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## **The Nexus between Strategic Direction and Performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi, Kenya**

*Casty Gakii Micheni<sup>1\*</sup> and Emmanuel Awuor<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Postgraduate Student, The Management University of Africa

<sup>2</sup> Professor (Associate), The Management University of Africa

Email: [castygmicheni@gmail.com](mailto:castygmicheni@gmail.com)

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### **ABSTRACT**

Public sector entities operate in a dynamic governance context, necessitating effective strategic direction to enhance performance. While private sector studies have examined the impact of strategic leadership on organizational performance, research in the public sector, particularly at the county government level, remains limited. This research aimed to bridge this gap by investigating the relationship between strategic direction and the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The purpose of the study was to find out how strategic direction influence on performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The study was anchored on Strategic leadership theory with the adoption of descriptive research design targeted 139 management-level employees. A sample of 124 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. Data was collected through structured questionnaires. Prior to data collection, a pilot study was conducted at Embu County. Inferential statistics revealed that the correlation between strategic direction and performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi was positive and significant. The regression revealed that there was a positive relationship between strategic direction and the county performance, and that changes in strategic direction. Based on the findings the study concludes that the strategic direction has a significant and positive effect on organizational performance of county government of Tharaka Nithi. That county leadership to ensure there is well developed long-term vision and identify mission that enhances attainment of the county goals. Further research should be conducted on those other dimensions and a possibility of moderating factor for generalization of the results and fully establishment of the relationships and the effects that exist between strategic direction and organizational performance.

**Key Words:** *Strategic direction, influence, performance, County Government*

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### **1.0 Introduction**

Strategic leadership practices play a key aspect in the performance of public sector organizations worldwide. As governments seek to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness, strategic leadership gained prominence as a critical factor in achieving public policy goals (Doh & Quigley, 2014). In this era of rapid globalization and interconnectedness, countries across the globe are continuously exploring ways to improve their public sector performance to fulfil the evolving needs of their citizens and stakeholders (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). The adoption of strategic leadership practiced in public sector organizations was recognized as a means to navigate complex challenges, foster innovation, and promote sustainable development (Bryson et al., 2018).

South African strategic leadership practices played a pivotal function in addressing the legacy of apartheid and building a more inclusive and responsive public sector. The post-apartheid government established the Public Service Commission to promote good governance, ethical behavior, and performance in the public service (Dyro, 2021). South Africa's emphasis on strategic leadership extends to the development of performance management frameworks and initiatives aimed at improving service delivery, particularly in sectors like healthcare and education. The country's experience underscores the importance of strategic leadership in fostering social cohesion and economic development. These examples highlight how strategic leadership practices were being employed to overcome governance challenges and drive positive change in public sector organizations across Africa.

In Kenya, the County Government of Tharaka Nithi presented a compelling case for exploring the association amid strategic leadership practices and public sector performance. The Kenyan government embarked on ambitious decentralization efforts through the establishment of county governments (Republic of Kenya, 2010). This transformation created unique opportunities and challenges for strategic leadership within county governments, including Tharaka Nithi. Tharaka Nithi County was one of Kenya's 47 counties, located in the Eastern Region of the country. It was established as an administrative unit following the implementation of the 2010 Kenyan Constitution, which introduced devolved governance.

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## 2.0 Literature Review

Numerous research studies have looked at how strategic direction affects an organization's success in different situations. Munene and Nyaga (2021), for example, investigated the effect of strategic leadership on the operation of Deposits Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOS) in Embu County, with a particular emphasis on the six SACCOS that are now registered in the region. The Resource-Based View theory and the Stakeholders' theory served as the foundation for the research. All management employees at the head offices of these six SACCOS, including CEOs and department heads, were included in the study's target group.

Mixed method approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was employed, with semi-structured questionnaires administered to all 54 respondents, achieving a 100% response rate. Data analysis, using SPSS and regression modeling, revealed a positive influence of strategic leadership on SACCOS' performance. A pilot test affirmed the correlation between strategic direction and performance, leading to the recommendation that strategic direction should be properly defined to ensure clear communication of organizational goals to all employees.

Odero (2023) investigated the impact of the strategic plan on the operational efficiency of SACCOs in Kenya. Using interviews and closed-ended questionnaires, the study used a descriptive and correlational research approach to collect primary data from CEOs and senior management of SACCOs. Together with content analysis, the data analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study's findings demonstrated that strategic direction setting had a major effect on SACCO performance, highlighting the need of developing and communicating a clear vision, mission, goals, and objectives in a proactive manner.

This, in turn, contributes to the enhancement of performance metrics, including customer satisfaction, growth in membership, expansion of the asset base, and an increase in the deposit base. The findings hold valuable implications for SACCO leaders and offer a foundation for potential future research on strategic direction within the SACCO sector.

According to a study by Njagi (2019), the strategic direction of Kisumu's Matatu SACCOs had an impact on the organizations' success. This influence was clear because staff members showed that they understood the organization's policies and processes, and management kept a close eye on goal achievement and the implementation of the organization's vision. The survey did find, however, that staff members believed the organization's plans, vision, and mission were not well articulated during staff meetings. It was significant to highlight that structured questionnaire served as the main research tool for data collecting in this study, which was limited to Matatu SACCOs. The most important sub-construct for establishing strategic direction was having a well stated and understood vision, mission, and strategic intent, according to a different study by Olaka et al. (2016) done within the context of commercial financial institutions in Kenya. This study verified that the choice of strategic direction had a major impact on how well strategy was implemented. Comparing the present study, which took place in an alternate environment (DTS) with the performance of the organization as the dependent variable, to Olaka et al. (2016) research, which was carried out within the banking industry and had strategy execution as the dependent variable, highlights the contextual and construct gap.

In the realm of public sector organizations in Kenya, Chewa et al. (2023) utilized a mixed-methods approach to explore the relation between strategic direction and performance. Their study highlighted an affirmative correlation between effective strategic direction and improved performance, emphasizing the value of clear and well-communicated strategic direction. However, Mwangi (2019) quantitative research in various public sector organizations in Kenya reinforced the importance of strategic direction but did not delve into county-specific dynamics, revealing a research gap in understanding county-level dynamics.

Moving beyond industry-specific studies, Alfwani et al. (2018) investigated transformational leadership's impact on organizational performance at Coast General and Referral Hospital. They found a robust affirmative relationship between strategic direction and organizational performance, emphasizing the pivotal role of strategic direction in influencing and enhancing hospital performance. In another study, Ayalew et al. (2022) conducted case studies of public sector organizations in Kenya, emphasizing the alignment of organizational strategy with performance goals through effective strategic direction. Meanwhile, Kariuki and Nguyo (2020) study delved into the determinant of strategic direction on the performance of public sector entities in various Kenyan counties, revealing variations across counties and suggesting the need for county-specific studies.

Waithira (2017) looked into how strategic direction affected government-owned businesses' performance in the travel and tourism industry. A cross-sectional survey approach was used in this study, and qualitative as well as quantitative information were gathered. To get a thorough grasp of how strategic direction affects organizational performance, information was collected from management and non-managerial employees. With 420 individuals in the sample, the study had a 78% response rate. The main instrument for gathering data was the questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential techniques were used to code and evaluate quantitative data.

The results of the study showed a strong relationship between tourism agencies' performance and their strategic orientation. It was found that higher-level and intermediate-level managers were principally in charge of giving these firms strategic direction, with lower-level employees playing a smaller part in the creation of strategies and being largely engaged in implementation duties. According to the report, companies should aggressively involve lower-level employees in the creation of their strategies. Furthermore, increased training and capacity-building programs for leadership are necessary to improve the efficacy of strategic direction in government-owned tourist organizations.

Similarly, the comprehensive study carried out by Kimathi and Deya (2022) shed further light on the significance of strategic direction in public sector organizations. Their research underscored the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation of strategic plans. This continuous evaluation and adaptation process was recognized as essential for ensuring that the chosen strategic direction remains relevant and responsive to changing internal and

external conditions. However, a noteworthy limitation in both of these valuable studies was the absence of exploration at the county level, particularly in Tharaka Nithi County. These points to a research gap that merits attention. Given that different counties within Kenya may have unique challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors, understanding how strategic direction and its implementation affect organizational performance at the county level becomes increasingly important. Thus, the current study aimed to address this specific research gap by delving into the influence of strategic direction on the performance of public sector organizations in Tharaka Nithi County, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this critical dynamic at the county level in Kenya.

Kaburu and Karanja (2021) research assessed the strategic direction and performance of Kenyan public sector organizations, emphasizing resource allocation's critical role in strategic success. Collectively, these studies emphasize the importance of strategic direction in enhancing organizational performance, but there remains a research gap in understanding how these dynamics operate at the county level, particularly in Tharaka Nithi County. Thus, the current study aimed to address this gap by examining the influence of strategic direction on the performance of public sector organizations in Tharaka Nithi County, providing localized insights and recommendations tailored to the county's unique context.

### ***Strategic leadership theory***

This was the anchor theory for this study. The theory has its roots in the mid-20th century and has evolved over the years. It gained significant attention in the 1980s and 1990s as organizations grappled with a rapidly changing business landscape. One of its seminal moments in history was the publication of Richard E. Boyatzis and Kolb work in 1991, where they highlighted the importance of leadership that aligns with an organization's strategic goals (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1991). Additionally, the works of thought leaders like John P. Kotter and Warren Bennis have played a pivotal role in shaping the theory. Kotter, in his 1990 book, emphasized the distinction between leadership and management, underscoring the role of leaders in shaping an organization's strategic direction (Kotter, 1990). Bennis, in his 1985 book, delved into the psychological and personal aspects of leadership, stressing self-awareness and vision (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). These historical developments laid the foundation for strategic leadership theory.

The strategic leadership theory operates under several key assumptions. It assumes that leaders are central to an organization's ability to formulate and execute its strategic goals effectively (Kotter, 1990). Furthermore, it assumes that leaders possess the skills and competencies required to navigate complex and dynamic environments, anticipating future challenges and opportunities (Kotter, 1990). The theory also assumes that leaders can inspire and mobilize their teams toward a shared vision, fostering a civilization of invention and ability within the organization (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). However, these assumptions are context-dependent and may need to be altered to suit the unique challenges and conditions of the public sector in Kenya.

Despite its merits, strategic leadership theory has limitations that must be acknowledged. One limitation was that it often emphasizes leadership as a top-down process, potentially overlooking the contributions of middle and lower-level managers and employees. This limitation was noted by Mintzberg, who argued that leadership often emerges from the bottom of an organization (Mintzberg, 1973). Additionally, the theory may not fully account for the complex political and bureaucratic dynamics that can influence the public sector in Kenya. In practice, political interference, resource constraints, and cultural factors can hinder the implementation of strategic leadership practices (Hood, 1995).

The link between strategic leadership theory and the consequence of strategic leadership activity on the performance of public sector companies was significant. While the theory provides a foundational framework for perceptive leadership's role in organizational performance, it must be adapted to the unique challenges faced by public sector organizations. By recognizing the limitations and considering the specific context, policymakers and leaders can better apply strategic leadership principles to better the effectiveness and efficiency of public sector organizations, ultimately benefiting the country's citizens and governance (Hood, 1995). Strategic leadership theory serves as a valuable guide for public sector leaders, offer insights into effectual leading activity that can drive affirmative organizational outcomes.

## **3.0 Methodology**

A research design is a strategy that a researcher uses to get answers to study questions (Blumberg et al. 2013). Descriptive research design was employed in this study to address issues about how strategic leadership practices affect public sector organizations' performance (Kothari, 2009). According to Blumberg et al. (2013), the questions of who, what, where, when, and how much were the focus of descriptive study. Because she wants to report on things as they are at the Tharaka Nithi County Government, the researcher chooses this arrangement.

In the context of this study, the target population encompassed 139 employees at the management level within the Tharaka Nithi County Government, categorized into five distinct cadres: County Executive Committee Members (08), Chief Officers (14), Directors (16), Assistant directors (32), and Section heads (69). The composition of this target population was summarized in Table 3.

**Table 1**

### ***Target Population***

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
County Executive Committee Member	08	6%
Chief Officers	14	10%

Directors	16	11%
Assistant Directors	32	23%
Section Heads	69	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Tharaka Nithi County Government (2023)

#### Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling is the process of choosing people from the population that is easily available. This was required because the research could not involve the entire population due to time and budget constraints (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). To create a representative sample for the investigation, Yamane's (1967) formula was combined with stratified random sampling in this study. The degree of confidence in the assumption was 97%  $e = 0.03$ ;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where: n = sample size

N = Target population

e = the accepted sampling error

$$n = \frac{139}{1 + 139 * 0.03^2} = \frac{139}{1.1251} = 124$$

The sample size of 124 respondents were selected from the target population. The sample size was proportionately computed according to departments as shown in table 4

**Table 2**

#### Sample size

Category	Target Population=k	Sample=k/139*124
County Executive Committee Member	08	7
Chief Officers	14	12
Directors	16	14
Assistant Directors	32	29
Section Heads	69	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>124</b>

Source: Tharaka Nithi County Government (2023)

The research utilized primary data, which was collected from the study participants through the use of questionnaire. Questionnaire was commonly employed to gather essential information from a population. Each component within the data collection instrument was crafted to address specific research objectives of the study (Kumar, 2010). Unstructured questionnaire was the preferred choice as it ensured uniformity in both the questions posed and the responses obtained from the participants, in addition to being a more efficient and cost-effective method. The research instrument encompassed a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, organized into six distinct sections, which included: A (Demographic information), B (Strategic leadership), C (Goal setting), D (Stakeholder engagement), E (Staff capacity building), and E (Organizational Performance).

Pilot study was conducted at Embu County, twelve (12) employees from nearby Embu County who would not be included in the sample population participated in the project's pilot study. This accounted for roughly 10% of the entire sample. The tool's validity and reliability were assessed using the pilot study's findings (Sekaran, 2015). According to Mackinnon (2011), ethics is the area of philosophy that deals with behavior and acts as a guide for it. Research ethics was created to make sure that scientists conducted their work honestly and did not participate on projects that would have negatively impacted other people or their own interests. The study addresses informed permission, voluntary participation, secrecy, privacy, and anonymity in relation to research ethics.

## 4.0 Results and Findings

The study sampled 124 respondents who were issued with questionnaires.

**Table 3**

**Response Rate**

Rate Response Rate	Frequency	Percent
Returned	112	90.3
Unreturned	12	9.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher (2024)

Out of the 124 distributed questionnaires, 112 were completed in full, resulting in a response rate of 90.3%. Twelve questionnaires were either partially completed, not completed, or not returned at all, indicating a non-response rate of 9.7%. As per Cooper and Schindler (2014), a response rate ranging from 40% to 80% is deemed suitable for a social scientific study. Consequently, the response rate obtained in this study suggests that the outcomes were commendable and fitting for a social investigation.

**Reliability Test**

The utilization of the Cronbach's alpha method proved to be efficient in assessing the questionnaire's reliability. Within a simulated survey, the researcher administered sample questionnaires to participants, focusing particularly on aspects such as language clarity and question appropriateness. Employing Cronbach's alpha facilitated the evaluation of internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaires. Prior to the main study, a pretest was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the research tool, with the outcomes presented in Table 4.2

**Table 4**

**Reliability Analysis**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items	Comments
Strategic Direction	0.741	8	Accepted

Source: Researcher (2024)

During the pretest phase, it was observed that all alpha coefficients exceeded 0.7, as detailed in Table 4.2. Specifically, strategic direction exhibited an alpha value of 0.741.

**Descriptive Analysis**

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed that strategic direction had an impact on the effectiveness of the Tharaka Nithi County Government. Here is a tabulation of the results:

**Table 5**

**Strategic Direction**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county government defines the strategy clearly.	112	1	5	3.679	1.038
The county government culture is clearly defined.	112	1	5	3.807	.912
Every time there are changes to the county strategy that could impact performance, the leadership team is informed.	112	1	5	3.692	1.060
The leadership group determines the mission that best supports achieving your objectives.	112	1	5	3.538	1.213
The county's vision and mission are followed while coming up with fresh concepts.	112	1	5	3.602	1.165
The leadership sees to it that the county government's long-term vision is developed.	112	1	5	2.359	.702

The leadership makes sure that plans are strategically implemented while emphasizing fundamental values.	112	1	5	3.589	1.144
Valid N (listwise).	112				

#### Source: Researcher (2024)

The study found that respondents generally agreed with the statements provided regarding strategic direction and performance of the county government. They felt the county clearly defines its strategy (mean 3.6795, std dev 1.038) and has a well-defined culture (mean 3.807, std dev 0.912). Respondents believed the leadership team is aware of strategic changes that could impact performance (mean 3.692, std dev 1.060) and identifies missions aligned with county goals (mean 3.538, std dev 1.213). They indicated new ideas are generated in line with the county's vision and mission (mean 3.602, std dev 1.165). However, they were slightly less positive about the leadership ensuring a long-term county vision is developed (mean 2.359, std dev 0.702). But respondents did agree that leadership emphasizes core values during strategic plan implementation (mean 3.589, std dev 1.144). The means and standard deviations provide insight into the degrees of agreement and variation across respondents.

The findings align with Serfontein's (2010) study on how effective strategic leadership practices can enhance business performance in turbulent South African markets. Tools were developed to measure these phenomena. The results also agree with Noor (2015), whose Indonesian banking study found organizational commitment is positively impacted by training, culture, and ethical practices - key strategic leadership elements. Additionally, the study concurs with Zia-ud-Din et al. (2017) on strategic leadership's impact on employee performance, with significant hypothesis outcomes. This guides organizations to leverage strategic leadership to boost employee performance and competitiveness. Overall, the research highlights strategic leadership's importance for organizational vision, values, performance and competitiveness.

Most of the reviewed research established connections between an organization's performance and factors like vision, mission, core values, and objectives. One prior study on private Kenyan universities determined that having a clear vision contributes to success (Jonyo et al., 2018). That same study also suggested correlations between task performance and overall organizational performance. Additionally, Lin & Cantoni, (2017) found that an organization's core values significantly influence its performance levels.

In essence, the body of research indicates that well-defined guiding principles such as vision statements, articulated missions, and institutionalized core values tend to be associated with stronger organizational achievement and outcomes. Establishing clarity around these strategic elements appears to provide a foundation for enhanced performance across businesses and institutions.

#### Organizational Performance

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the organizational performance of the Tharaka Nithi county government.

**Table 6**

#### Organizational Performance

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The county government consistently meets or exceeds its revenue targets, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and financial stability	112	1	5	4.17	1.136
We effectively serve a significant number of citizens ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in our public services	112	1	5	4.03	0.981
The county is consistently rated positively by citizens in terms of service quality responsiveness and overall satisfaction	112	2	5	3.97	0.981
The county government consistently meet or exceed the service charter targets set for our organisation ensuring accountability and transparency in our operations	112	1	5	4.10	1.047
The county government is committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of our operations	112	1	5	4.10	1.047
The county government experiences less staff turnover rates thus performance is met	112	1	5	4.00	1.069
The county government ensures that projects completion is completed timely for better services to its citizens	112	1	5	3.86	1.302

The county government has intensified revenue collection to sustain the county operations	112	2	5	4.31	0.806
Valid N (listwise)	112				

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The study results in Table 4.40 indicates that the respondents agreed with the statements that county government consistently meets or exceeds its revenue targets, demonstrating fiscal responsibility and financial stability (Mean=4.17, Std Dev=1.136), the county government has intensified revenue collection to sustain the county operations (Mean=4.31, Std Dev=0.806), the county government effectively serve a significant number of citizens ensuring accessibility and inclusivity in our public services (Mean=4.03, Std Dev=0.981). the findings also indicate that the county is consistently rated positively by citizens in terms of service quality responsiveness and overall satisfaction (Mean=3.97, Std Dev=0.981), the county government consistently meet or exceed the service charter targets set ensuring accountability and transparency (Mean=4.10, Std Dev=1.047) and that the county government is committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of operations (Mean=4.10, Std Dev=1.047). The study further indicate that the respondents agreed with the statements that the county government ensures that projects completion are completed timely for better services to its citizens (Mean=3.86, Std Dev=1.302) and that the county government has intensified revenue collection to sustain the county operations (Mean=4.31, Std Dev=0.806).

### Correlation Analysis

The type and intensity of the association between the research variables are shown by the correlation analysis.

**Table 7**

### Correlations

		Strategist Leadership	Organizational Performance
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	112	
<b>Organizational Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.741**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	112	112

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

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

**Source: Researcher (2024)**

The study's conclusions show a favorable and statistically significant relationship ( $P=0.741$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000$ ) between the county government of Tharaka Nithi's performance and its strategic leadership. Ng'ang'a (2018) provided support for the findings, indicating that leadership have a significant impact on organizational performance and mission.

### Regression Analysis

The correlation and determination coefficients are shown in the study model summary. The degree to which changes in the independent variables account for the dependent variable's explanation is indicated by the coefficient of determination, whereas the correlation coefficient shows the strength of the relationship between the variables.

**Table 8**

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.772 <sup>a</sup>	0.728	0.719		0.961

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic leadership

The predictor variables strategic direction, account for 77.2% of the variation in revenue collection, as shown in Table 8 above. The R coefficient, has a value of 0.772. Accordingly, this coefficient indicates that 22.8% of the variability in the organizational performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi is attributable to external factors not taken into account throughout the research process. The data shown in the table also show that, according to the Adjusted R square coefficient, the results are 70.9% reliable. This indicates that the results would have a variation of 29.1% if the study had been carried out using the full population instead of a sample or if the sample could have been changed to replace some of the respondents who were not chosen (1-.709) from the current results.

**Table 9***ANOVA<sup>a</sup>*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.797	4	16.199	106.711	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	22.169	108	1.924		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46.966</b>	<b>112</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant) and strategic direction

As the table shows, the significance value of 0.001, which is less than 0.05 at the 95% significance level, was obtained when testing the model's reliability for the relationship between strategic leadership and performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi. As a result, the model is statistically significant in forecasting the correlation between the study's independent variable (strategic direction) and dependent variables (the county government's performance). According to the regression coefficients, a significant model for the association is shown by the F value from the table, which is 106.711. This demonstrates that the entire model was dependable and statistically significant in describing how the predictor variables affected the performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi.

**Table 10***Regression Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.256	1.256		12.816	0.000
	Strategic leadership	0.796	0.084	0.303	9.822	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

The adopted Study Model was  $Y=1.256+0.796X_1$

The model's summary of the results shows that, if strategic leadership is held constant, Tharaka Nithi County Government's performance would be 1.256 units. The outcome additionally suggests a positive correlation between strategy direction and county performance, with 0.796 units of change in county performances resulting from changes in strategic direction ( $\beta_1=0.796$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000$ ). The performance of the organization and strategic direction were positively and significantly correlated. The study's findings confirm the relationship between organizational performance and strategic leadership as supported by Jonyo et al., (2018).

## 5.0 Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

Using the County Government of Tharaka Nithi as a case study, the study aimed to study how strategic direction influence on performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi, Kenya. According to descriptive data, the county has a distinct culture and a well-defined strategy. The leadership team of the county recognizes missions that are in line with county objectives and is aware of strategic changes that may have an effect on performance. According to the findings, the county's vision and goal are being followed in the generation of new concepts. The results also showed that county leadership does not guarantee the creation of a long-term county vision and does not prioritize fundamental values when implementing strategic plans. According to inferential statistics, there was a positive and significant connection ( $P=0.741$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000$ ) between the county government of Tharaka Nithi's performance and its strategic orientation. According to the regression, there is a positive correlation between strategic direction and county performance; changes in strategic direction led to changes in county performances that are equivalent to 0.796 units ( $\beta_1=0.796$ ,  $\text{sig}=0.000$ ).



### Conclusion

The study concludes that the county clearly defines its strategy and has a well-defined culture and county leadership team is aware of strategic changes that could impact performance and identifies missions aligned with county goals. Based on the inferential statistics the study concludes that correlation between strategic direction and performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi was positive and significant.

### Recommendation

That county leadership to ensure there is well developed long-term vision and identify mission that enhances attainment of the county goals.

### Suggestions for Further Research

A replication of this study in other different sectors especially in private sector as well as other parts of the Kenya would explain a complete picture of the significance of the strategic leadership and organizational performance.

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