very Low) = below 20 percent, 2 (Low) = 21 – 40, 3 (Average) = 41 – 60, 4 (High) = 61 – 80 and 5 (Very High) = 81 to 100 percent. The responses from the open-ended items provided the qualitative data.

3.6 Data Analyses and Model Specification

The quantitative data was analysed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive and inferential statistics from the raw data of the variables (Kothari, 2004; Choge, 2017). Content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data with the responses being categorized into relevant sub categories and categories followed by indexing for statistical analysis. ANOVA test was used to determine if the independent variable had a significant influence on the dependent variable at 5 percent level of significance. The decision rule was that if $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis (H_0) was not accepted but if $p > 0.05$, then H_o was accepted (Gujarati, 2004). Further, a significant regression coefficient for the interaction term implied that the moderator variable had a significant influence on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The study adopted linear regression models

$$Y = \beta_{0 +} \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + e \qquad \text{(model 1)}$$

$$Y = \beta_{0 +} \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 XZ + e \qquad \text{(model 2)}$$

where Y = Performance of Departments, X = Leadership Practices, $Z =$ Stakeholder Involvement, β_0 = the intercept holding all the variables constant at zero, β_1 = partial regressions coefficients of X, β_2 = partial regression coefficient of Z, XZ = interaction term, β_3 = partial regression coefficient of the interaction term and e = error term, representing all other variables in the function but not observed. Comparison of the two models was used to test the moderating effect of stakeholder involvement on the relationship between leadership practices and the performance by examining the significance of regression coefficient of the interaction term and coefficient of determination change, that is, R square change (Whisman & McClelland, 2005).

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Response Rate

A total of 152 valid questionnaires were returned from the 195 questionnaires administered, giving a response rate of 77.9 percent, which was a good response rate as a 60 percent response rate is adequate and sufficient for any research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003; Fincham, 2008).

4.2 Leadership Practices

The study sought to establish if the respondents agreed or disagreed with the assertion that leadership practices significantly influence the performance of National Government departments. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics from 149 valid responses. The mean scores show that majority of the respondents were in agreement that familiarization with strategic goals commits employees to implementation of strategies, the employees' adoption of

strategic intent enhances implementation of the departmental objectives and the departmental strategies have clear description of staff roles. However, they were not sure the departments have an elaborate training system for employees on strategy programs, the departments invest in skills development to improve on the implementation of their programs and the managers in the departments do not assign key tasks on strategy implementation to other staff.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Practices Items

	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Familiarization with strategic goals commits employees to strategy implementation	152	3.7697	1.01948
2	Adoption of strategic intent enhances implementation of objectives	151	3.6490	1.07206
3	Department has an elaborate training system for employees on strategy activities	152	3.3487	1.05642
4	Investment in skills development to improve on implementation of programs	151	3.4172	1.09153
5	Managers do not assign key tasks on strategy implementation to other staff	151	2.7815	1.16558
6	Strategies have clear description of staff roles	152	3.5066	1.01640
	Valid N (listwise)	149		

The respondents were also asked to state one leadership practice that contribute to enhanced implementation of departmental strategies. From 103 valid responses, 4 leadership practices were identified as shown in Table 2. These are empowering employees, performance management and accountability, participatory leadership and delegation. According to the majority (66.02%) of the respondents, empowering employees and performance management and accountability are key leadership practices that enhance implementation of departmental strategies.

Table 2. Leadership Practices Contributing to Strategy Implementation

S/No.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Empowering Employees	39	37.86
2.	Delegation	16	15.53
3.	Participatory leadership	19	18.45
4.	Performance management and accountability	29	28.16

4.3 Stakeholder Involvement

The study sought to establish if the respondents agreed or disagreed with the assertion that stakeholder involvement influences the performance of National Government departments. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics from 151 valid responses. The mean scores show that the respondents were in agreement with all the items. Hence, according to the majority of the respondents, embracing stakeholder involvement influences the strategy implementation.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Stakeholder Involvement Items

S/No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Stakeholder handling enhances performance in strategy implementation	152	3.7368	.96108
2	Stakeholder management system improves strategy implementation outcomes	152	3.6842	.93795
3	Stakeholder maintenance enhances performance and strategy implementation	152	3.6842	.87965
4	Stakeholder assistance promotes performance in strategy implementation	152	3.7434	.82588
5	Stakeholder demands contribute to performance in strategy implementation	151	3.7483	.94670
6	Recognizing stakeholder interests determine performance in strategy implementation	152	3.6776	.93215
	Valid N (listwise)	151		

The respondents were also asked to explain how the departments involve the stakeholders in the implementation of their programs. From 125 valid responses, as shown in Table 4, the departments involve the stakeholders in the implementation of their programs through consultations and sensitizations, encouraging stakeholder participation, inclusivity in the implementation process and using interactive stakeholder forums.

Table 4. Involving Stakeholders during Implementation

S/No.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Consultation and sensitization	49	39.2
2.	Encouraging stakeholders participation	28	22.4
3.	Inclusivity in implementation process	25	20.0
4.	Interactive stakeholders forums	23	18.4

The respondents were further asked to explain how the stakeholders' interests are taken care of during the implementation of departmental strategies. From 116 valid responses, as shown in Table 5, majority of the respondents (88.8%) were of the view that the stakeholder demands and interests are handled through organizing for stakeholders' participation, incorporate their interests during planning and consultative stakeholder forums. These results are in agreement with Munene (2013) views on addressing stakeholder interests.

Table 5. Taking Care of Stakeholder Interests

S/No.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Incorporate their interests during planning	35	30.17
2.	Recognizing the stakeholder role and responsibility	13	11.21
3.	Consultative stakeholder forums	31	26.72
4.	Organizing for stakeholders participation	37	31.9

4.4 Performance of Departments

The study assessed the performance in terms of the completion and the achievement of the implementation of the departmental strategies. The results from 151 valid responses as presented in Table 6, show that in the last five years the departments' performance was between 3.5 and 4, which translates to an average performance of between 41 and

60 percent in the last five years. This is in agreement with performance report of 2019/2020 performance evaluation report (PSC(K), 2020).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Performance of Departments Items

S/No	Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Degree of accomplishment of the departmental mission programs	151	3.6755	1.01028
2	Level of accomplishment of strategic objective programs	151	3.6159	.96513
3	Average accomplishment of the departmental mission programs	151	3.5232	.95103
4	Degree of achievement of the departmental mission programs	151	3.7020	1.00528
5	Level of achievement of departmental goals and objectives	150	3.8400	.85200
6	Average achievement of the departmental strategic goals and objectives	150	3.5200	.91754
	Valid N (listwise)	151		

The respondents were also asked to state one strategy used to ensure accomplishment of their departmental programs. From 116 valid responses, as shown in Table 7, the majority (65.4%) of the respondents identified monitoring and evaluation and compliance to work plan timelines as the key strategies used by the departments to ensure accomplishment of departmental programs.

Table 7. Ensuring Program Accomplishment

S/No	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Periodic review of progress	18	15.52
2.	Compliance to work plan timelines	37	31.9
3.	Monitoring and evaluation	40	34.48
4.	Appropriate planning and coordination	21	18.10

The respondents were also asked to state one strategy used to ensure achievement of their departmental strategic objectives. From 130 valid responses, as shown in Table 8, the majority (86.92%) of the respondents identified tracking progress in performance, commitment to work execution plan, motivation and capacity building as key strategies used in ensuring achievement of strategic objectives.

Table 8. Ensuring Achievement of Strategic Objectives

S/No	Category	Frequency	Percent
1.	Tracking performance progress	52	40.0
2.	Motivation and capacity building	29	22.31
3.	Commitment to work execution plan	32	24.62
4.	Strategic control and guidance	17	13.08

4.5 Correlation Between Variables

The results in Table 9 show the correlation coefficient for the relationship between the variables. From the results, the leadership practices and the stakeholder involvement have a statistically significant positive correlation of 0.302 and 0.203 respectively with the performance of departments but they are not significantly correlated amongst themselves.

Table 9. Correlations Coefficients between Variables

		X	Z	Y
Leadership Practices (X)	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	149		
Stakeholder Involvement (Z)	Pearson Correlation	-.062	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.455		
	N	146	149	
Performance of Departments (Y)	Pearson Correlation	.302[**]	.203[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.014	
	N	147	146	149

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4.6 Hypotheses Testing

4.6.1 Hypothesis One, H_{01}, Test

Without the moderator, the linear regression model 1 becomes $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + e$. This was used to test the first research hypothesis. Table 10 shows the ANOVA test results where F statistic is 14.598 with a p value which is less than 0.05 at a 5 percent significance level.

Table 10. ANOVA Test Statistics for Hypothesis One

	Model	*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	Regression	252.750	1	252.750	14.598	.000[b]
	Residual	2510.529	145	17.314		
	Total	2763.279	146			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Departments

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Practices

Further, the results in Table 11 show the regression coefficient of leadership practices, $\beta = 0.285$ with t = 3.821 and with p value which is less than 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis, **H_{01}**, was not accepted and therefore, leadership practices has a significant positive influence on the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya.

Table 11. Partial Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	15.994	1.559		10.261	.000
X	.285	.075	.302	3.821	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Departments

4.6.2 Hypothesis Two, H_{02}, Test

The hypothesis, $\mathbf{H_{02}}$, was tested using $\mathbf{Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 XZ + e}$ (model 2). Table 12 shows the ANOVA test results with model 1 (without interaction term) having $F_{(2,143)} = 11.747$, $p < 0.05$ and model 2 (with the interaction term) having $F_{(2,143)} = 9.608$, $p < 0.05$. The F statistics are both significant.

Table 12. ANOVA Test Statistics for Hypothesis Two

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	387.619	2	193.810	11.747	.000[b]
	Residual	2326.318	141	16.499		
	Total	2713.938	143			
2	Regression	463.377	3	154.459	9.608	.000[c]
	Residual	2250.560	140	16.075		
	Total	2713.938	143			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Departments

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Involvement, Leadership Practices

c. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Involvement, Leadership Practices, Product of XZ

The results in Table 13 show a R^2 for model 1 equals 0.143, F $(2,143)$ change $= 11.747$ and $p < 0.05$ for model 1 while model 2 has R^2 of 0.171, F $(1,142)$ change $= 4.713$ and $p = 0.032$ which is less than 0.05. Comparing the statistics of the two models gives a significant R^2 change of 0.028 with F $(1,142)$ change $= 4.713$ and $p = 0.032$.

Table 13. Summary Statistics of the Models

				CHANGE STATISTICS				
MODEL	R	R^2	ADJUSTED R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.378[a]	.143	.131	.143	11.747	2	143	.000
2	.413[b]	.171	.153	.028	4.713	1	142	.032

A. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Involvement, Leadership Practices

B. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholders Involvement, Leadership Practices, Product Of Xz

The results in Table 14, further show that model 1 has significant partial regression coefficients of the predictor (X) and moderator (Z). From model 2 the interaction term (**XZ**) has a significant partial regression coefficient of 0.012 (p $= 0.032$ which is less than 0.05) while regression coefficients of **X** and **Z** are statistically insignificant. This implies

that there is complete moderation and hence, the null hypothesis, H_{02}, was not accepted. Therefore, the stakeholder involvement has significant influence on the relationship between the leadership practices and the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya.

Table 14. Partial Regression Coefficients

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	t	Sig.
1	**(Constant)**	10.748	2.391		4.495	.000
	X	.311	.075	.325	4.153	.000
	Z	.225	.081	.216	2.767	.006
	Constant)	14.742	2.993		4.926	.000
		.018	.153	.019	.120	.904
		.052	.113	.050	.462	.645
	Z	.012	.006	.377	2.171	.032

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Departments

4.7 Statistical Model

4.7.1 Statistical Model Without Moderator

The main influence of the leadership practices on the performance of departments without a moderator was tested with the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + e$, where the variables and parameters are as previously defined. The results in table 11 show that $\beta_0 = 15.994$ (t = 10.261, p = 0.000), $\beta_1 = 0.285$ (t = 3.710, p = 0.000). Hence, the main influence of the leadership practices can be estimated using statistical model $\hat{Y} = \mathbf{15.994 + 0.285X}$. The constant (intercept) shows the expected value of **Y** when all the variables are held constant at zero. The results imply that holding all other factors constant, a unit change in leadership practices (**X**) results in 28.5 percent positive change in the performance of the departments. The statistical equation shows a logical relationship between the variable with the partial regression coefficients not equal to zero and hence, the model is reliable and valid.

4.7.2 Statistical Model With Moderator

The influence of the leadership practices on the performance of departments with a moderator was tested with the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 XZ + e$. From the results in Table 14, the model 1, $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + e$, partial regression coefficients were $\beta_0 = 10.748$ (t = 4.495, p < 0.05), and $\beta_1 = 0.311$ (t = 4.153, p < 0.05) and $\beta_2 = 0.225$ (t = 2.767, p = 0.006 < 0.05). Hence, the estimated model 1 was $\hat{Y} = \mathbf{10.748 + 0.311X + 0.225Z}$. It has significant t statistics for parameters and a logical relationship**.** Hence, the model is reliable and valid.

The model 2, $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 XZ + e$, results show that with interaction term, $\beta_0 = 14.742$ (t = 4.926, p < 0.05)**,** $\beta_1 = 0.018$ (t = 0.120, p = 0.904 > 0.05), $\beta_2 = 0.052$ (t = 0.462, p = 0.645 > 0.05) and $\beta_3 = 0.012$ (t = 2.171, p = 0.032 < 0.05). Thus, the moderated estimated statistical model is $\hat{Y} = \mathbf{14.742 + 0.052Z + 0.018X + 0.012XZ}$ which when rearranged, it becomes $\hat{Y} = \mathbf{(14.742 + 0.052Z) + (0.018 + 0.\ 012Z)X}$. This is a linear regression model in **X** where **(14.742 + 0.052Z)** is intercept term and **(0.018 + 0.012Z)** is the regression coefficient of **X;** both of which depend on Z**.** This is the optimal model for the study and it shows that the influence of leadership practices on the performance of departments depends on the stakeholder involvement where an increase in the stakeholder involvement increases the performance.

The significant regression coefficient of the interaction term (**XZ**) shows that stakeholder involvement has a significant moderating effect on the relationship between the leadership practices and the performance. The statistical equation has a logical relationship between the variables and the partial regression coefficients are not simultaneously equal to zero, hence, the model is reliable and valid. The R^2 change = 0.028 with a p = 0.032 at 5 percent significance level which is less than 0.05, implying that the stakeholder involvement significantly improve the performance of the departments by 2.8 percent. These findings are consistent with Twaissi and Aldehayyat (2021) findings on the stakeholder involvement on the performance of organizations.

5. Conclusion

This study assessed the influence of leadership practices as a strategy implementation driver on the performance of National Government departments in Kenya. The leadership practices and stakeholder involvement have a significant positive correlation with the performance of departments. The findings revealed that the heads of departments adopt various leadership practices to improve on their performance, these include empowering employees, ensuring accountability in performance management, embracing participatory leadership and delegation. However, the respondents were non-committal that employee empowerment and delegation were fully practiced in the departments.

The study also established that embracing stakeholder involvement improves the performance and the stakeholders are involved by allowing for stakeholder participation, ensuring inclusivity in the implementation process and interactive forums. While the HoDs take care of the interests and demands of the stakeholders by organizing for their participation, incorporating them in planning and consultative forums. That is, recognizing their role and responsibility in the implementation process.

The National Government departments have an average performance, implying that the departments have a medium completion and achievement of their strategic objective programs. To ensure accomplishment and achievement, the heads of departments use monitoring and evaluation, compliance to work plan time lines, provision of necessary support, periodical review and tracking progress in performance, ensuring commitment to work, motivation and capacity building, strategic control and guidance as some of the key leadership practices.

The study concludes that leadership practices influence the performance of the National Government departments moderated by stakeholder involvement. The performance can be estimated with the optimal moderated model $\hat{Y} = (14.742 + 0.052Z) + (0.018 + 0.012Z)X$. This shows the performance depends on stakeholder involvement, improving it by 2.8 percent. The findings also imply that the leadership practices and stakeholder involvement are strategy implementation drivers, significantly influencing the performance of the National Government departments such that as one increases the performance improves. However, the performance of the departments has remained average over the years and thus, there is need to review the leadership practices as well as the way the stakeholders are involved in strategy implementation with a view of re-engineering the processes to improve on the performance.

6. Recommendations

The study findings imply that the average performance of the National Government departments may be as a result of the leadership practices adopted as well as the way the stakeholder involvement is managed in the implementation process. The results provided significant contribution on the literature on the implementation drivers as well as adding knowledge on the literature on leadership practices as a driver of the performance of public sector organizations. Further, it added knowledge on the moderating role played by stakeholder involvement on the performance of National Government departments.

In order to improve on the performance of departments in the National Government of Kenya, the researchers made the following recommendations.

1. The National Government departments of Kenya should review the leadership practices adopted as well as the stakeholder involvement management with a view of re – engineering the implementation process to provide for a framework for enhancing performance.

2. The findings of this study provides valuable knowledge on the leadership practices and stakeholder involvement as a strategy implementation drivers in the public sector organizations. The researchers recommended for examining other possible strategy implementation drivers that may be influencing the performance of the departments in the National Government of Kenya.

3. The study was restricted to the National Government departments in the Counties and hence, the study may be replicated to include the views of the heads of departments at the national headquarters.

4. The study may also be replicated to assess the influence of leadership practices on the performance of the County Government Departments moderated by the stakeholder involvement.

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