

## Transactional Leadership Style and the Effectiveness of Public Participation in the County Governance in Kenya

Authors: <sup>1</sup>Dr. Paul Karanja Njiiri, PhD, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Susan Were, PhD, <sup>3</sup>Prof. Willy Muturi, PhD



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<sup>1</sup> Scholar: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

<sup>3</sup> Professor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

### ABSTRACT

An effective system of governing is crucial for advancing both social and economic development, with a focus on promoting openness, accountability, and active involvement of the people. Public participation entails the active involvement of citizens in the process of governance, promoting openness, responsibility, and fair provision of public services. This method facilitates well-informed decision-making and improves governance by ensuring that policies align with the requirements and priorities of the community. To enhance efficacy, numerous governments have transitioned from centralization to decentralization, thereby enabling local governments to include citizens more directly in the process of decision-making. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 incorporated decentralization and public involvement as integral components to enhance governance in Kenya. Nevertheless, despite extant literature suggesting that leadership affects participation, the extent to which various leadership styles impact the effectiveness of public engagement has not been well investigated. This study examines the influence of transactional leadership style on the effectiveness of public participation in the county governance in Kenyan. The components of transactional leadership styles consisted of contingent reward, contingent punishment, Management-by-Exception-active, and Management-by-Exception-passive. The study adopted a positivist philosophy, using scientific methods to explore social phenomena, focusing on objectivity and empirical verification. The research used a quantitative survey design, with questionnaires for data collection. The analysis involved devolved county governments, targeting residents from eight counties, who had engaged in public forums. A sample of 400 respondents was obtained through both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling methods. The results of the regression analysis indicated that there was a positive relationship between transactional leadership and the effectiveness of public participation. The implementation of active management-by-exception and contingent incentive resulted in a notable increase in public engagement, with active management-by-exception having the most prominent influence. The effects of contingent punishment and passive Management-by-Exception were positive, although they failed to achieve statistical significance. The study recommends county authorities to prioritize active management-by-exception and use reward schemes to enhance public participation. Additionally, it suggested implementation of training programs aimed at transforming executives from passive to proactive management approaches. In addition, proposals were made for policies that support leadership training and civic education to promote public participation. This study enhances the existing theory by empirically demonstrating the relationship between transactional leadership style and the effectiveness of public participation. It also offers a foundation for future research in this area. Subsequent investigations should examine additional variables that impact the efficacy of public participation in county governance, considering cultural and contextual variations.

**Keywords:** *Transactional Leadership Style, Public Participation Effectiveness, Local Governments Governance*



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Efficient and effective governance is crucial for driving social and economic progress across all levels of government (World Bank, 2020). Good governance focuses on promoting transparency, accountability, and active participation of stakeholders, ensuring that their needs and concerns are considered (Sari, 2023). In addition, it creates an environment where policies and programs of the government are more effective and equitable, leading to improved public services (Breen, *at al.*, 2018; Zahran, Terada & Saengsroi, 2023). To achieve this, many governments have adopted public participation as a process by which the public engages with leaders and government agencies to influence decision-making on policy, delivery of services, oversight, and development matters that affect them (Bobbio, 2019; Mbithi, Ndambuki & Juma, 2019). According to Jurlina and Slijepcevic (2018), in an era characterised by a distrust of the government, public participation is a critical participatory approach that encourages a shift from “government” to “governance”.

As an embodiment of decentralization, Kenya introduced a devolved system of governance consisting of 47 counties in accordance with the new Constitution of Kenya 2010. The objective is to deepen democracy, devolution of state power and enhance governance through public participation. Accordingly, public participation was made a crucial pillar of the constitution under Article 232(d), which guarantees public involvement in the policy decision-making process. Further, Article 196(1)(b), mandates the county governments to enhance and facilitate effective public participation in their governance (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

The rationale of public participation is based on the constitutional foundation which places sovereign power on the people of Kenya and must be respected and institutionalized in all processes of governance (County Public Participation Guidelines (CPPG), 2016). The Constitution of Kenya 2010 is also very empathetic on enhancing transparency, accountability, equity, and inclusiveness in service delivery (Korir & Bett, 2018; World Bank, 2020). Hence, the County Public Participation Guidelines (2016) requires the counties at a minimum to engage the public in policy and law making, planning & budgeting, implementation and delivery of county public services, oversight through Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), and vetting of public officers. Moreover, the guidelines have highlighted the salient features of the public participation process outlining the role of county governments and the governor in facilitating effective public participation in the county governance in Kenya.

Despite the theoretical underpinnings and advocacy for effective public participation in decentralized service delivery, studies show that in most democracies, public participation remains ineffective (Carreira, Machado & Vasconcelos, 2016; Bobbio, 2019; Quick & Bryson, 2022). Kenya is no exception, as studies indicate that public participation in the devolved system of governance remains largely ineffective (KSG, 2015; Mbithi *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the Courts in Kenya continue to stop county governments’ policies, programs, and projects after dissatisfied citizens file court cases because of lack of or ineffective public participation (Kenya Law, 2018).

Public leaders influence the design of participatory arrangements (Eckerd & Heidelberg, 2020), decide the degree to which citizens’ input is incorporated into decisions and control administrative resources (Migchelbrink & Van de Walle, 2022). Accordingly, theorists suggested that the leadership style of public leaders has an impact on the effectiveness of participation processes (Cattino & Reckien, 2021; Riristuningsia & Harsono, 2017). Mbithi, *et al.* (2019) corroborates further that leadership style exhibited by leaders has an impact on the service delivery quality and the effectiveness of governance processes in the local governments. Despite these acknowledgements, empirical studies on how leadership styles affect public participation are rare (Liao & Schachter, 2018; Springer, Walkowiak & Bernaciak, 2020). This motivated the study to discover leadership styles that entrench effective public participation.

Amongst leadership styles in focus of recent research is transactional leadership. Transactional leadership style is based on the hypothesis that followers are inspired by a system of rewards (extrinsic, mostly economical) and punishments. It values order and structure. It strictly focuses between followers and leaders interchange and specifically what benefits are there for each party after completing the goal (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Leaders work within the existing organizational culture and with the existing tools and processes. They maintain the status quo and are extremely performance-oriented (thinking inside the box). These types of leaders are not inclined to bring change (Mäkitalo, 2017; Odumeru, 2013).

Bass and Avolio (1990) indicate that the sub-dimensions of transactional type of leadership are contingent reward and management-by-exception. A contingent reward is where the leader communicates the goals, objectives, and targets of a task to be accomplished and a predetermined reward is offered to followers on the accomplishment of that task. Management-by-exception dimension entails the leader correcting the followers negatively (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). It is categorized into active and passive forms. An active leader monitors deviation from standards and acts when necessary. A passive leader generally ignores followers until a mistake occurs, and only then does he/she provide negative feedback (Mäkitalo, 2017; Northouse, 2021).

Transactional leadership style plays a very critical role in an organizational setting. It allows leaders to achieve their performance goals, complete required tasks, maintain the current organizational situation, motivate subordinates through contractual agreements, direct subordinates' behavior towards the set goals' achievement, emphasize extrinsic rewards, avoid unnecessary risks, and focus on improving organizational efficiency (Tahar & Abdillah, 2021). Transactional leadership style positively affected performance outcomes (Kalsoom, Khan & Zubair, 2018; Samson & Ayodeji, 2019). This means that the more effective a leader is in applying this transactional leadership style, the higher the resulting performance.

In the practice of governance, the aspect of leadership is needed to stimulate creativity by providing various kinds of knowledge to stakeholders, enabling the formation of new ideas and understandings (innovation). Thus, according to Muslim, Prasjo and Salomo (2021) facilitative leadership may aid stakeholders in exploring various possibilities for the sake of mutual benefit. Contrary to this view, transactional leadership style possesses a strong "top-down" characteristics (Ricard, et al., 2017). Further, the leader may take advantage of the instrument of incentives to spur the members of the organization towards the achievement of the established goal which may not be aligned to good governance practices. Given the contradicting views regarding the effects of transactional leadership, this study sought to explore the influence of transactional leadership style on public participation effectiveness in the county governments governance.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many nations throughout the world have implemented public involvement as a strategy to improve governance in different areas of government, including policy development, decision-making, and citizen service delivery (Muriu, 2014; World Bank, 2020). Public engagement enhances the power of citizens, encouraging the government to be accountable and responsive, while also increasing cost-effectiveness and social inclusion (Chado, Johar & Khan, 2017; Mbithi et al., 2019). Canada, Switzerland, Italy, India, and South Africa have successfully included public engagement into their governance frameworks, as reported by IGRTC (2019). Legislation have been introduced in Africa, particularly in Kenya, to promote and enable meaningful public involvement in governance processes (Botlhale, 2021).

Although there are laws requiring public engagement, their impact on county governance in Kenya is still difficult to achieve. Obstacles such as a lack of openness, accountability, disregard for citizen input, absence of feedback channels, corruption, and nepotism impede meaningful public engagement. Improper resource allocation processes have a negative impact on county initiatives and programs (Opiyo et al., 2017; ICPAK, 2014; Transition Authority, 2014). Citizens' discontent with government decisions and service delivery frequently results in petitions being filed against county governments. Judicial evaluations indicate that



several public involvement processes in Kenya are tokenisms, that do not meet the spirit of the constitution and their validity remains questionable (Korir & Bett, 2018; Mitisya, & Mutiso, 2020; Mohamed, 2018). The lack of successful public engagement not only goes against the principles of the Kenyan Constitution but also denies residents the chance to hold leaders responsible and impact the quality-of-service delivery. Hence, it is imperative to discover leadership style characteristics that can augment the efficacy of public participation in county governance.

Prior research conducted in Kenya has predominantly disregarded leadership styles as factors that affect public engagement, despite existing literature indicating their substantial impact on participation outcomes (Gitegi & Iravo, 2016; Kaseya & Kihonge, 2016; Mbithi et al., 2019; Opiyo et al., 2017; Siala, 2015). The lack of empirical research that directly connects leadership styles to public engagement worsens this problem, which is made even more complicated by the lack of agreement on the most effective leadership style for all situations (Ghartey, Mensah, & Ghartey, 2016; Rathore, 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Hence, this study seeks to close this disparity by investigating the influence of transactional leadership style on the effectiveness of public engagement in the county governance in Kenya.

### 1.3 Research Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of transactional leadership style on public participation effectiveness in the county governance in Kenya.

### 1.4 Scope of the Study

The conceptual scope was limited to transactional leadership styles as independent variable, and public participation effectiveness as the response variable. The ineffective public participation in the county governance process due to leadership behaviour was the contextual scope. Theoretical scope encompassed the framework of effective public participation enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya (2010), behavioural leadership theory, transactional leadership model and participatory democratic theory. Questionnaires were administered to 400 respondents, sampled from eight out of the forty-seven (47) counties in Kenya namely, Kilifi, Garissa, Makueni, Murang'a, Uasin Gishu, Bungoma, Kisumu and Nairobi. These counties were randomly selected from each of the eight regions in Kenya (former provinces) which was a good representation of country demographics. The study used descriptive survey research design to analyse and describe the relationship between leadership styles and public participation effectiveness in the county governance in Kenya. Descriptive and inferential data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 26.0.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

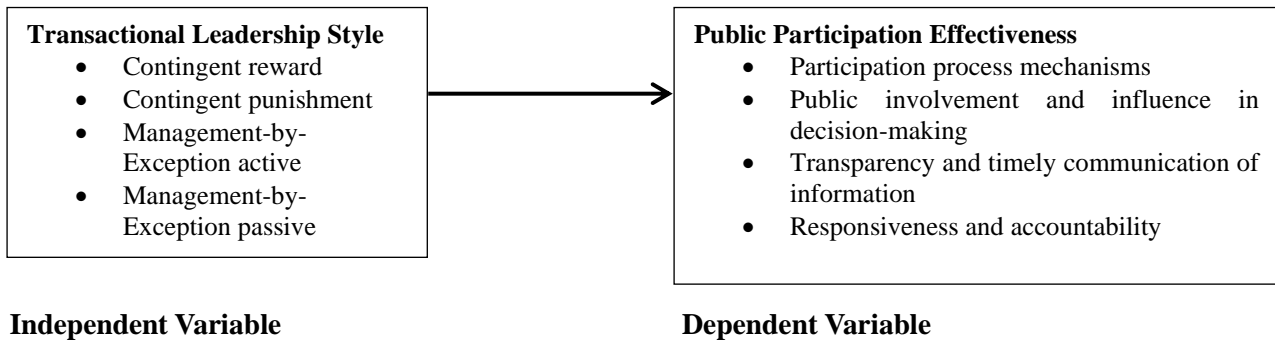
### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Behavioural theories focus on how leaders behave and assume that leaders can be made, rather than born and successful leadership is based on definable and learnable behaviours. The behavioural theorists posit that a leader's behaviour is the best predictor of his leadership influences and as a result, is the best determinant of his or her leadership success (Terblanche & Bitzer, 2018). Aligned to behavioural theories, transactional leadership style was first described by Max Weber in 1947, and again by Bernard M. Bass in 1981. Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on the transactions between leaders and their followers (Bass, 1990). Transactional leadership style comprises four components: contingent reward, contingent punishment, management-by-exception (active) and management-by-exception (passive). Contingent reward and punishment refer to transactional leaders providing well defined rewards and punishments to their followers based on meeting the set performance targets. As humans appreciate concrete, tangible, material rewards in exchange for their efforts, thus, this behavior surfaced (Nawaz & Khan, 2016).

The principle of people's participation underscores representative democracies and underpins 'participatory democracy'. Thus, participatory democracy is among several democratic theories conceived as complements to or variants of representative democracies. This theory argues that where there is a higher degree of

participation, people are more likely to believe that the decisions of the state are binding and hence form a less estranged attitude towards the government (Day, 2017; Pateman, 1970). Thus, the question of whether the participation process is efficient, effective, and ends with a desirable outcome is very important (Bobbio, 2019; Clark, 2021). The study adopted both process and outcome evaluation criteria based on County Public Participation Guideline (2016). These are the use of public participation mechanisms, public involvement and influence in decision-making, timely access and transparent communication of information, and responsiveness and accountability of the agent to the public. The relationships can be presented using a conceptual framework, as indicated in figure 1.0 below as follows.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework**

## 2.3 Empirical Review

Good leadership styles are required to guide organizational changes towards a direction that will enable governments to achieve their goals, objectives, and vision. Based on this premise, Ongige (2018) researched on leadership styles and implementation of devolved governments in Kenya using Kisii County as a Case Study. Simple random sampling was applied to collect data from 285 respondents, including management and staff working in Kisii County government. Transactional leadership, with a correlation coefficient of 0.9536 was noted to have the strongest influence on the implementation of devolved governments. This was followed by transformational leadership style, servant leadership and participative leadership style with correlation coefficients of 0.5526, 0.148 and 0.0438 respectively.

Devi and Narayanamma (2016) studied transactional and transformational leadership relationship to employee work engagement. They used a survey method covering 55 respondents in a beverage company and analyzed the data using correlation, chi-square test, means, and regression. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale was used to develop the research instrument for measuring employee engagement, while Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) that was developed by Bass and Avolio (1990) was used to determine leadership style. The study results indicated a significant positive correlation between employee engagement and transactional leadership ( $r = 0.7600$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and transformational leadership ( $r = 0.487$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Khuong and Yen (2014) conducted a study using a sample size of 269 respondents from five leading industries in Binh Duong, Vietnam, to empirically find the effect that styles of leadership had on employee engagement. Various statistical techniques were used for analysis, including quantitative analysis, factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, and path analysis. The results showed that higher levels of visionary, ethical leadership and employee sociability were related positively to higher levels of employee engagement. Visionary and ethical leadership had a positive effect on the sociability of the employee. In contrast, transactional leadership correlated negatively with the engagement of the employee.

Elenkov (2002) investigated the key impacts of transformational and transactional leadership behaviour on the organizational performance of companies in Russia and the effect that cohesiveness of the group has on leadership-transformational behaviour from a Russian perspective. Stratified random sampling was used in

the selection of a sample of 950 Russian managers. Bass and Avolio's (1990) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was applied in measuring leadership behaviour. The results of the study demonstrated that transformational leadership was able to predict the organizational performance of Russian companies directly and positively over and beyond the effect of transactional leadership.

Mulama (2018) explored how strategic leadership influences service delivery in county governments and found that transformational and transactional leadership can enhance service delivery by 68%. However, the study solely relied on reviewing earlier studies and did not employ quantitative techniques. Rigill (2018) conducted another study to examine the relationship between leadership and service delivery in Kenyan county governments. Contrary to Mulama's findings, this study concluded that transactional contingent reward and decentralized leadership negatively impact service delivery by 56.4%.

Kindarto's (Kindarto, 2020) research findings, showed that transformational and transactional leadership styles had a positive effect on the performance of government IT teams, while the laissez faire leadership style had a negative impact on performance. In addition, follower and team competencies also play an important role in the relationship between leadership style and team performance. This study suggests that leaders develop transformational and transactional leadership skills and pay attention to follower and team competencies to improve IT team performance in the government sector.

### 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research philosophy adopted in this study was positivism, which approached social research using natural science models and emphasized objectivity, detachment, and empirical verification. Positivism is a philosophical approach that asserts that social phenomena may be examined by scientific methods. The study examined the opinions of the leadership styles of county governors in Kenya and how these styles affect the efficacy of public engagement. To accomplish its goals, the research utilized a survey design with a quantitative methodology, employing questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection. The devolved county governments in Kenya were the unit of analysis. The target population of this study consisted of all the people of Kenya (5,481,822) who were domiciled in the eight counties, aged 18 years and above, registered as voters, and had participated in public participation forums in their respective counties. The sampling procedures employed both probabilistic and non-probabilistic methods, which yielded a sample size of 400 respondents that were evenly dispersed among eight specifically chosen counties. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics to determine and explain the relationship between the study variables using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26.

### 4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Response Rate

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the eight sampled counties. The respondents were purposively selected adult citizens who were registered voters and had participated in public participation forums in their counties. Of these, 321 (or 80.25%) were filled and returned. However, after scanning through the 321 questionnaires for consistency and data cleaning, only 296 were found to be duly filled and fit for further analysis. As presented in Table 4.1, the 296 questionnaires analyzed represented a response rate of 74%. According to Morton, Bandara, Robinson, and Carr (2012), survey studies face challenges of low response rates that rarely go above 50%. The authors suggest that a response rate of 50% and above is satisfactory and represents a good basis for data analysis. Oso and Ifijeh (2016) argue that for a social study, responses bearing over 60% response rate are sufficient for making adequate research conclusions. Therefore, the researcher considered the achieved 74% response rate as adequate for further analysis since it was above 50%, and that this would provide sufficient ground for analysis and drawing of conclusions for the study.

**Table 4.1: Response Rate**

Region	Sampled County	Registered voters	Percentage	Sample Size	Valid Responses	Response Rate
Coast	Kilifi	508,068	9.3%	37	25	67.6%
North Eastern	Garissa	163,350	3.0%	12	12	100.0%
Eastern	Makueni	423,310	7.7%	31	28	90.3%
Central	Murang'a	587,126	10.7%	43	38	88.4%
Rift Valley	Uasin Gishu	450,055	8.2%	33	24	72.7%
Western	Bungoma	559,850	10.2%	41	31	75.6%
Nyanza	Kisumu	539,210	9.8%	39	35	89.7%
Nairobi	Nairobi	2,250,853	41.1%	164	103	62.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,481,822</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>74.0%</b>

## 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Holcomb (2016) argued that descriptive statistics are important because they enable presentation of data in a meaningful way, and consequently allow for a simpler interpretation and allow patterns to emerge from the data. This view is also shared by Cooper and Schindler (2011), Kothari (2011) and Sekaran (2006). Two measures of central tendency, the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were used in interpreting the research results while the percentages (%) were used to indicate the frequency of Likert's score under each item. Kothari and Garg (2014) contend that the mean is the most common measure of central tendency while standard deviation is the most widely used and regarded as a very satisfactory measure of dispersion in research studies. The study used a 5-point Likert's scale. This means that a score of 3 equates to 50% score. A small standard deviation means that the values in a statistical data set are close to the mean (or average) of the data set, and a large standard deviation means that the values in the data set are farther away from the mean. There was no threshold set in the current study since all scores were valid observation.

### 4.2.1 Public Participation Effectiveness

From the findings of the descriptive statistics in Table 4.2, the results show that the overall level of public participation in the county governments was rated below average ( $M=2.6$ ,  $SD=.7567$ ) and 20.38% of the respondents indicated not at all, 29.50 % to very low extent, 26.18% to moderate extent, 17.70% to a high extent, while 6.23% indicated to very high extent. The results were consistent with Mitullah (2016) who found that only 29% of the citizens indicated that they were satisfied with the extent of public participation in their county. The results further corroborate with Oxfam (2017) and Transition Authority (2014) that public participation remains low and KIPPRA (2015) that the County leadership has not effectively engaged the public in participation.

Respondents indicated that the use of different mechanism to facilitate public participation processes in the county governments was moderate ( $M=2.9$ ,  $SD=.95$ ) with 12.4%) indicating not at all, 24.17% to a very low extent, 28.53% to a moderate extent, 26.33% to a high extent and 8.57% to very great extent. The extent of public involvement and their influence in decision making in county government was rated below average ( $M= 2.5$ ,  $SD= .85$ ) and 24.58% of the respondents indicated not at all, 27.63% to a very low extent, 26.43% to a moderate extent, 15.53% to great extent, while 5.85% indicated very high extent. These results support the notion that the leaders ignored citizen input and did not give feedback (Society for International Development [SID], 2016; KSG, 2015; Transparency International, 2015).

The perceptions on the responsiveness and accountability in the public participation process was rated to



little extent ( $M=2.2$ ,  $SD=.92$ ) and 27.8% respondents indicated not at all, 36.95 % to a very low extent, 20.2% to a moderate extent, 10.8% to a high extent while 3.25% indicated to a very high extent. The respondents' view on transparency, sufficiency and timeliness of information provided by the county governments was below average ( $M=2.6$ ,  $SD=.98$ ), 16.55% of the respondents indicated not at all, 33.8%, to a very low extent, 27.15% to a moderate extent, 16.00% to a high extent, while 6.45% indicated to a very high extent. The finding was consistent with KIPPRA (2015) observation that only 32.8% of respondents were involved to a little extent in receiving information.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics for Public Participation Effectiveness and its Components**

	<i>n</i>	NA %	LE %	ME %	GE %	VGE %	M	SD
Overall Public Participation	20.38	29.50	26.18	17.70	6.23	2.60	.76	
Participation process mechanism	12.40	24.17	28.53	26.33	8.57	2.95	.95	
Public involvement & influence in decision making	24.58	27.63	26.43	15.53	5.85	2.51	.85	
Transparency, sufficient & timely communication of information	16.55	33.80	27.15	16.00	6.45	2.63	.98	
Responsiveness & accountability	27.80	36.95	21.20	10.80	3.25	2.25	.92	

#### 4.2.2 Transactional Leadership Style

The overall respondents' perception of transactional leadership style practices in the county governments was to a moderate perception (2.85,  $SD=.86$ ) with 17.31% of the respondents indicating not at all, 24.93% to a very little extent, 24.97% to a moderate extent, 21.4% to a great extent while 11.39% indicated to a very great extent (Table 4.3). The finding conforms to Kimwetich, Kidombo and Gakuu (2017) who found a higher level of transactional leadership style ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=.975$ ) in Migori county in Kenya.

Though moderate, the results suggest that passive management-by-exception ( $M=2.95$ ,  $SD=1.33$ ) is the dominant construct of transactional leadership style that is practiced in the counties. This implies that leaders in the counties generally believe that there is no need for them to be engaged in monitoring work unless a mistake that cannot be ignored occurs. The finding opined with Springer, Walkowiak and Bernaciak (2020) who similarly found that passive management-by-exception was the widely used practice by commune mayors in the Greater Poland province.

The results from this study conform to the literature reviewed which concluded that, with transactional leadership followers are inspired by a system of rewards (extrinsic, mostly economical) and punishments that values order and structure. Bass and Avolio (1990) posited that transactional leaders focus on the benefits that accrue to both the leader and the followers after completing set goals. This was clearly demonstrated by the results of this study. For instance, the majority of the respondents agree to a moderate extent that their leaders always clarify what to expect in form of payment once work is completed. This implies that a transactional leadership style can be applied to enhance public participation effectiveness in the county governance if the leader enhances the level of reward.



**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics for Transactional Leadership Style and its Components**

	<i>n</i>	NA	LE	ME	GE	VGE	M	SD
		%	%	%	%	%		
Overall Transactional Leadership Style	296	17.31	24.93	24.97	21.40	11.39	2.85	.86
Contingent Reward	296	17.50	24.00	25.23	22.30	10.93	2.86	.98
Contingent punishment	296	20.4	26.3	28.4	15.2	9.7	2.67	1.23
Management by Exception - Active	296	15.75	25.90	24.35	23.35	10.70	2.88	1.07
Management-by-Exception – Passive	296	16.8	24.4	22.0	21.0	15.8	2.95	1.33

NA= Not at All, LE=To a little extent, ME=To a moderate extent, GE=To a great extent, VGE=To a very great extent, M=Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

### 4.3 Inferential Statistics

#### 4.3.1 Correlation between Transactional Leadership Style and Public Participation Effectiveness

Table 4.4 shows the correlation between transactional leadership components and public participation. The findings indicated moderate positive correlations between contingent reward ( $r = 0.512^{**}$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ), active management by exception ( $r = 0.523^{**}$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.005$ ) and public participation. Correlations between contingent punishment ( $r = 0.331^{**}$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ), and passive management by exception ( $r = 0.261^{**}$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ) and public participation were weak and positive. The results are in tandem with Maundu, Namusonge and Simiyu (2020) who studied leadership styles and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Murang'a county in Kenya and found weak positive correlation between transactional leadership and employee engagement ( $r = 0.286$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ).

**Table 4. 4: Pearson Correlations Matrix**

		CR	CP	MEA	MEP	PP
<b>CR</b>	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
<b>CP</b>	Pearson Correlation	.431 <sup>**</sup>	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
<b>MEA</b>	Pearson Correlation	.656 <sup>**</sup>	.485 <sup>**</sup>	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
<b>MEP</b>	Pearson Correlation	.426 <sup>**</sup>	.198 <sup>**</sup>	.249 <sup>**</sup>	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.000		
<b>PP</b>	Pearson Correlation	.512 <sup>**</sup>	.331 <sup>**</sup>	.523 <sup>**</sup>	.261 <sup>**</sup>	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	296	296	296	296	296

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

IR= Contingent reward, IP= Contingent punishment, MEA= Management-by-Exception active, MEP=Management-by-Exception passive, PP=Public Participation

#### 4.3.2 Relationship between Transactional Leadership and Public Participation Effectiveness

The regression results in Table 4.21 indicated that transactional leadership style explained 32.9% of the total variability in public participation effectiveness in the county governance in Kenya and that the model is significant in predicting public participation effectiveness ( $R^2 = .329$ ,  $F(1,294) = 144.153$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The remaining 67.1% of variance in public participation effectiveness is attributed to other factors beyond the

scope of current study or by chance. The study findings indicated a positive and significant relationship between transactional leadership and public participation effectiveness in county governance in Kenya ( $\beta = 0.505$ ,  $t(295) = 12.006$ ,  $P < .001$ ) which implies that a unit increase in transactional leadership increases public participation effectiveness by 0.505 units. The results show that transactional leadership style positively and significantly influences public participation.

$$\text{Public Participation Effectiveness} = 1.160 + .505 * \text{Transactional Leadership Style}.$$

The study findings agree with Amgheib (2016) who documented that transactional leadership style was positively linked to work engagement and job satisfaction. Similarly, the findings are consistent with Elenkov (2002) who demonstrated that transactional leadership was able to predict the organizational performance of Russian companies directly and positively but not beyond the effect of transformational leadership.

**Table 4. 5: Regression Analysis on Transactional Leadership and Public Participation**

Model Summary					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
0.574	0.329	0.327	0.6209		
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	55.574	1	55.574	144.153	0.00
Residual	113.343	294	0.386		
Total	168.917	295			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.16	0.125		9.253	0.00
Transactional Leadership Style	0.505	0.042	0.574	12.006	0.00

#### 4.3.3: Transactional Leadership Style Components and Public Participation Effectiveness

A multiple regression was conducted to determine the influence of the transactional leadership style dimensions (Table 4.6). Contingent reward, contingent punishment, active management by exception and passive management by exception explained 32.9% of the variance in public participation effectiveness and that the model was a good predictor for public participation effectiveness ( $R^2 = .329$ ,  $F(4,291) = 35.748$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The remaining 67.1% of the variance in public participation effectiveness can be accounted for by other variables not included in the model or by chance. Analysis of regression coefficients indicates that contingent reward and management-by-exception (active) had positive and significant relationship with public participation, with beta values ( $\beta = 0.199$ ,  $t = 3.724$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and ( $\beta = 0.218$ ,  $t = 4.659$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) respectively. On the other hand, contingent punishment and management-by-exception (passive) showed a positive but not statistically significant relationship with public participation effectiveness with beta values ( $\beta = 0.034$ ,  $t = 1.026$ ,  $p = .306$ ) and ( $\beta = 0.036$ ,  $t = 1.192$ ,  $p = 0.234$ ) respectively. The resultant regression equation was:

$$\text{Public participation effectiveness} = 1.207 + 0.199 * \text{Contingent reward} + 0.218 * \text{Active Management-by- exception}$$

While the regression results indicate that management-by-exception (active) had the highest influence on public participation effectiveness in county governance in Kenya and management-by-exception (passive) was not significant, the descriptive statistics revealed that management-by-exception (passive) practices in the counties were rated as average ( $M=2.9450$ ,  $SD=1.328$ ). This implies that leaders need to shift their style from management-by-exception (passive) which is a style of watching and only intervening when standard is not achieved, to management-by-exception (active) which looks at any deviation from the rule and makes corrections to any changes as they arise.

These findings are consistent with Koech and Namusonge (2012) who carried out a study of the effect of leadership style on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. They found a significant effect of contingent reward and management by exception (active) while management by exception (passive) was not significant. Equally, the findings were in support of Odumeru (2013) who reported that organization performance was contingent to transactional leadership since they are performance oriented. This would be achieved through continuous evaluation of performance to deploy corrective measures that would aid in the achievement of organization goals and objectives. Moreover, the findings concurred with Devi and Narayanamma (2016) who reported positive causality between employee engagement and transactional leadership.

**Table 4.6: Regression Analysis on Transactional Leadership Style Components and Public Participation Effectiveness**

Model Summary					
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
0.574	0.329	0.32	0.62387		
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	55.655	4	13.914	35.748	.000
Residual	113.262	291	0.389		
Total	168.917	295			
Coefficients					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.207	0.127		9.524	0.000
Contingent Reward	0.199	0.053	0.257	3.724	0.000
Contingent punishment	0.034	0.034	0.057	1.026	0.306
Management by Exception: Active	0.218	0.047	0.311	4.659	0.000
Management-by-Exception - Passive	0.036	0.03	0.063	1.192	0.234

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the study sought to examine the influence of transactional leadership style on public participation effectiveness in the county governance in Kenya. The univariate regression results indicated that transactional leadership positively and statistically predicted public participation effectiveness in the county governance in Kenya. Multivariate regression results analysis disclosed that transactional leadership constructs of active management-by-exception and contingent reward had positive and statistically significant relationship with public participation. Active management-by-exception exerted the highest influence followed by contingent reward. The constructs of passive management-by-exception and contingent punishment had positive but not statistically significant relationships with public participation. The study concluded that transactional leadership style positively influences the effectiveness of public participation in the county governance in Kenya. The study findings supported much empirical research presented in the paper which showed that transactional leadership style was positively associated with outcomes such as organizational performance and employee engagement while at the same time contradicting research that found negative association with such outcomes.

### Recommendations to County Governments

Given that active management-by-exception showed the highest influence on public participation effectiveness, county leaders should focus on actively monitoring and intervening only when necessary. This proactive approach can help ensure that public participation processes are effectively managed and supported. The study found a positive and statistically significant relationship between contingent reward and public participation effectiveness. Therefore, county leaders should consider implementing reward systems to incentivize and recognize public participation efforts. This can encourage greater engagement from the public and improve the effectiveness of governance processes. Training programs aimed at enhancing leadership skills and promoting a more proactive approach to management-by-exception could be beneficial. Leaders should be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively monitor and intervene when needed, rather than adopting a passive approach.

### Recommendations for Policy

To meet the dictates of the constitution, the study recommends that the ministry in charge of devolution should work with the county governments to develop a policy on mandatory leadership training for county leaders to attend upon assumption of office, with regular refresher trainings between the election periods. Such training should include leadership style assessment so that leaders become aware of their dominant leadership style and its impact on followers and county performance, including public participation. Model profiles of the various leadership positions in the county governments should be developed and referenced to various leadership style expectations and outcomes. The policy should include surveys to assess the citizens' perceptions of leadership styles exemplified by the county leaders and help in designing appropriate leadership development pathways. Further, citizen's civic education should include enlightenment on leadership styles and their impact on performance outcomes such as public participation. This will build citizens' capacity to make informed choices when choosing their leaders. They will also participate more effectively in leadership styles surveys.

### Contribution of the Study to Theory and Existing Knowledge

The study fills a gap in the body of literature by providing a framework and empirical evidence for understanding how transactional leadership style predicts the effectiveness of public participation.

### Areas of Further Research

Further research could explore additional factors that may influence public participation effectiveness in county governance, such as cultural and contextual variables. Continued analysis and evaluation of



leadership practices can provide valuable insights for improving governance processes, promoting citizen engagement and a more effective service delivery to citizens.

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