

An Evaluation of Influence of Leadership on Management of Strategic Organizational Change A Case Study of Nakuru County Government, Kenya

Ruttoh Fred Bore, Ronald Chepkilot, John Kipkorir Tanui

Abstract— Leadership has the ability to bring a vision into reality by making swift decisions and inspiring others. Leadership is guiding people and the company in the right direction through empowerment and inspiration, objectively enabling people to achieve organizational goals, whereas management is a set of processes that help the company to be reliable and efficient. This study sought to investigate the influence of leadership on strategic change in Nakuru county government. Specifically the study sought to determine establish the influence of leaderships' communication and leaderships' strategic direction on strategic change in Nakuru county government. The study was anchored on systems theory and strategic leadership theory. A descriptive research design was used for this study. The study targeted employees from several cadres in the county totalling to 1266. To come up with a sample of 304 respondents the study made use of proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was coded and entered into Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed based on the content of the responses. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation and multiple regressions was used to establish the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. The study concluded that communication and strategic direction had positive and statistically significant influence on the strategic change individually. The study recommended that the leadership had an influence on the strategic organizational change of the county government at Nakuru with communication, strategic direction, organizational culture and dynamics management had positive and significant influence on the strategic change individually. The study thus recommended that the county government of Nakuru should put emphasis on the leadership aspects at the country to influence the strategic change.

Index Terms— Communication, Strategic Direction, Organization Culture, Group Dynamics' Management, Strategic Change.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership has also been defined by Cole (2015) as a dynamic process where one person influences others to voluntarily contribute towards the attainment and realization of the objectives and goals as well as aspirations of values of the group. Transformational style of Leadership comprises of the components of idealized influence, inspiration,

intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration and has been suggested widely as the optimum style for managing change (Boal & Hooijberg, 2014). Transformational leadership is based more on the leaders shifting values, beliefs and needs of their followers and is a broader concept which implies reshaping the entire strategies of the organization. Transformational leadership leads to positive changes in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic and passionate (Tiri, Ogollah, & Mburu, 2015). These leaders are not only concerned and involved in the process but they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed as well.

Transactional leaders expect certain work behaviours from their subordinates who are compensated for these behaviours by both monetary and nonmonetary rewards. The locus of the relationship is on an exchange. Each party to the exchange recognizes the value of the exchange as well as the value of the relationship, but these bargainers have no reason to remain together subsequent to the exchange (Yukl, 2013). There is nothing enduring about their relationship; no actual engagement has occurred. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership, also known as delegative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to make the decisions. This style of leadership implies that someone in the position of a leader does not fulfil leadership responsibilities and practically does not engage or involve in any meaningful transactions whatsoever (Vera & Crossan, 2014).

According to Xenikou, (2019), one of the most essential aspects of leadership is to influence the shared cognitions and behavioural norms that organizational members hold, and thus effective leaders must put effort into culture formation, change and maintenance. This can be achieved through various mechanisms that leaders can employ; communication a powerful clear vision, organizational design and systems and the allocation of resources and rewards. Change involves the crystallisation of new possibilities; new policies, new behaviours, new patterns, new methodologies, new products or new market ideas, based on the reconceptualised patterns in the institution (Kanter, 2012). The architecture of change involves the design and construction of new patterns, or the reconceptualization of old ones, to make new, and hopefully more productive actions possible. Lycke (2014), state that changes can be numerous and could also include changes to procedures, structures, rules and regulations, technology, training and development and customer needs within organisations. Adding a new dimension to the definition of

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change, Robbins (2015), maintained that change should not be incidental in nature. All change initiatives must be planned in consultation with employees.

Change management requires leadership that has the ability to predict, anticipate and prepare for eventual internal changes as a result of changes in the external environment (Nooraie, 2016). The leadership must be able to marshal others into buying in to the change process so as to avoid backlash and opposition of the change. For the strategic change to be successfully implemented therefore, the leaders must offer direction to the staff members and able to inspire positive emotions in the institution and ensure unity of purpose while amicably resolving divergent views among the organization's employees (Murugan, 2016).

The leaders must be able to successfully sail their organizations through turbulent times occasioned by external pressures of change. Jooste and Fourie, (2016) have asserted that since the world has transformed into a small global village, leaders must become innovative and creative in the ever-changing environment in order to remain competitive and to grow successful organizations. Additionally, Tropicales and Guzman, (2014) postulated that strategic leaders integrate the vision, creativity and innovation necessary for long term success with the operational focus and understanding that preserves organizational stability.

The County of Nakuru is one of the Counties that were established after the promulgation of the Constitution in 2010 and after 2013 election. The County is among the most cosmopolitan in the country. The County is among the 14 Counties within the Rift Valley region. The major economic activities include; agriculture, tourism and financial services. Nakuru is an agricultural rich County whose background was shaped by the early white settlement schemes. Nakuru County is home to 2.1 Million people as per the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) 2017 projections (KNBS, 2017). The County's two major towns are; Nakuru Town which is the County's headquarters and Naivasha town which is popular for both local and international tourism because of its proximity Nairobi the capital city of Kenya. The county is divided into nine administrative Sub-Counties namely; Naivasha, Gilgil, Nakuru, Rongai, Nakuru North, Subukia, Njoro, Molo, and Kuresoi. Njoro and Kuresoi were hived off from Molo Sub-County, Gilgil from Naivasha, Rongai from Nakuru Town, and Subukia from Nakuru North.

A. Statement of the Problem

Strategic change has become a constant occurrence that no institution can survive without its proper management (Cameron & Green, 2015). Changes in the social structure, political environment, technology, workforce demographics, legal and regulatory frameworks, and the global economy have had significant influence on the organizational processes, structures and the services provided. The organizations that are caught unawares by these forces of change have been forced to operate in a devastating environment as the forces create an external environment that is unpredictable, dynamic and demanding (Arvinen-Mnondo & Perkins, 2013). Since organizational change is constant, those mandated with the progress of the organization need to be aware and knowledgeable about the different aspects of

the management of such change. Leadership is therefore a very crucial variable in the strategic organizational change. Some of the changes worth noting with respect to county governments are; the shift from the municipal councils to the county governments, the shift of procurement to Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), the introduction of the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act Of 2015 and other Acts of Parliament (Oganga, 2013). Nakuru County has faced numerous challenges as a result of these changes. These includes numerous strikes by county workers, resistance of the IFMIS, lack of public participation as provided for by the constitution, coordination challenges between departments and challenges in generating own source revenues. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, very few studies have been done locally on the role leadership plays in the management of strategic change but none has been done in relation to the counties and their governments. Ojendo, (2016) carried out a study on how the Energy regulatory commission of Kenya managed its strategic change and found that the firm adopted change leadership, creation of understanding and awareness of the change process and overcoming opposition to change. Evidently, as much as these organizations are in the public sector, no study has been done on the strategic change and the role leadership plays in the change process with respect to counties and their governments. This study aims to close this knowledge gap by investigating the influence of leadership on strategic change in Nakuru county government.

B. Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish the influence of leaderships' communication on management of strategic change in Nakuru county government, Kenya.
- ii. To assess the influence of leaderships' strategic direction on management of strategic change in Nakuru county government, Kenya.

C. Research Hypotheses

H0₁: Leaderships' Communication has no significant influence on the management of strategic change in Nakuru county government.

H0₂: Leaderships' Strategic direction has no significant influence on the management of strategic change in Nakuru county government.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper was based on systems theory was proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1968. Systems theory is an interdisciplinary theory about the nature of complex systems in nature, society, and science, and is a framework by which one can investigate and/or describe any group of objects that work together to produce some result. A system is an organized complexity with interdependencies parts of the whole. The system approach consists of open system approach and social-technical approach that integrates classical and human relation schools of organization and management. The system approaches emphasizes organization as a complex social-technical and open system with interrelationships and interdependencies of sub-systems. In order to reduce resistance to change, organization should

balance economic, technological and psycho-social needs. The theory was also based on strategic leadership theory was originally developed and expanded from Hambrick and Mason, (1984) upper echelons theory which was based on the leadership impact on organizational outcomes and performance (Vera & Crossan, 2014). Strategic leadership theory assumes that organizations performance and values are reflections and the efforts of their leaders (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996). The theory of strategic leadership also takes into consideration the important aspects of the environment on which the top executives operate and how this environmental context affects and influences their actions and decisions (Yukl, 2013). The strategic leadership theory seeks to provide a different perspective on strategic leadership requirements in today's dynamic environments (DeChurch, et al., 2016). Strategic leadership theory in this study helps explain that strategic leaders should be able to handle different activities and roles. Further, strategic leaders must be able to perform these tasks and roles using complementary leadership styles, personal characteristics and strategies to influence lower level managers and teams.

A. Leadership's Communication

Effective communication is the cure of all leadership activity leaders know they can best achieve their goals if they have the cooperation of the people they work with (Den Hartog, et al. 2014). Their ability to communicate effectively enables them to influence the attitudes and actions of their colleagues and subordinates. Leaders can sell their ideas better if they communicate effectively. The ability to express themselves clearly and effectively can be their most valuable skill. Research by Hoque, (2014), revealed that communication has been recognized as one of the fundamental principle that has impact on the whole question of development and strategic management. Communication enhances the image and credibility of the development organizations involved in the efforts; and last, to enable community consultation on specific initiatives (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2016). According to research by Johansson, et al., (2014), have attested that leaders communicating effectively to demonstrate daily in all organizations. Further, top executives in all Industry and countries consistently list good communication skills as one of the most important qualities for organizational success. Research by Robbins, (2013), postulated that communication process focuses on context as the basis for designing intervention strategies which focus on participation, social change, learning and empowerment According to Cameron and Green, (2015) an organization can build leadership through communication by denying the importance of effective interpersonal communication for leadership role, building trust and believability, having a clear perception while communicating with others, have strategies of improving self-concepts, delivering clear and concise messages and acting assertively and not aggressively or passively. Communication influence involves clarity, listening, understanding and adapting to audiences as well as negotiable persuasively leaders produce user friendly verbal and writer communication that is clear and concise check that it has been understood as intended (Cameron & Green, 2015). The leader also keeps people up to date and fully informed of

any changes to the original communication. Another commonly noticeable trait is that they allow for a genuine contest of ideas and pulls different views into a coherent position and finds common ground to facilitate agreement and acceptance of mutually beneficial solutions. These people also reach negotiated positions through compromise, which lead to the achievement of the required outcomes. Every leader needs to consider communications as an important never-ending responsibility then success directly links to their organization.. He further asserts that effective organizational communication even at the interpersonal level becomes difficult and at times seemingly impossible. In organization where hierarchical relationships exist, communication requires even greater effort to yield the degree of understanding necessary for effective operations (Hoque, 2014). In organizations, formal communication generally, flows in different directions i.e. downward; upward and horizontal. He further adds that there is a manager leader whose skills are not in born. A manager is a position given by the job level thereby empowering the appointed person to utilize several resources (human, material, equipment and capital) for results leadership is the managing of the human resources, in order to influence their performance by inducing them to a motivator, persuader, effective communicator, a listener, a negotiator and delegate.

B. Leadership's Strategic Direction

Strategic direction is the process of directing and controlling the organization action that leads into achievement of the goal which may involve different degrees of changes hence they must set the activities and process to be followed across all levels (Boal & Hooijberg, 2014). Research by Alexander, (2015) advanced that strategic direction has significantly contributed to organizational performance by generating relevant information in a bid to reduce uncertainty while creating a better understanding of the important environment within which organizations operate. Further, researchers revealed that strategic planning as an essential tool which generates greater understanding in the process of planning initiation as an area of interest and importance to both practitioners and theorist (Barney, 2013; Bryson, Berry, & Yang, 2015). Strategic direction is a variable that influences organizational processes, business environments and performances of businesses while investigating planning in businesses (French, Kelly, & Harrison, 2014). Strategic direction is one of the key strategic leadership actions which plays critical roles in ensuring strategies are executed effectively (Jooste & Fourie, 2016). Strategic direction is an avenue through which top echelon of the institution provide strategic direction to the different department and sections, communicate to their staff who eventually implement strategic plans hence offer a control over the strategic processes. Strategic leaders are in-charge of directing and controlling the organization into achievement of the goal which may involve different degrees of changes hence they must set the activities and process to be followed across all levels. Further, research by Johansson *et al.*, (2014), revealed that strategic decisions should be sustainable, should offer competitive advantage, should develop processes to deliver the strategy, should exploit the linkages between the

organization and its environment and should move the organization forward to a significant position.

Leadership is about finding the right direction or path and then leading others onto the future. Finding path is the onus of leadership. Nadler, Shaw, and Walton, (2015) emphasized the importance of leaders in organizing and maintaining a climate for change within organizations. Although participation of all players is necessary, the role of the leader in the change process is crucial. Strategic leadership shapes the formation of vision and mission, facilitates strategy formulation and strategy implementation and helps in the achievement of strategic competitiveness and above-average returns. It is involved in effectively managing the firm's resource portfolio, sustaining an effective organizational culture, emphasizing ethical practices, establishing balanced organizational controls, developing policies and procedures and developing reward systems.

A leader that is adaptive is required in a work environment that is adaptive in order to give direction within the organization's systems, offer protection, solve conflicts and maintain norms. Having a common goal, the ability to influence and having employees that are willing to work toward the company's vision are the three elements of leadership. Nonetheless effective leadership is not guaranteed by possessing the three elements. This is because in their effort to redirect the company, leaders often face resistance from their employees. According to Bryson, *et al.*, (2015) as far as organizational change is concerned, the only certain thing is that nothing is certain. Barney (2013), states that many leaders think that individual behaviour in an organization can be changed by changing the organizational culture, which is a common mistake. He posits that the active involvement of the CEO as well as the decision-making team is imperative for effective cultural change to occur.

C. Empirical Studies

Zhang (2014) conducted a study on the relationship between perceived leadership style and employee engagement among 439 sales assistants in Sidney Australia. The results showed that employee engagement is associated with an employees' perception of leadership style in his or her direct supervisor, negatively when classical or transactional leadership styles are perceived and positively in the case of visionary or organic leadership. Moreover three employee characteristics moderated the relationship between the perceived leadership style and employee engagement in different ways. In this study, Zhang concludes that leadership styles influence employee engagement.

Mbithi (2014) conducted a study to understand how universities in Kenya responded to reforms, focusing on their leadership that is critical in both managing the transformation and creating academic excellence. It emerged that transformational leadership behaviour of the top leadership of universities in Kenya led to high employee and employee performance and that the top leadership of these universities is able to match their strategy with the correct structure, systems and technology to achieve organizational effectiveness.

Mativu, (2013) undertook a study to examine management of strategic change at Safaricom Limited Company. His study discusses changes in the company management overtime as well as management strategies adopted to overcome external challenges. The study revealed that although the firm's supervisory approaches employed in midst of challenges to solve crisis and steer performance are highlighted, a gap exists on the influences of leadership, and more specifically transformational leadership on the employee performance.

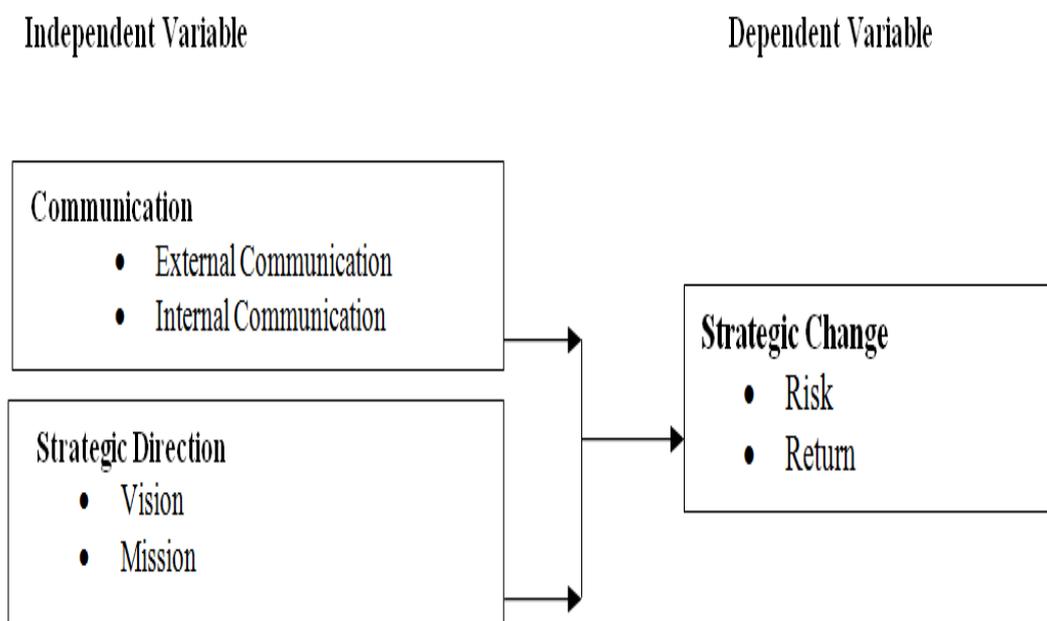
Tiri, Ogollah and Mburu (2015), investigated the influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited. The study established that there existed a positive relationship between influence of transformational leadership styles and virtual team performance in Safaricom Company limited. A major gap in their study as previously highlighted is lack of explanation of how individual factors of transformational leadership impacts on employee performance.

Khan, *et al.*, (2015) investigated the relationship of self-awareness leadership competencies, organization commitment and organization performance. The quantitative research focused on call centres of telecom sector operating in Islamabad and used 245 questionnaires.. The quantitative research focused on call centres of telecom sector operating in Islamabad and used 245 questionnaires. The findings indicated that employee's organization commitment strongly mediated the process of impact of self-awareness leadership competencies on the organization performance. That is, though self-awareness leadership competencies positively impacted on organization performance, the presence of the organization's commitment boosted the relationship

D. Research Gaps

Most of the studies have focused on either of the two being either an independent variable of another variable or a dependent variable of another. This study will therefore look at the two together with the strategic leadership being independent of change management and establish the effect of leadership on strategic change management. The study will go further than Stoyanova, (2015) and establish more aspects of the leadership that affect change management. As has been witnessed in the empirical review, studies on the influence of leadership in the country are minimal. The studies conducted by (Hoque, 2014; Stoyanova, 2015; Alexander, 2015; Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, 2014; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2013) etc. were based in developed economies. Locally, there is no study that has looked at the influence of leadership on strategic organizational change from the point of view of County governments. This study therefore, will seek to fill the knowledge gap by establishing the overall objective of this study which is to investigate the influence of leadership on strategic organizational change in Nakuru county government.

E. Conceptual Framework



III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design. Descriptive approach was quick and practical in terms of the financial aspect. The study targeted the senior leaders in the county government of Nakuru namely the CECs, COs, directors, sub county administrators, HODs, Medical superintendents, Auditors, Accountants, Ward administrators, Senior doctors, Senior nursing officers and senior administrators. The study used Yamane’s (1967) formula to get a sample of 304 respondents. The study further employed Proportionate Stratified random sampling technique. Proportionate Stratified random sampling was ideal for this study because the offices from which the study was done were uniquely different as they fall under different categories. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire as the main data collection instrument. Both Structured and unstructured questionnaires allowed for uniformity of responses to questions. Questionnaires gave the researcher comprehensive data on a wide range of factors. Both open-ended and closed-ended questions were used. Questionnaires allowed greater uniformity in the way questions were asked, ensuring greater compatibility in the responses. Questions were constructed so as to address specific objectives and provide a variety of possible responses. Unstructured questions gave the respondent freedom of response which helped the researcher to gauge the feelings of the respondent. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the University and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. This was followed by the recruitment of research

assistants. The questionnaires were dropped and picked later after they had been fully filled. The pilot testing was conducted on 10 officers who were not included in the main study. Content validity was concerned with sample-population representativeness. To ensure validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to the supervisors, colleagues, and other experts in research to check on content and face validity. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data was coded and entered into Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS Version 21) and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed based on the content of the responses. Descriptive statistics involved the use of absolute and relative (percentages) frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion (mean and standard deviation respectively). Quantitative data was presented in tables and graphs and explanation was presented in prose. The study used Karl Pearson’s coefficient of correlation and multiple regressions to establish the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables.

IV. RESULTS

A. Response Rate

The target population of the study constituted 304 county government employees. Since the data for the research was being collected through use of the questionnaire, then 304 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. A total of 261 questionnaires were returned making a response rate of 85.8% which surpassed the 80% threshold advocated by Connelly (2008).

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Position Held in the Organization

| Position Held in the Organization | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Manager | 15 | 5.7% |
| Supervisor | 39 | 14.9% |
| Assistant Manager | 27 | 10.3% |
| Unit Head officer | 55 | 21.0% |
| Departmental Head | 17 | 6.5% |
| Technical personnel | 108 | 41.6% |
| Total | 261 | 100 |

The results of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents (at 41.9 %) were technical personnel. This is compared to 21.0% of the respondents who were unit head officer, 10.3% of the respondents who were assistant manager, 14.9% of the respondents who were supervisors, and 6.5% of the respondents who were departmental heads.

Descriptive Statistics for Communication

| | SD Freq % | D Freq % | U Freq % | A Freq % | SA Freq % | χ^2 | P-Value |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|---------|
| Communication has gained the cooperation of the people working in the county | 5 1.9% | 14 5.4% | 16 6.1% | 198 75.9% | 28 10.7% | 7.178 | 0.518 |
| There is timely communication of county strategies to staffs and other stakeholders | 8 3.1% | 30 11.5% | 27 10.3% | 162 62.1% | 34 13.0% | 17.751 | 0.023 |
| There is continuous flow of information between the county leadership, staff, and other relevant stakeholders | 21 8.0% | 18 6.9% | 12 4.6% | 181 69.3% | 29 11.1% | 5.774 | 0.673 |
| County leaders in are able to validate responses timely from departmental teams | 15 5.7% | 29 11.1% | 7 2.7% | 184 70.5% | 26 10.0% | 19.582 | .012 |
| County leaders build trust, transparency and honesty communication within the county government | 11 4.2% | 26 10.0% | 28 10.7% | 158 60.5% | 38 14.6% | 17.545 | 0.025 |
| County leaders are able to create team commitment through enhanced communication | 13 5.0% | 20 7.7% | 15 5.7% | 178 68.2% | 35 13.4% | 15.146 | 0.047 |
| County leaders allow for a genuine contest of ideas and pulls different views into a coherent position | 9 3.4% | 13 5.0% | 21 8.0% | 170 65.1% | 48 18.4% | 16.573 | 0.031 |

The use of communication to gain the cooperation of the people working at the county was examined and the responses indicated that 75.9% and 10.7% agreed and strongly agreed with the measurement. Therefore, a cumulative percentage of 86.6% were in agreement with the measure. In order to examine on whether the use of communication to gain cooperation of the people working at the count had an association with the strategic management the chi square test of independence was undertaken. The achieved results were $p(X^2 > 7.178) = 0.518$ with a decision being made to that there is no association between communication to gain cooperation of people working at the county and strategic change at the county due to a p value > 0.05.

This results are evidenced in the available literature. Effective communication is the cure of all leadership activity leaders know they can best achieve their goals if they have the cooperation of the people they work with (Den Hartog, *et al.* 2014). Their ability to communicate effectively enables them to influence the attitudes and actions of their colleagues and subordinates. Leaders can sell their ideas better if they communicate effectively. The ability to express themselves clearly and effectively can be their most valuable skill. Research by Hoque, (2014), revealed that communication has been recognized as one of the fundamental principle that has impact on the whole question of development and strategic management.

The examination on whether presence of timely communication of county strategies to staffs and other

stakeholders had a statistically significant association with strategic change was undertaken. The achieved chi square results revealed that $p(X^2 > 17.751) = 0.023$ indicating lack of independence of presence of timely communication of county strategies to staffs and strategic change at 5% level of significance due to a p value < 0.05 . There was therefore statistically significant association between the two variables. These results were further evidenced by a majority of the respondents indicating their agreement with the presence of timely communication of county strategies to staffs and other stakeholders at 62.1%. This is compared to a cumulative of 14.6% of the respondents who were in disagreement with the metric. The results in this study are similar to that by Rajhans, (2013) proposed communication measures including information distribution that is relevant in a timely manner, creating and building effective decision making process through active communication within the organization and development of a good communication culture to boost

When the respondents were asked on whether there was continuous flow of information between the county leadership, staff, and other relevant stakeholders the achieved results had 3.1%, 11.5%, 10.3%, 62.1%, and 13.0% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. The results thus indicated that a majority of the respondents were in agreement with the metric at 62.1%. The chi square test of independence of indicated that $p(X^2 > 5.774) = 0.673$ resulting in a conclusion of presence of independence between continuous flow of information between the county leadership, staff, and other relevant stakeholders against strategic change at the county government. In organization where hierarchical relationships exist, communication requires even greater effort to yield the degree of understanding necessary for effective operations (Hoque, 2014). In organizations, formal communication generally, flows in different directions i.e. downward; upward and horizontal. He further adds that there is a manager leader whose skills are not in born. A manager is a position given by the job level thereby empowering the appointed person to utilize several resources (human, material, equipment and capital) for results leadership is the managing of the human resources, in order to influence their performance by inducing them to a motivator, persuader, effective communicator, a listener, a negotiator and delegate.

The respondents were asked on whether the county leaders able to validate responses timely from departmental teams with 5.7%, 11.1%, 2.7%, 70.5% and 10.0% of the respondents being in strong disagreement, disagreement, being uncertain, agreement and strong agreement respectively. This shows that a cumulative percentage of 16.8% of the respondents being in disagreement and 80.5% of the respondents being in agreement aspects. The chi square test of independence observed results of $p(X^2 > 19.582) = .012$ of presence of significant association between county leaders able to validate responses timely from departmental teams and strategic change due to p value < 0.05 . The chi square results as to whether county leaders building trust, transparency and honesty communication within the county government had a statistically significant relationship with strategic change achieved results of $p(X^2 > 17.545) = 0.025$.

The results thus indicated that presence of statistically significant relationship between county leaders building trust, transparency and honesty communication, and strategic change at 5% level of significance due to a p value of less than 0.05. This results can further be validated by the achieved frequency distributions of 75.1% of the respondents being in agreement compared to 14.2% of the respondents that were in disagreement with the metric. When asked on whether the county leaders are able to create team commitment through enhanced communication, 5.0%, 7.7%, 5.7%, 68.2% and 13.4% of the respondents chose strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The results of this study are similar to the relevant literature on the subject. Communication enhances the image and credibility of the development organizations involved in the efforts; and last, to enable community consultation on specific initiatives (Kellett, Humphrey, & Sleeth, 2016). According to research by Johansson, *et al.*, (2014), have attested that leaders communicating effectively to demonstrate daily in all organizations

The chi square test of independence of county leaders being able to create team commitment through enhanced communication and strategic change had achieved results of $p(X^2 > 15.146) = 0.047$. These results indicated presence of statistically significant association between the metrics at 5% level of significance due to a p value of less than 0.05. The final indicator that was used to measure communication was the county leaders allowing for a genuine contest of ideas and pulls different views into a coherent position. The chi square of independence between this indicator and strategic change achieved $p(X^2 > 16.573) = 0.031$ indicating presence of a statistically significant association at 5% level of significance. This is further evidenced by a cumulative percentage of 83.5% of the respondents being in agreement that county leaders allow for a genuine contest of ideas and pulls different views into a coherent position. The strategic influence of commitment on the strategic change has been noted in the empirical literature. In this context, Khan, *et al.*, (2015) investigated the relationship of self-awareness leadership competencies, organization commitment and organization performance. The quantitative research focused on call centers of telecom sector operating in Islamabad and used 245 questionnaires. The findings indicated that employee's organization commitment strongly mediated the process of impact of self-awareness leadership competencies on the organization performance. That is, though self-awareness leadership competencies positively impacted on organization performance, the presence of the organization's commitment boosted the relationship.

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Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Direction

| | SD Freq % | D Freq % | U Freq % | A Freq % | SA Freq % | χ^2 | P value |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|---------|
| The county leadership has a clear vision which ensures commitment to the strategic direction | 14 5.4% | 19 7.3% | 21 8.0% | 189 72.4% | 18 6.9% | 14.876 | 0.062 |
| The county has a strategy which links the vision with current reality | 4 1.5% | 12 4.6% | 24 9.2% | 190 72.8% | 31 11.9% | 27.868 | 0.001 |
| The county leadership's strategy guides in formulating the organizational structure | 11 4.2% | 26 10.0% | 24 9.2% | 165 63.2% | 35 13.4% | 15.134 | 0.049 |
| The county leadership has a strategy that guides in identifying capabilities that need to be developed to achieve desired results | 20 7.7% | 17 6.5% | 10 3.8% | 183 70.1% | 31 11.9% | 19.582 | 0.012 |
| The county develops processes through strategic implementation of the plans to support change | 5 1.9% | 16 6.1% | 36 13.8% | 168 64.4% | 36 13.8% | 22.186 | 0.005 |
| The county leadership communicates reasons for strategic direction to the stakeholders | 12 4.6% | 32 12.3% | 29 11.1% | 161 61.7% | 27 10.3% | 41.912 | 0.000 |
| The county has targets that are to be achieved at all times | 8 3.1% | 34 13.0% | 26 10.0% | 154 59.0% | 39 14.9% | 31.465 | 0.000 |
| The county leadership's strategic decisions are sustainable | 21 8.0% | 5 1.9% | 17 6.5% | 196 75.1% | 22 8.4% | 28.951 | 0.001 |

The respondents were asked on whether the county leadership has a clear vision which ensured commitment to the strategic direction. The respondents indicated that 5.4%, 7.3%, 8.0%, 72.4%, and 6.9% of the respondents were in strong disagreement, disagreement, uncertain, agreement and strong agreement respectively. The chi square test of independence between county leadership having a clear vision which ensured commitment to the strategic direction and strategic change achieved results of $p (X^2 > 14.876) = 0.062$. This indicated presence of independence between county leadership having a clear vision which ensured commitment to the strategic direction and strategic change at 5% level of significance since p value is less than 0.05. The results of the study are consistent with Tropicales and Guzman, (2014) who postulated that strategic leaders integrate the vision, creativity and innovation necessary for long term success with the operational focus and understanding that preserves organizational stability.

The results of the study showed that the county having a strategy which links the vision with current reality and strategic change achieved $p (X^2 > 27.868) = 0.001$. This showed that there was statistically significant association between county having a strategy which links the vision with current reality and strategic change. These results were further validated by a cumulative percentage of 84.7% of the respondents that were in agreement that that the county having a strategy which links the vision with current reality compared to a cumulative of 6.1% of the respondents that were in disagreement. The views of this study on the

importance of the matching of the vision with the reality are further noted in the literature. According to Cummings and Worley, (2013) changing corporate culture can be extremely difficult and risky exercise and as such requires top management commitment and support, clear strategic vision, symbolic leadership, supporting organizational changes, selection and socialization of newcomers and termination of deviants, as well as sensitivity to legal and ethical issues.

The study also examined on whether the country leadership's strategy guides in formulation of the organizational structure. This indicator had 4.2%, 10.0%, 9.2%, 63.2%, and 13.4% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, being in agreement, and strongly agreeing respectively. The results thus indicated that it was only a minority of the respondents at a cumulative percentage of 14.2% of the respondents that were in disagreement with the metric. In respect as to whether the country leadership's strategy guided in the formulation of the organizational structure had a statistically significant association with strategic change the achieved chi square results were $p (X^2 > 15.134) = 0.049$. These results indicated that country leadership's strategy guiding in formulation of the organizational structure had a statistically significant relationship with strategic change at 5% level of significance. This was due to a p value of less than 0.05. The results are further supported by Buchanan and Huczynski, (2013) who argue that there must be a fit between strategy, structure, systems, staff, skills, shared values and style for

strategic change implementation to successful. This view is supported by Kotter and Schlesinger, (2014) who appoints out that for change to be successful, it must be anchored on the organisation's culture

The chi square test of independence results on the country leadership having a strategy that guided in the identification of capabilities that need to be developed to achieve desired results had the observed results of $p(X^2 > 19.582) = 0.012$. The results thus indicated presence of statistically significant association between the indicator and the dependent variable at 5% level of significance due to a p value of less than 0.05. These results are further validated by the observed frequency distribution of a majority of the respondents at 70.1% agreeing that country leadership had a strategy that guided in the identification of capabilities that need to be developed. This is as opposed to 7.7% and 6.5% of the respondents who strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. In respect as to whether the country developed processes through strategic implementation of the plans to support change, 1.9%, 6.1%, 13.8%, 64.4%, and 13.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were uncertain, agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The need for the strategic implementation to develop change are consistent with the available literature. The ultimate focus of the top leaders of an organization, who have substantive responsibility for making strategic decisions, is to understand how the top executives create an overall purpose and direction for the organization, which eventually guide strategy formulation and implementation (Makri&Scandura, 2013).

The chi square test of independence results further indicated that $p(X^2 > 22.186) = 0.005$. These results thus

Descriptive Statistics of Strategic Change

| | SD Freq % | D Freq % | U Freq % | A Freq % | SA Freq % |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Resources have been properly managed during the change process | 14 5.4% | 21 8.0% | 45 17.2% | 152 58.2% | 29 11.1% |
| The change objectives have been achieved during the change process | 11 4.2% | 34 13.0% | 30 11.5% | 156 59.8% | 30 11.5% |
| There has been no resistance to the strategic change processes | 15 5.7% | 28 10.7% | 24 9.2% | 148 56.7% | 46 17.6% |
| Change management in the county has gone according to schedule | 17 6.5% | 16 6.1% | 26 10.0% | 178 68.2% | 24 9.2% |
| Change initiatives in the county are easily implemented in order to contribute to the desired goal. | 13 5.0% | 24 9.2% | 25 9.6% | 167 64.0% | 32 12.3% |
| The county has the right people that enable realization of strategic change | 10 3.8% | 36 13.8% | 21 8.0% | 149 57.1% | 45 17.2% |
| The county is able to effectively balance short term and medium term goals. | 12 4.6% | 27 10.3% | 23 8.8% | 160 61.3% | 39 14.9% |

The study found that in respect to the resources having been properly managed during the process had a majority of 58.2% of the respondents agreeing and 11.1% of the respondents strongly agreeing. This is as contrasted to the 5.4%, 8.0% and 17.2% of the respondents who strongly disagreed, disagreed and were uncertain in respect to the metric. The study in respect to the change objectives being achieved during the

indicated that there was statistically significant association between country developing processes through strategic implementation of the plans to support change and strategic change. On whether the country leadership communicated the reasons for strategic direction the stakeholders, the achieved frequency distribution results were 4.6%, 12.3%, 11.1%, 61.7%, and 10.3% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively with the metric. The results of the chi square test of independence further indicated that $p(X^2 > 41.912) = 0.000$. The results thus indicated presence of statistically significant association between country leadership communicated the reasons for strategic direction the stakeholders and strategic change at county government due to a p value of less than 0.05. This can be attributed to a cumulative percentage of 72% of the respondents who were in agreement that country leadership communicated the reasons for strategic direction the stakeholders.

The respondents were asked on whether the county had targets that were to be achieved at all times. This had the respondents indicating 3.1% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, 13.0% disagreeing, 10.0% of the respondents being uncertain, 59.0% of the agreeing, and 14.9% of the respondent strongly agreeing. The chi square tests of independence results further found that $p(X^2 > 31.465) = 0.000$. These results thus indicated that there was a statistically significant association between county having targets that were to be achieved at all times and strategic change aspects. These results are further evidenced by a cumulative percentage of 73.9% of the respondents that were in agreement that county had targets that were to be achieved at all times and strategic change aspects.

change process had 4.2%, 13.0%, 11.5%, 59.8%, and 11.5% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. In respect to the lack of resistance to the strategic change process, the results indicated that 5.7%, 10.7%, 9.2%, 56.7%, and 17.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed, were uncertain, agreed and strongly agreed in respect to the

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metric. The change management in the country going according to the schedule had 6.5%, 6.1%, 10.0%, 68.2%, and 9.2% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. The change initiative in the country being easily implemented in order to contribute to the desired goal had a majority of the respondents at 64.0% being in agreement with the measure and a further 12.3% of the respondents being in strong agreement with the measure. The county having the

right people that enable the realization of the strategic change had 3.8%, 13.8%, 8.0%, 57.1%, and 17.2% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing with the metric. Finally, in respect to the county being able to effectively balance short term and medium term goals the question had 4.6%, 10.3%, 8.8%, 61.3%, and 14.9% of the respondents strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, being uncertain, agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively.

Correlational Analysis

| | | Communication Strategic Strategic Direction Organizational Change | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|--|
| Communication | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | |
| | N | 261 | | | |
| Strategic Direction | Pearson Correlation | .175** | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .005 | | | |
| | N | 261 | 261 | | |
| Strategic Organizational Change | Pearson Correlation | .634** | .605** | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | |
| | N | 261 | 261 | 261 | |

The findings revealed that there is significant correlational between strategic organizational change and communication as indicates by r value of 0.634. In addition the findings revealed that there is significant correlational between strategic organizational change and strategic direction as indicates by r value of 0.605.

Coefficients

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | .368 | .134 | | 2.746 | .006 |
| 1Communication | .236 | .023 | .362 | 10.260 | .000 |
| Strategic Direction | .217 | .026 | .287 | 8.346 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Strategic Organizational Change

The regression coefficients are used to show the effect of the unit increase on the independent variable on the dependent variable. In this context, the beta coefficients of communication and strategic direction are 0.236 and 0.217 respectively. The results thus indicated that a unit increase in communication led to 0.236 increases in strategic organizational change with the other variables kept constant. The t test was used for the purposes of testing the null hypothesis of the study that communication has no significant influence on strategic change in Nakuru county government. The achieved results for the communication variable were $t=10.260$, $sig=0.000$ leading to the conclusion to reject the null hypothesis at 5% level of independence since p value is less than 0.05. On the other hand, a unit increase in strategic direction led to a 0.217 increase in organizational culture. The t test as a test statistic was used to test the hypothesis that strategic direction has no significant influence on strategic change in Nakuru county government. The achieved results for the strategic direction variable were $t=8.346$, $sig=0.000$ leading to the conclusion that the null hypothesis should be

rejected at 5% level of significance since p value is less than 0.05.

The results of the beta coefficients further indicated that all the independent variables had positive predictive capability on the dependent variable as all the beta coefficients were positive in nature. The beta coefficients based on their numerical strengths was also used to deduce the strength of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Using the regression coefficients, the following regression model was constructed that is;
 $Y = 0.368 + 0.236X_1 + 0.217X_2$ where X_1 , X_2 indicate the independent variables; communication, strategic direction

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusion

The study concluded that there was no association between communication to gain cooperation of people working at the county and strategic change at the county. This was attributed to effective communication is the cure of all

leadership activity leaders know they can best achieve their goals if they have the cooperation of the people they work with. The study further noted that presence of independence between continuous flow of information between the county leadership, staff, and other relevant stakeholders against strategic change at the county government. In organization where hierarchical relationships exist, communication requires even greater effort to yield the degree of understanding necessary for effective operations. In organizations, formal communication generally, flows in different directions i.e. downward; upward and horizontal.

The study further concluded that presence of independence between county leadership having a clear vision which ensured commitment to the strategic direction and strategic change. The results of the study also showed that the county having a strategy which links the vision with current reality and strategic change. The study results found that there was statistically significant association between county having a strategy which links the vision with current reality and strategic change.

B. Recommendation

The study recommended that the leadership had an influence on the strategic organizational change of the county government at Nakuru with communication, strategic direction, organizational culture and dynamics management had positive and significant influence on the strategic change individually. The study thus recommended that the county government of Nakuru should put emphasis on the leadership aspects at the country to influence the strategic change. The study recommended that other factors that influence on the strategic change at the county government be examined.

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