

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE
OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA; A CASE STUDY OF GARISSA COUNTY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND
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DECLARATION

This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for the award in any other University or institution. No part of this research proposal should be reproduced without the author's consent or that of the Management University of Africa.

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DEDICATION

This research project work has been dedicated to the family for moral support throughout the course

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I am grateful to Almighty God for being my source of power throughout this exercise of writing this research project. Secondly, appreciation goes to The Management University of Africa for training and imparting knowledge and skills throughout my course. I am also grateful to my supervisor Mr. Johnson Kianda for advice and tireless efforts in supervision during my research project work.

ABSTRACT

Counties have put in place diverse strategies for the purpose of enhancing operational performance. Despite implementation of such strategies for the purpose of improving operational performance, the expected results have not been attained. Time without numbers, citizens and general public has expressed concern in relation to the elements that influence service delivery by county leaders. The current study aimed at investigating the relationship between leadership and operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa County. The specific objectives were; to determine impact of leadership skills on operational performance, to investigate influence of leadership styles on operational performance and to assess the role of ethical leadership practices on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county. The study adopted descriptive research design. The study target population consisted of 2611 staffs from 10 departments within Garissa county government. The researcher employed 10% of the total population as the sample size which constituted of 261 respondents for the current study. Study employed questionnaires as the research instruments. The researcher adopted drop and pick method during data collection to allow sufficient time for response by respondents. Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS version 23) was used for data analysis purpose. Data was presented in form of graphs and tables.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides introduction of the study by presenting background of the study, statement of research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations to the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Operational performance of county governments in Kenya has gained attention of many researchers in the current decade. This is due to the fact that different stakeholders have felt that their key interests have not been well represented and they feel dissatisfied from the services being offered by the county governments departments. With such situation in place, it has necessitated the investigation of the role of leadership in relation to the situations being experienced. According to Lara (2017) leaders in any given institution usually mediate and reconcile the often-conflicting expectations between different stakeholders to a given organization so that they can all be satisfied with the performance of the organization. Additionally, leaders are the ones who control allocation of the resources in the organization thus they define specific dispensation of the resources which operational performance rests on. Generally, the organizational leaders are known to influence the internal stakeholders in relation to their practices towards goals attainment since the leaders develop the vision then motivates followership through giving the direction that is to be pursued by the members of the organization (Łukowski, 2017). This implies that the leaders ought to be reliable, tactical, strategic, tactful, and resourceful and have effective personal qualities that promote conceptual, human and technical orientation in the organization. Thus amidst the current dynamics in the environment in which organizations operate, leaders should play the role of defining, establishing, identifying or developing the direction that should enable organizational processes and systems to help in achieving organizational purpose.

According to Armstrong (2014), leadership holds various conceptions which make it difficult to put forward universal and conventional definition. This is due to definition of leadership from

various perspectives that make it difficult to maintain a specific definition for that particular context. According to Maurer & London (2018), leadership holds many definitions and the rationale behind such view is that the definition of leadership depends on the theoretical orientation. For example Yuki (2016) contents that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. According to Maurer & London (2018), Apart from the influence, the leadership could be defined in regards to the group processes, personality, compliance to the set behaviour as well as the guidance that sees attainment of the set goals and objectives. To gain the conventional understanding and enhance focus on the specific subject under study, the current study adopt definition proposed by Yuki (2016) where leadership will be defined as the process of influencing the task and strategies being adopted by an organization or influencing people in the organization to complement to the predetermined strategies and achieve the objectives of the organization or influencing organization processes and culture as well as identification of the areas of action aim an organization.

1.11 Operational Performance

According to Oko (2015), operational performances in organizations relates to the manner in which an organization provides output that satisfies the expectations of various stakeholders with minimization of the inputs or ensuring economic allocation of the inputs and maximizing the outputs. Scott & Davis (2015) noted that there is no universal and general agreement in the literature on the specific standards that can be used in measuring operational performance in any given organization since the organization may be pursuing goals that are different from another although the objectives of customer satisfaction, maximization of output and costs minimization usually cut across. Thus the operational performance in any organization is seen as the attainment of various goals that the stakeholders of an organization subscribe to. This is in line with the goal approach that terms performance of an organization in terms of meeting specific goals that the various stakeholders formed the organization to attain (Lara, 2017).

Lang (2018) noted that operational performance in an organization entails how the organization is doing in terms of the level of service delivery, profitability, quality as well as the level of service delivery in relation to the level of satisfaction attained. Additionally, regarding the level

of productivity of the organizational staffs, it reflects the growth in terms of the profits, revenues, development, expansion as well as sustaining the operational requirements in the organization.

According to Mohamed (2018), operational performance in an organization relates to how an organization practices in various dimensions mainly the behavioural outcomes and other related results, organizational behaviour and work related practices conforms to the desired outcomes as put in place by the goals of the organizational stakeholders. Thus in relation to behavioural operational performance in the organization relates to the ways in which the various practices in the organization enhance effectiveness of both mental and physical efforts anticipated. Thus in relation to the literature, the operational performance in any given organization will constitute the ability of the enterprise to attain objectives of the organization in terms of the profit level, financial results, quality of outputs, attaining market share and the overall health of the organization as defined by its mission and vision.

According to Hussein (2019), in any given organization, performance generally relates to the actual records of the outcomes achieved by an organization on a given action during a specified period of time for example within a year or a given period which the record is to review. From the literature, it is evident that operational performance of an organization can be gauged from the output generated, the nature of the processes, the perception of the stakeholders towards the organization, the level of profitability and other factors related to the interaction with organizational stakeholders. Generally, as opined by Arham (2014), the performance in respect to an origination relates to the the scope in three areas mainly the organizational commercial performance which relates to the (profits, incomes and the return on investment), return to shareholders which is indicated through (return to the shareholders) and lastly the performance related to the products and services in the market which is reflected through (annual turnover,, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, stewardship, CSR etc.).

1.1.2 Leadership and Operational Performance

The leadership takes key concern in relation to the level of operational performance attained by organizations (Butler, 2012). According to Hussein (2019), leadership forms the basis upon which sense of direction, motivation, enthusiasm, communication and the related elements are coined for the purpose of enhancing the operational performance. Organizational leadership

inspires vision and commitment in relation to dealing with environmental dynamics that are essential for coping with the environmental dynamics for the purpose of ensuring that there is input and maintenance of the basic requirements for attaining operational performance on the organization. In line with the statement and the relationship between the two variables under study, Butler (2012) maintains that for an organization to enhance its performance through enhancing the leadership framework with clear emphasis on the leadership style, ethical practices as well as the leadership skills that will promote smooth functioning of the organization.

Generally, in many studies, emphasis has been placed on the financial performance of the organizations especially private institutions as well as the public institutions. Financial performance may not be an effective measure of organizational performance since the finances can be raised through offering services that may be substandard, delayed and inefficient while finances are being charged as usual. Thus operational performance is an essential measure of the general satisfaction generated from the services that are being rendered by any organization. The relationship between leadership and operational performance can be linked to various indicators for example the rate of service delivery, flexibility, the nature and level of customer satisfaction, perception held by the customers, regulatory compliance as well as overall service delivery (Kasandi, 2018).

Leaders play critical role relate to the decision making, direction, creating vision, determine what to acquire in the organization and the overall deployment of the resources needed in pursuing organizational strategies (Yuki, 2013). These factors related to what a leaders does makes the organizational leadership a vital tool for which performance is built. It has been noted that leadership acts as a strong source of managerial and sustained competitive advantage in the organization thus it forms the ultimate focus for which the organizational operational performance can be gauged (Kasandi, 2018).

1.1.3 Garissa County Government

Garissa county government came into being after 2013 election in accordance to the Kenyan new constitution promulgated in 2010 (CoK, 2010). Garissa County is situated in North Eastern part of Kenya. Its operations are cantered at Garissa town which is the provincial headquarter of former north eastern province. Its geographical location is bordering Wajir county to the north,

west of Tana River county, Lamu county to its south, Isiolo county to northwest and Somalia to the east. The main economic activity of the county is livestock rearing. Garissa County consists of 10 departments headed by the county executive committee members. The leadership of Garissa County consists of three types of categories. These consist of individuals elected through election process, county appointees appointed by county public service board and the leaders who are linked with the central government. Operational performance in Garissa County has been facing myriad challenges related to poor service delivery, delays in service effectiveness, lengthy processes, unduly performance, high level of reluctance and limited commitment into the assigned tasks (Mohammed, 2018). The question that to date has not been addressed is about is on how and what role the leadership elements have played in regards to the ongoing situation.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Counties have put in place diverse strategies for the purpose of enhancing operational performance despite implementation of various strategies for the purpose of improving operational performance the expected results have not been attained (Musyoka & Kagiri, 2016). Time without numbers, citizens and general public as well as other leaders has expressed dissatisfaction and concern in relation to the elements that influence service delivery by county leaders (Wangari, 2014). Thus the question rests on “What are the elements of county leadership which will shape management performance?”

Effective leadership is an essential element in performance of any institution. Operational performance in county governments has gained great attention in Kenya. Attaining operational performance at counties with continued mismatch between leadership and the staff expectations has led to decline in the operational performance. With dynamics in the performance of the county governments, operational performance is hinged on the nature of leadership that has been put in place in those institutions. Recently, it has been witnessed that performance in the county government departments has witnessed decreasing rate. This has been linked to poor leadership of such counties (Musyoka & Kagiri, 2016). Additionally, countries that have indicated high level of performance have indicated effective leadership.

The basic question that have not been able to find the effective answer in such case is the question to which specific element of leadership could be limited to such phenomena. This has

raised the question of the role of the leadership style, leadership ethics and leadership skills. There have been previous leadership studies that have been linked leadership style. Unfortunately, the study gaps on the various elements of leadership apart from leadership style have not been addressed. Leadership style guides the organizational strategies which aim at attainment of the objective of the organization (Mohamed, 2018).

Through utilization of effective leadership style, the organizational top leadership influences the role execution by the staffs. This implies that appropriate leadership style will shape the effectiveness of operational efficiency. Effective leadership ethics helps the organization in avoiding inefficiencies. In the same line there is essential place of leadership skills since they help in ensuring that there is effective compliance and enhancing organizational operational efficiencies. County governments are faced by pressure from both internal and external sources which affect the operational performance. For the operational performance to be effective the three elements of leadership i.e. style, skills and ethics need to be effectively incorporated (Mburu, 2018). Given those elements of leadership, there has been a serious problem of managing individuals in order to generate the desired service delivery level.

It has been evidenced that operational performance in counties has been adversely affected. Garissa County has been recently rated among the countries which are facing operational challenges across all its 10 departments. In order to enhance effectiveness in relation to operational performance, the management of the countries should put in place appropriate measures in relation to the various elements of leadership mainly styles, skills and ethical practices related to the leadership. Though having such elements effectively utilized, there will be attainment of desired efficiency and overall organizational performance. Past studies have been carried out on the relationship between leadership and operational performance. The context of the previous studies reviewed is different from the viewpoint maintained by this study hence the previous studies have limited application. This has called for the necessity of the current study which finds wide and diverse application (Hussein, 2021).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

To investigate the relationship between leadership and operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To determine impact of leadership skills on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county
- ii. To investigate influence of leadership styles on operational performance of county government; a case study of Garissa county
- iii. To asses, the role of ethical leadership practices on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the impact of leadership skills on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa County?
- ii. What is the influence of leadership style on operational performance of county government in Kenya; a case study of Garissa County?
- iii. What is the role of ethical leadership practices on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Firstly, the current study through its findings, conclusion and recommendation it will be of great significance firstly to the county management team as it will act as an eye opener and the point of reference for enhancing current and future leadership in the county that shape the operational performance. This will be applied by putting recommendation into practice that will see the effectiveness of the operational performance of counties.

Secondly, the government will be able to address the much long standing question on the relationship between the two variables under study. It will help in developing effective code of ethics that will act as a guiding policy on the staffs conduct at workplace .generally with

application of this there will be development of the operational performance at the county government.

Thirdly, future academic will benefit from the study and find it significant. This is because the study will be helpful to these scholars since the study forms the literature that will be reviewed for their future studies. Additionally, it will offer the bridge between the knowledge gaps about the various variables being investigated. Thus it will help researchers find the point of comparison and reference the academicians will utilize this study to buffer their study on the same subject under study.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The current study is set to assess the relationship between the leadership and operational performance of county governments in Kenya with case study of Garissa County. The study will take place in Garissa County for 3 months with the county government staffs forming the study population under survey.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Providing required data calls for filling or responding to the research instruments. Generally, most research is faced with the unwillingness of the respondents to the research instruments. The current study is not an exception of the same setback. Therefore, the researcher was faced by limitation for reluctance of the respondents in responding to the research instruments where they might be citing personal commitment or fear of retaliation from their heads. To overcome such limitation, the researcher assured the respondents about protection of their privacy, confidentiality as well as maintaining anonymity. Finding appropriate time to respond to the research instruments was another limitation facing the current study. In this case the researcher utilized drop and pick technique that afforded the respondents ample time for responding to the questionnaires.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter provides the theoretical literature review, empirical literature, summary of the research and gaps as well as the conceptual; framework guiding the current study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The current study will be guided by three main theories. These are mainly contingency theory of leadership, behavioural theory of leadership and traits theory of leadership.

2.1.1 Contingency Theory of Leadership

The theory was postulated by Fielder in the year 1958 (Kessler, 2013). Fielder's contingency leadership style holds that a leader who is successful is that leader who adopts the style of leadership that matches the current demands of the environment in which the organization is operating. The contingency theory of leadership entails how an individual leader responds to the situational factors that surround the environment in which the leader operates (Kessler, 2013).

The theory places emphasis on the flexibility of the leadership style in order to adapt to the changing environmental situations which are being experienced both internally and externally. Thus in general, the leader should assess the best leadership style for a given organization or maybe an employee based on the characteristics of the employee as well as the current situation that the organization or the employee is experiencing. Additionally, the theory notes that different styles of leadership can be applied to employees due to their differences in experience, personality as well as other factors. Theory maintains that there is no one best and universal leadership style that can be applied in all situations but it should be contingent to the environment as well as other individual characteristics and personality traits (Gupta, 2016).

2.1.2 Behavioural Leadership Theory

The theory was developed to bridge the various limitations that were associated with the traits theory of leadership (Gupta, 2016). The behavioural theory of leadership tries to isolate the behaviours which are the inherent characteristics of the leaders which help in overcoming the shortcomings associated with the traits theory. This leadership theory places great emphasis on the outward looking approach the character of effective leadership. This entails studying what the leaders' say, what they do, what they thought etc. which generally develops expectations in terms of the behaviour that should be demonstrated by a leader when dealing with the subordinates. This helps in developing general expectations regarding the behaviour of a leader that can be learnt or acquired. According to Ryan & Tipu (2013), effective leadership is that which individuals demonstrate positive views of the motives, abilities and attitudes of subordinates. This theory holds that an effective leader should display behavior that encourages supportive relationship with the staffs.

2.1.3 Traits Theory of Leadership

The traits theory was developed by Bernard in 2006. The traits theory is based on the believe that leaders bear various traits that determines their effectiveness of leadership style (Mitonga-Monga & Coetzee, 2012). The traits theory according to Bernard posits that the physical, social and personal characteristics are the key determinants of the success of the leader. The theory maintain that the the physical, social and personal characteristics are the key in guiding the fortunes of the endeavour of being effective leader. The application of this theory in in identifying the common attributes associated with the leadership (Longe, 2014). This theory have faced criticism from the researchers in that it has shortcomings in that it has failed to provide appropriate recognition of the situation in which leadership operates in terms of its situation, environment and individual characteristics defining the operations in which leadership can be gauged to be effective of ineffective.

2.2 Empirical Literature

2.2.1 Leadership Style

The leader in any given organization is tasked with performance of various functions that aims at attainment of the operational performance in the organization which generally is linked to

smoothening and improvement the organizational operations (Sougui, Bon & Hassan, 2015). Generally, leadership styles encompass the systematic patterns of behaviours that are portrayed by the leaders in regards to dealing and directing the employees in efforts to generate influence (Mitonga-Monga,& Coetzee, 2012). The leadership style is defined as the manner by which the leader or general management in the organization performs the roles tasked with directing and generating influence from the subordinates. Generally the leadership style entails the way or the approach that is adopted by a leader in influencing action from the followers. Leadership styles are many in relation to the various approaches that the leader may adopt based on personal characteristics or individual characteristics of the followers or else their nature. Among the various styles of leadership styles of leadership, there exists autocratic leadership, participative leadership, free reign leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership and contingent leadership styles (Ebrahim, 2018).

Scholars in the discipline of leadership and organizational behaviour have presented various styles of leadership that are said to be very common in the contemporary organizational management. The widely applied leadership styles have been dictatorial leadership, democratic style, transactional and transformational leadership styles. Other authors have been able to maintain that there are four mainly and commonly applied leadership style which constitute of autocratic, participative, laissez faire and transactional leadership styles (Sofi & Devanadhen, 2015). Another thought of classifying the leadership styles involves categorization of leadership into three styles mainly, non-leadership (laissez-faire), leadership based on rewards (transactional leadership) and leadership based on the inspiration and behavioral charisma (transformational leadership style) (Longe, 2014).

Transactional leadership style entails a situation where a leader maintains absolute power in making key decisions about the organizational processes then the subordinates are left with limited chances or making key decisions (Frisch & Huppenbauer, 2014). This type of leadership involves the leader exhibiting more emphasis on the processes as opposed to the forward thinking in developing new and better ways of achieving organizational objectives (Ebrahim, 2018). Here, the leader is seen as an expert in various organizational aspects and maintaining sole knowledge in relation to managing the organizational processes and therefore there is no

room left for making innovations in relations to new inventions in the firm by the subordinates or other forces in the organization (Frisch & Huppenbauer, 2014).

According to Fletcher, Uhl-Bien & Ospina (2012), transformational leadership style entails the style that aims at changing the organizational culture and motivating the staffs to accept and incorporate the desired changes to attain future set goals. Transformational leadership is the most embraced style of leadership in the recent organizational management systems as well as in an era that is confined to ever dynamic organization. Ismail et al.. (2016) maintain that this style of leadership basis its focus on ensuring that there is effective systems of value that employees subscribe to and maintain as their source of motivation thus acting as the drive that drives the staffs in following the leaders.

The other type of leadership is autocratic style of leadership where the leaders retain all decision making rights and powers and the work of the subordinates is to do as it has been said by the leaders who is the master (Armstrong, 2014). The laissez faire style of leadership on other hand entails the leader delegating almost everything to the subordinates and giving consultations on the complex matters that may arise on their line of duty. The leader usually leads the organization indirectly where the decisions are not from the leader but from those of the popular opinion by the individuals' whom the leader have delegated the authority to. Laissez-faire style is associated with managers with dissatisfaction, unproductiveness and ineffectiveness (Sabir, 2020).

2.2.2 Leadership Ethical Practices

Ethical leadership is grounded on the concept of leadership where leadership has been defined as the concept of influencing the people in a given way to accomplish various objectives that they could have not have otherwise accomplished without such influence/direction (Sabir, 2020). In line with the definition of the leadership in terms of its scope, the ethical leadership practices entails the exhibition of normative matching behaviour by which organizational activities and the individual behaviour of the individuals in the position of leadership. Ethical leadership denotes the maintaining moral direction with reference to morally accepted behaviour that promotes adherence to set standards of practice (Agha, Nwekpa & Eze, 2017)

Changsuk et al., (2017) maintain that ethical leadership should constitute moral initiatives that are aimed at attaining the desired results, correspondence to the set moral standards and stand operating procedures with high level of transparency, accountability, responsibility and integrity. According to Mainga (2012), ethical leadership incorporates inclusion, maintaining full level of responsibility, logical reasoning, moral stand, self adequacy and other related values that promote morally accepted behaviour as outlined in the organizational code of conduct. Armstrong (2014), maintained that ethical leadership involves various steps or processes which guides the individual and group conduct in relation to the performance of the assigned duties at the workplace. Ethical leadership was characterized by Armstrong (2014) as the capacity to convince others to eagerly act intuitively with the aim of attaining the set goals by the organization with strict observance of the outstanding caliber of the moral values that are generally accepted in the organization.

Qates & Dalmau (2013) hold that ethical leadership and management is the right course of action that enhances benefits to all organizational stakeholders. Additionally, they noted that the moral authority is more worrying on adjusting the association between the organizational goals and the actual performance of the staffs in the organization. Conversely, Thao (2016) noticed that the integration between morality and the uprightness is an initiative of either an organization or the state of the blend of the two institutions. This means that ethical leadership in any organization must start from the top leadership then trickle down the management hierarchy. Generally, the ethical leadership practices provides the procedure, standards, qualities and other convictions that are gauged as the the right standards which should be the guiding principles that guides all activities within the organization as well as its relationships internally and externally (Bubble, 2012).

Ethical leadership is characterized by the goals, care, vision and honesty portrayed by the stakeholders in the organization. In any organization, leadership should be able to generate positive results in relation to the overall organization performance. This is because; the ethical leadership should provide intrinsic motivation to the staffs as well as other stakeholders to the organization. Where the organizational leadership is built in the moral duties that are solid, it usually affects the performance of the assignments assigned to the individuals since the ethical

leadership is seen as the linkage between top management and staff commitment (Sage & Dalmau, 2013).

2.2.3 Leadership Skills

A leadership skill entails the mental and physical competences and proficiencies that a leader holds that enable generation of the influence and followership from the subordinates (Yulk, 2013). Leadership skills encompass the ability of a leader to perform activities that enhance overall organizational performance in line with creating motivation and sense of direction to the staffs

Yulk (2013) opined that a leadership skill entails a leader being able to perform leadership functions in the manner that demonstrates competency, innovation and effectiveness in line with the objectives being pursued. The current study posits leadership as the average leader's skills which define the abilities of the leaders to be able to performance the managerial tasks in an effective manner as well as generating the results sandwiched in the leadership role.

According to Thao (2016), the leadership skills can be measured through interpersonal skills, cognitive skills, business skills as well as strategic skills. The interpersonal skills constitutes of the coordination, social perception, negotiation as well as persuasion. The cognitive skills entail the listening, speaking, writing, reading comprehension and active learning. The business skills constitute the motivation skills, business analysis skills, directing skills, developing staffs as well as management of the other resources. Lastly, the strategic skills encompass the ability to promote vision, system perception, system, analysis, problem identification and problem management.

Based on Kyongo (2013), the leaders usually portray and must have three categories of skills which constitute of the human, technical and conceptual skills. Human skills entail the the knowledge that guides human behaviour and interpersonal interactions between individuals mainly the leader with the subordinates as well as with the other individuals at their level. A human skill defines all elements that influence behaviour, mainly the attitude, perception, personality, values etc. that determine the relationship that the leader develops with the subordinates. The technical skills demonstrate the processes, methods, procedures, techniques

and the specialized knowledge to perform a specific task that befall an individual in leadership position. Technical leadership skills will include the knowledge concerning the organization and its products and services that it offers. This is essential for the junior leaders that are at the execution direction and guidance position. Lastly conceptual skills entails the analytical abilities, logical reasoning, proficiency in the concept, conceptualization of the complex relationships and developing creative ideas that are able to anticipate and see the organization through complex situations (Musembi, Guyo, Kyalo & Mbuthia, 2018).

Leaders require both problem solving skills and social judgment skills though for them to effectively apply those skills they need to have effective knowledge concerning the organization in term of the vision, mission, products, human resources and general business operation (Chakrabarti, 2014).

2.2.4 Leadership and Operational Performance

The researchers in the current decade continues to intensify their study on the relationship that exists between the the organizational leadership and operational performance in the organizations both public and private institutions. Al Khajeh (2018) posits that there is strong correlations between the the nature of leadership style and the operational performance in the organizations. These studdiea show both positive an dneegative correlation between the leadership style and other aspects of perrfomance depending on the study variables under study. Akparep, Jengre & Mogre (2019) noted that the leadership style aqdopted by the managers in the organization is the source of the potent performance in those organizations. Bargavi & Yaseen (2016) opined that the organization that have high level of performance attain such level from the integration of the resources that the firm is mainatining.

Kigundu (2015) defined operational performance as the ability and capability of the organization to be able to offer effective and efficient services and products that are in line with its objectives with the cost effectiveness, timeliness as well as in line with the expectations of the customers receiving those products and or services. Operational efficiency is geared towards attaining the effective service delivery in the manner that enhances effective utilization of the available resources ranging from financial resources, physical resources, human resources, technological resources as well as all other inputs and outputs that are involved in the process.

Operational performance of any organization is essential in attainment of desired level of customer satisfaction. Okwang'a, Mungania & Karanja (2015) noted that operational performance of an organization aims at enhancing and maximizing service delivery at reduced costs and time. It is in this line that operational performance works to promote quality of the services and products provided to the customers in the most effective and efficient manner. To achieve operational efficiency, organization needs to respond to the environmental dynamics through reorganizing its main processes to ensure that they match with the internal and external environmental dynamics.

Dylan (2016) opined that organizations' operational performance is concerned with the level of attainment of the goals of the organization through provision of timely, efficient and effective services as to when and the manner in which they are needed by the organizational customers. Generally, through effective operational performance, the organization becomes dependable since it maintains satisfied customers with positive perception on the organization due to high levels of customer service.

According to Muliro, Nambuswa & Namusonge (2016), operational performance entails the degree to which the organization is capable of attaining its set goals and objectives which are linked to the performance of the services outlined in the organizational mission. According to Moses et al., (2021), an organization that is characterized by effectiveness in service delivery, quality of services and reliability of the services provides the basis upon which the organization can be gauged on the level of effectiveness for the operational performance to be said as efficient or inefficient.

2.3 Summary and Research gaps

Table 2.1 Research gaps

Authors	Titles/What the study was about	Gaps Identified	How current study fills gaps
Al Khajeh (2018)	Impact of Leadership Styles on Organizational Performance	Focused only on leadership styles as opposed to other components of leadership	Provides critical analysis of components of leadership like skills and ethics and

		like skills and ethics	influence on performance
Akparep, Jengre & Mogre (2019)	The Influence of Leadership Style on Organizational Performance	Focused on institutional sector context as opposed to Kenyan county government case	Focused on public sector with reference to with reference to Kenyan county government case
Bargavi & Yaseen (2016)	Leadership Styles and Organizational Performance	Focused only on leadership styles	There is a gap in relation to how specific styles affects the performance
Okwang'a, Mungania & Karanja (2015)	Analysis of Factors Affecting the Operational Efficiency of Jua Kali Sector	Placed emphasis on jua kali sector as opposed to county governments	The research outlines dynamics regarding specific factors of overall leadership influencing operational performance
Musyoka & Kagiri (2016).	Effect of Contemporary Leadership on the Performance of County Government in Kenya, Case Study of Machakos County Government	Failure in providing appropriate conditions, environmental contexts and situation that a particular leadership style has been proved to be applicable.	Provides appropriate conditions, environmental contexts and situation that a particular leadership style has been proved to be applicable.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Mugenda & Mugenda (2012) defined conceptual framework as a simplified graphical or diagrammatic model that displays the existing relationship between the independent and dependent variables which the researcher in the study is investigating. The current study conceptual framework will be displaying independent variable which is the leadership demonstrated through its elements mainly the leadership skills, leadership styles and leadership ethical practices. The dependent variable of the study is the operational performance.

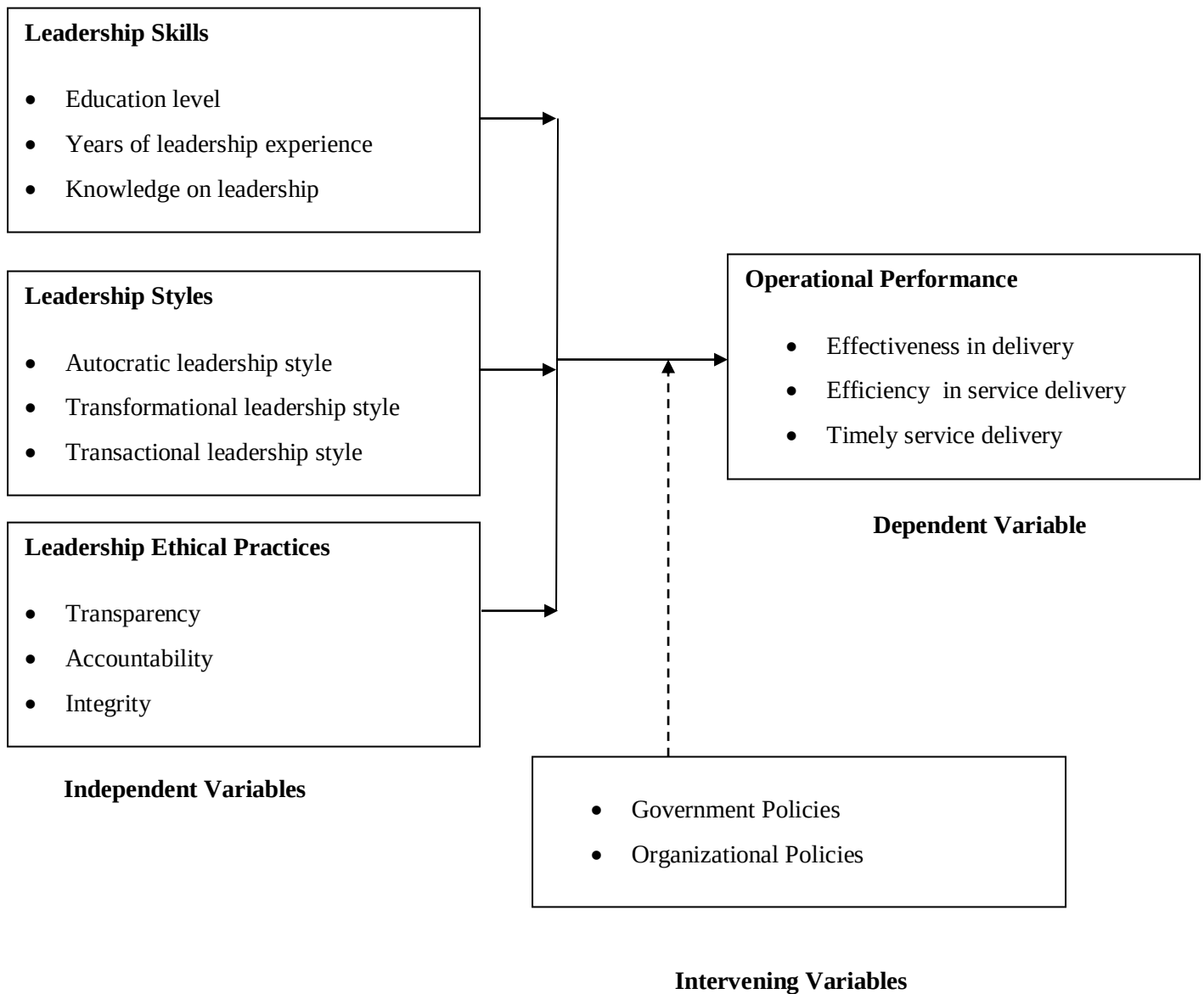


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This section comprises the research design to be utilized by the researcher, the target population that the researcher was in targeting to investigate, the sample size and sampling procedure as well as the technique that the researcher uses for sampling population, the data collection instruments, procedure of data collection piloting of the study, data analysis and presentation and the ethical consideration in the study.

3.1 Research Design.

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) research design is defined as the plan, scheme or the outline that is adopted by researcher for the purpose of generating answers to the research problem which is under investigation additionally. Kombo & Delno (2010) noted that research design involves the arrangement of conditions and analysis of data in the manner that aims at combining relevance with the research purpose. The current study adopted descriptive research design. According to Creswell (2014) descriptive research design involves utilization o the research instruments to provide description of specific characteristics of the sampled respondents in the study being conducted. Kothari (2011) noted that research design provides an order and the arrangement of the conditions in the manner which present the blueprint for data collection, measuring and analysis of the data to address the research of this research problem being pursued. The rationale of this research design is that it enables the researcher to collect and evaluate the opinions attitudes and suggestions from the respondents. Creswell and Creswell (2018) noted that descriptive research design is appropriate for the nature of study as it is concerned with finding what, who, how and where in relation to the phenomena under study. It was the most suitable design for the current study because it helped the researcher to gain useful data or evaluation of the current study phenomena to enhance effective decision making

3.2 Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) hold that target population constitutes the elements or institutions that have similar observable characteristics for which the researcher wishes to investigate. The target population for the study constituted the county government employees. The respondents were drawn from a total number of 2611 staffs from 10 departments within Garissa county government.

Table 3.1 Target population of Study

S/No	Department	Population
1	Public service management	321
2	Finances and economic planning	159
3	Education youth and social services	117
4	Health services	512
5	Agriculture and fisheries	201
6	Water, energy and natural resources	432
7	Information and e-government	91
8	Public works ,road and transport	421
9	Trade and industrialization	136
10	Land, housing and physical planning	221
	Total	261

Source: Garissa County Staff Data, 2022

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2011) defined sample as a representative of total population that the researcher chooses to secure a representative which enables the researcher to gain information about the population when faced with the time funds and energy limitation. Stratified random sampling was adopted in the study. The departments formed various strata for which the researcher employed simple random sampling for picking respondents from each department. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) a representative sample for any study in social sciences is a sample of between 10% to 30% of the total population under study. Therefore for this study, the researcher employed 10% of the total population as the sample size constituted of 261 respondents.

Table 3.2 Sample Size

S/No	Department	Population	Sample Size
1	Public service management	321	32
2	Finances and economic planning	159	16
3	Education youth and social services	117	12
4	Health services	512	51
5	Agriculture and fisheries	201	20
6	Water, energy and natural resources	432	43
7	Information and e-government	91	9
8	Public works ,road and transport	421	42
9	Trade and industrialization	136	14
10	Land, housing and physical planning	221	22
Total		2611	261

3.4 Instruments

A study instrument involves the methods that are employed by researcher for data collection (Creswell, 2014). The current study employed questionnaires as the research instruments. The research instruments chosen for the current study were questionnaires since the researcher targets qualitative data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). Additionally, Orodho (2014) noted that questionnaires are appropriate in research data collection because they help the respondents in providing well thought answers that are appropriate for large sample as they are economical time saving and convenient

3.4 Pilot Study

Mugenda (2011) noted that piloting involves a preliminary test of few items of the contents in the research instruments. Creswell & Creswell (2018) added that piloting of the study enhances perfection of the research instruments which it provides the basis for revising the instruments in reference to the results of the pilot study. The current study employed a pilot consisting of a 5% of sample under study which consisted of 13 respondents from the neighbouring Wajir County. The pilot chose has the same characteristics as the population under study including the geographical governance system and administration structure. This helped the researcher in understanding areas of correction and avoiding unnecessary questions to respondents.

3.5.1 Validity

Validity of research instrument refers the measure by which the research instruments measure what it is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2011). The research ensured content and construct validity of the research instruments through seeking expert opinion from the practitioners and professionals in the subject area of the study. This consisted of the supervisors guiding this research work.

3.5.2 Reliability of Research Instruments

According to Orodho (2014), reliability of research instruments refers to the degree to which the instrument used test and support objectives of the study. It relates to extent to which the instrument displays same results over repeated number of times under same conditions. The

study used split – half method to establish reliability of the research instruments. This actually involved administrating research instruments to the respondents then after completion they were divided into two halves then co-efficient of variation were tested. The results of the Karl Pearson moment correlation ($r \leq 0.75$), there was sufficient evidence reliable (Orodho, 2014).

3.6 Data Collection

The researcher used drop and pick method during data collection. Drop and pick technique involves the researcher dropping the questionnaires to the respondents then allowing them to respond to them for some 4 days to act on them. The researcher discouraged them against sharing or discussing on the respondents after 4 days they were collected for data analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Creswell (2012) maintained that data analysis is the process of organizing data into various patterns, categories and descriptive units to put it into meaningful units. Creswell & Poth (2018) noted that data presentation is the process of displaying the analyzed data into forms that simplifies complicated data. Data analysis started immediately after data collection this enabled the researcher to enter and bring out description of the variables under the study data analysis was done through inserting the data into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 2016). Regression and correlation analysis was used for data analysis purpose. The data was presented in form of tables/charts and graphs the regression function was presented as below.

$$y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3)$$

$$y = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 x_1 + \alpha_2 x_2 + \alpha_3 x_3 + \varepsilon.$$

Where;

y - Operational performance

x_1 - leadership style

x_2 -leadership skills

x_3 -leadership ethics

α_0 = Constant

ε = Margin of Error

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This involve the ethical issues observed the researcher while carrying out the study from initial planning through instruments administrations data analysis to making recommendations from the study (Mugenda, 2011). The current study involved obtaining informed consent from the respondents by outlining the objectives pursued by the study. This involved declaring that the study is academic in nature. Additionally, the researcher assured respondents of high degree of anonymity and confidentiality. Additionally, the researcher upheld highest degree of privacy. In relation to these ethical issues the researcher administered the instruments personally and signing non-disclosure form for purpose of enhancing ethical values that were related to protection of the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion of the research that was undertaken on the relationship between leadership and operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county. The research instruments used in the study were questionnaires that were administered to the staffs of Garissa county government. The analysis of the research findings of the data was done and the findings were presented in form of tables, percentages and the descriptive statistics.

4.1 Response Rate

The targeted sample size for the study constituted of a total of 261 respondents. From the total of 261 respondents targeted, 235 respondents fully filled the questionnaires issued. This represented a response rate of 90%. Mugenda & Mugenda (2013) posited that a response rate of 60% and above is adequate for analysis. Thus the response rate in the current study was excellent for analysis.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Response Rate	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
Instruments returned	235	90%
Instruments not returned	23	10%

4.2 Background Information of Respondents

The study aimed at establishing the background information of the respondents by determining their age, gender, level of education, years of service and the departments they are established. The findings were presented in tables and graphs

4.2.1 Age Brackets of Respondents

In the questionnaire, the first thing the researcher sought to determine was the age brackets of the respondents. The rationale for this investigation was to ensure that the sample was a representative of the variation of the age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents 37% were between 41-50 years, 30% of the respondents were within age of 31-40 years while those above 51 years accounted for 29% and the other 4% were the age bracket of between 18-30 years.

Table 4.2: Age Brackets of Respondents

Age Bracket	Distribution	
	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	9	4%
31-40	71	30%
41-50	87	37%
Above	68	29%
Total	235	100%

4.2.2 Gender of Respondents

The researcher sought to find gender of respondents. The findings revealed that 78.9% of the respondents were male while the rest of 21.1% of the respondents were female.

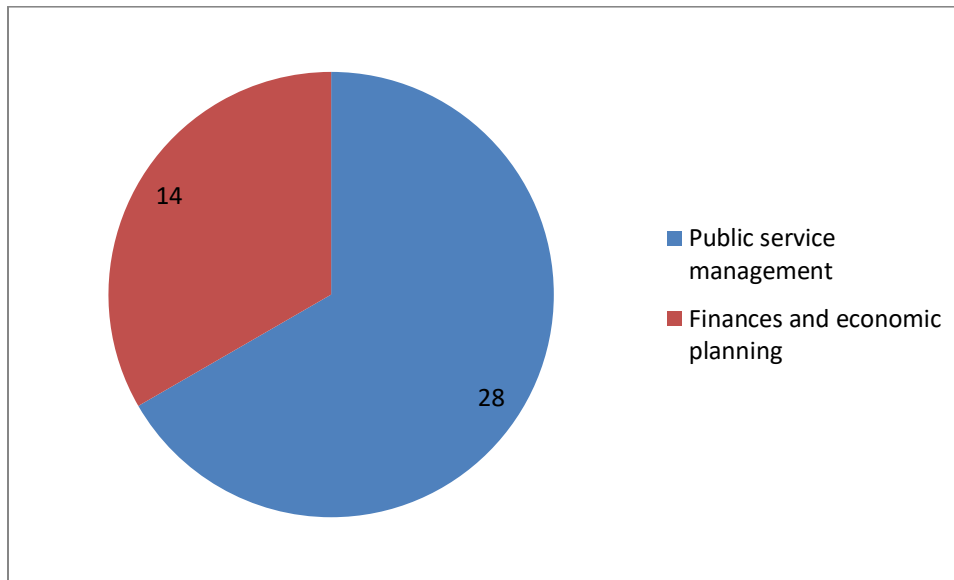


Figure 4.1: Age of Respondents

4.2.3 Highest Level Education of Respondents

The research sought to determine level of education of the respondents for the purpose of gauging the level of understanding of the respondents of the subject matter under study. The findings revealed that 3% of the respondents were of primary level of education, 5% were of secondary level of education, 23% of the respondents were of college education and majority of 69% of the respondents were of university education. This indicates that majority of the respondents held post secondary education hence had sufficient knowledge of the subject matter under study.

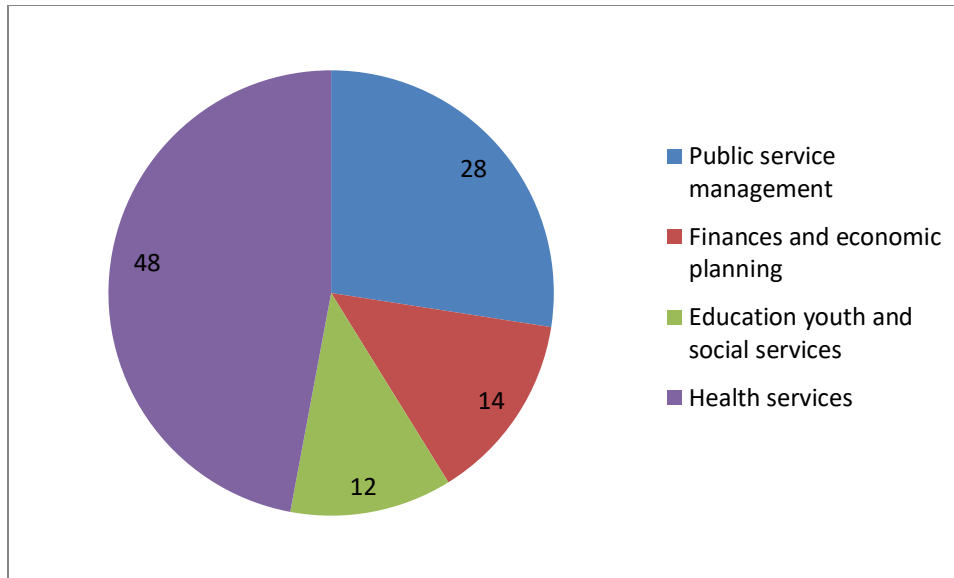


Figure 4.2: Highest Level of Education of Respondent

4.2.4 Years of Service at Garissa County Government

The researcher sought to determine the years of service that the respondents have served Garissa county government. This was important in determining their knowledge about the subject matter under the current study. The findings of the study revealed that majority of 68% of the respondents had 5-9 years of experiences at Garissa county government while the rest of 32% of respondents were having 1-4 years of experience at Garissa county government. None of the respondents had over 10 years of experience at Garissa county government. This is because; the counties are operating at their 9th year since establishment.

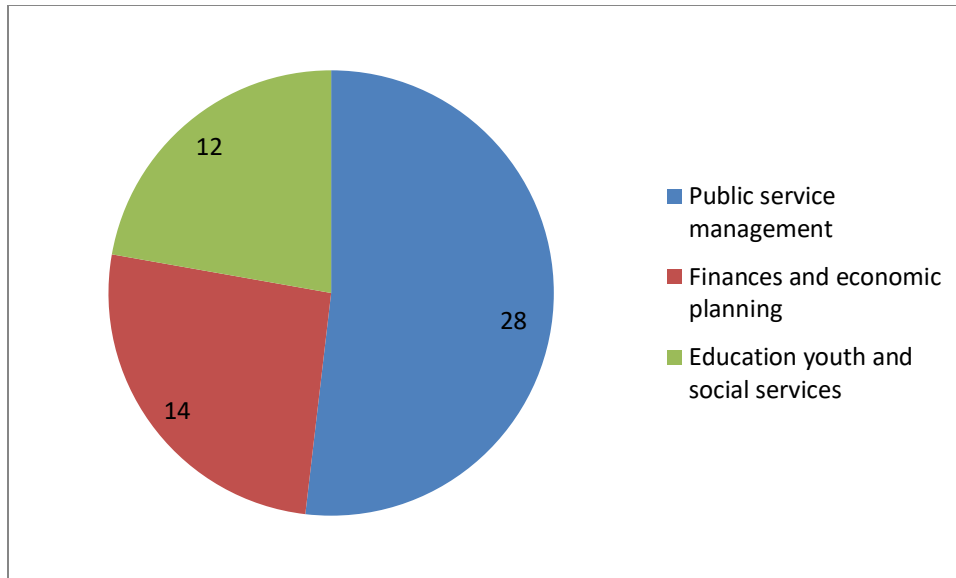


Figure 4.3: Years of Service at Garissa County Government

4.2.5 Departments Respondents are Working at Garissa County Government

Since Garissa county government consist of 10 departments that form the operational basis of the county, the researcher sought to determine the department that the respondents' were placed at Garissa County.

Table 4.3: Departments Respondents are Working at Garissa County Government

S/No	Department	Frequency	Percentage
1	Public service management	28	12%
2	Finances and economic planning	14	6%
3	Education youth and social services	12	5%
4	Health services	46	20%
5	Agriculture and fisheries	15	6%
6	Water, energy and natural resources	40	17%
7	Information and e-government	9	4%
8	Public works ,road and transport	38	16%
9	Trade and industrialization	14	6%
10	Land, housing and physical planning	19	8%
Total		235	100%

4.2 Leadership Skills and Operational Performance

The researcher pursued to investigate the relationship between leadership skills employed by Garissa county leaders and the operational performance of Garissa county government. The findings of the study revealed that 60% of the respondents agreed top the statement that leaders in the organization have adequate years of experience in leadership roles. In relation to the statement that a leader is perceived to be skilled based on their level they can influence the employees, 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Additionally, majority of the 55% of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that leaders in the organization acquire leadership skills through in-service training programmes. 65% of the respondents were for the opinion that leaders in the organization are skilled because of personal characteristics like gender, age etc. lastly, 75% of the respondents maintained that leadership skills in the organization are evaluated through success of the leaders in execution of their duties. The investigations of the study revealed findings as presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Leadership Skills and Operational Performance

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders in the organization have adequate years of experience in leadership roles	40%	20%	15%	5%	20%
A leader is perceived to be skilled based on their level they can influence the employees	30%	40%	5%	10%	15%
Leaders in the organization acquire leadership skills through in-service training programmes	20%	35%	20%	10%	15%
Leaders in the organization are skilled because of personal characteristics like gender, age etc.	25%	40%	10%	15%	10%
Leadership skills in the organization are evaluated through success of the leaders in execution of their duties	30%	45%	10%	10%	5%

4.3 Leadership Styles and Operational Performance

The current study to assess the leadership styles that leaders in Garissa county government employed. The study findings revealed that vast majority 80% of the county staffs were for the opinion that each leader in the organization employs a unique style of leadership. 90% of the respondents were on the opinion that leaders in the county government employ leadership style dictated by the situation. 75% of the respondents were for the opinion that leaders in the organization utilize leadership style that they have found successful over period of time. In relation to the statement training leaders helps them to know the most appropriate leadership style to apply, 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement. 75% of the respondents

maintained that leaders in the organization do not have freedom to apply their preferred style of leadership. The findings of the study were presented in table 4.4

Table 4.5 Leadership Styles and Operational Performance

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Each leader in the organization employs a unique style of leadership	50%	30%	10%	5%	5%
Leaders in the county government employ leadership style dictated by the situation	70%	20%	10%	0%	0%
Leaders in the organization utilize leadership style that they have found successful over period of time	50%	25%	5%	10%	10%
Training leaders helps them to know the most appropriate leadership style to apply	60%	10%	15%	10%	5%
Leaders in the organization do not have freedom to apply their preferred style of leadership	55%	20%	10%	5%	10%

4.4 Leadership Ethical Practices and Operational Performance

The researcher sought to establish the ethical leadership practices by the leaders in county government of Garissa. The findings revealed that 80% of respondents were of the opinion that leaders in the organization demonstrate ethics in their duties. 70% of the respondents agreed to the statement that leaders in the organization consider ethical practice as part of the organizational culture. 65% of the respondents stated that organizational top management is concerned about whether the leaders are ethical or not. Additionally, 50% of the county government staffs opined that leaders with unethical practices do not have much influence in the organization. Lastly, 60% if the responded maintained that ethical leadership practices are clearly defined for leaders in the organization. The findings discussed above were presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.6: Leadership Ethical Practices and Operational Performance

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders in the organization demonstrate ethics in their duties	60%	20%	10%	5%	5%
Leaders in the organization consider ethical practice as part of the organizational culture.	30%	40%	5%	10%	15%
Organizational top management are concerned about whether the leaders are ethical or not	25%	40%	15%	5%	15%
Leaders with unethical practices do not have much influence in the organization	30%	20%	15%	15%	20%
Ethical leadership practices are clearly defined for leaders in the organization	25%	35%	20%	10%	10%

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents a summary, conclusion and recommendations emanating from the current study. The main objective pursued by the study was to investigate the relationship between leadership and operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county. This section presents the study of findings, conclusion from the findings and recommendations from the findings.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The first objective pursued by the study was to determine impact of leadership skills on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county. The findings on this objective revealed that individuals in the leadership positions had relevant years of experience in the leadership positions. Additionally, the study findings revealed that leaders are perceived skills if they can influence the rest of the employees as well the leadership skills are evaluated through the outcomes generated and the overall influence emanating from the leadership actions.

The findings on the second objective; to determine impact of leadership style on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county revealed that majority of respondents felt that every leader in the county government employs a unique leadership style. Additionally, the findings revealed that the leaders employ leadership style that they felt was appropriate based on the situations. Additionally, the research findings established that leaders acquire leadership skills mainly through in-service-training that they are exposed to. Though with this in place, the leaders were not given room to exercise their preferred leadership styles

The results on the last objective to assess, the role of leadership ethical practices on operational performance of county governments in Kenya; a case study of Garissa county revealed leaders in the county maintained ethical practices in the line of their duty. Additionally, leadership ethics

were incorporated as part of the organizational culture in the organization. Respondents also noted that unethical leads do not have influence on the subordinates.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. The study concludes that Garissa county government leaders have acquired their leadership skill through the in-service training programmes. The findings could have been because some leaders at Garissa county government were chosen to be leaders through their level of education or the favors from the employers despite of the having limited or no leadership skills. Additionally, the study concludes that leaders are required to demonstrate ethical practices in their duties. This could be as a result of the fact that ethics and leadership goes hand in hand since the leader cannot be a leader without ethics and then expect to assert influence to the subordinates since they usually take the leader as the role model thus replicating the leader's behaviour. Where the leader does not have ethics, then the leader will have limited influence on the subordinates due to their unethical practices. Furthermore, the study concludes Garissa county government consider ethical practices as part of the organizational culture which could be due to the fact that county government has been able to perform and has been managed well hence ethics forming part of the Garissa county government organizational culture.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings emanating from this study, the study makes various recommendations for practice and policy in relation to operational performance of the county governments in Kenya. Therefore, the study based on the findings suggests the following recommendations for policy and practice in that;

- i. The county government leadership should document leadership policy document that will help in defining the require code of ethics that the county leaders should demonstrate in performance and practice of their administration goals.
- ii. The study also recommends that the county government should develop their own policy document detailing how various leaders in the county are expected to perform their duties in the organization in ethical manner. This will help in ensuring that all those in the

county government leadership are able to influence performance by being and upholding ethical standards.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Studies

Due to dynamic nature of leadership, the search for new knowledge in this study has not been dealt with exhaustively; further study should be conducted on the relationship between leadership specific ethical practices that enhances operational performance in county governments in Kenya.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan

Management University of Africa

Nairobi.

Dear Respondent,

RE: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA; A CASE STUDY OF GARISSA COUNTY.

I am Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan of Admission Number: DIP.ML/11/00146/2/21 a student from Management University of Africa (MUA). As a requirement for academic award, I am required to conduct a research project on the above mentioned subject. You have been selected as a respondent, I kindly request you to assist in data collection by filling in the attached questionnaire. The information you give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and the results shall be for academic purposes only. Your kind co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Participation in the survey is free and voluntary. All the information you give will be confidential. The information will be used to prepare general reports, but will not include any specific names.

Therefore you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire in the most free and honest way possible.

Please tick [✓] the appropriate answers in the boxes provided and also write down the appropriate answers in the spaces provided.

SECTION A: Background Information

1. Age:

18-30 yrs ☐ 31-40 yrs ☐ 50 yrs ☐ 1 and above ☐

2. Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Highest Level of education

Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ College ☐ University ☐

4. Years of service in county government of Garissa

1 - 4 yrs ☐ 5- 9 yrs ☐ Over 10 yrs ☐

5. Please indicate the department you are working at in Garissa county government

Section B: Leadership Skills and Operational Performance

Using Likert scale of 1-5 i.e. where 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree tick appropriately in relation to the following following statements

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders in the organization have adequate years of experience in leadership roles					
A leader is perceived to be skilled based on their level they can influence the employees					
Leaders in the organization acquire leadership skills through in-service training programmes					
Leaders in the organization are skilled because of personal characteristics like gender, age etc.					
Leadership skills in the organization are evaluated through success of the leaders in execution of their duties					

Section C: Leadership Styles and Operational Performance

Using Likert scale of 1-5 i.e. where 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree tick appropriately in relation to the following following statements

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Each leader in the organization employs a unique style of leadership					
Leaders in the county government employ leadership style dictated by the situation					
Leaders in the organization utilize leadership style that they have found successful over period of time					
Training leaders helps them to know the most appropriate leadership style to apply					
Leaders in the organization do not have freedom to apply their preferred style of leadership					

Section D: Ethical Leadership Practices and Operational Performance

Using Likert scale of 1-5 i.e. where 5- Strongly Agree, 4- Agree, 3- Neutral, 2 – Disagree, 1- Strongly Disagree tick appropriately in relation to the following following statements

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Leaders in the organization demonstrate ethics in their duties					
Leaders in the organization consider ethical practice as part of the organizational culture.					
Organizational top management are concerned about whether the leaders are ethical or not					
Leaders with unethical practices do not have much influence in the organization					
Ethical leadership practices are clearly defined for leaders in the organization					

Appendix 3: Time Schedule

ACTIVITY	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Topic approval by supervisor & Developing Proposal			
Proposal Presentation & Data Collection			
Data analysis & Project Compilation			
Printing and Binding			
Submission of final project			

Appendix 4: Budget

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT (Kshs.)
Travelling expenses	9,000
Materials	3,050
Print-out costs	8,570
Miscellaneous	2,060
Total	22,680