

**INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE SUCCESSION PLANNING
AMONG PROJECT FIRMS A CASE OF UASIN GISHU COUNTY
GOVERNMENT, KENYA**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the Candidate

This research proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this academic journey to my dear family, whose presence has been my anchor and source of strength. I am especially grateful to my wives, Sarah Juang and Rose Kolor, for their steadfast support, enduring encouragement, and profound understanding, which have carried me through each step of this endeavour. Your love, patience, and faith in me have been a powerful motivation, especially in moments of doubt and difficulty.

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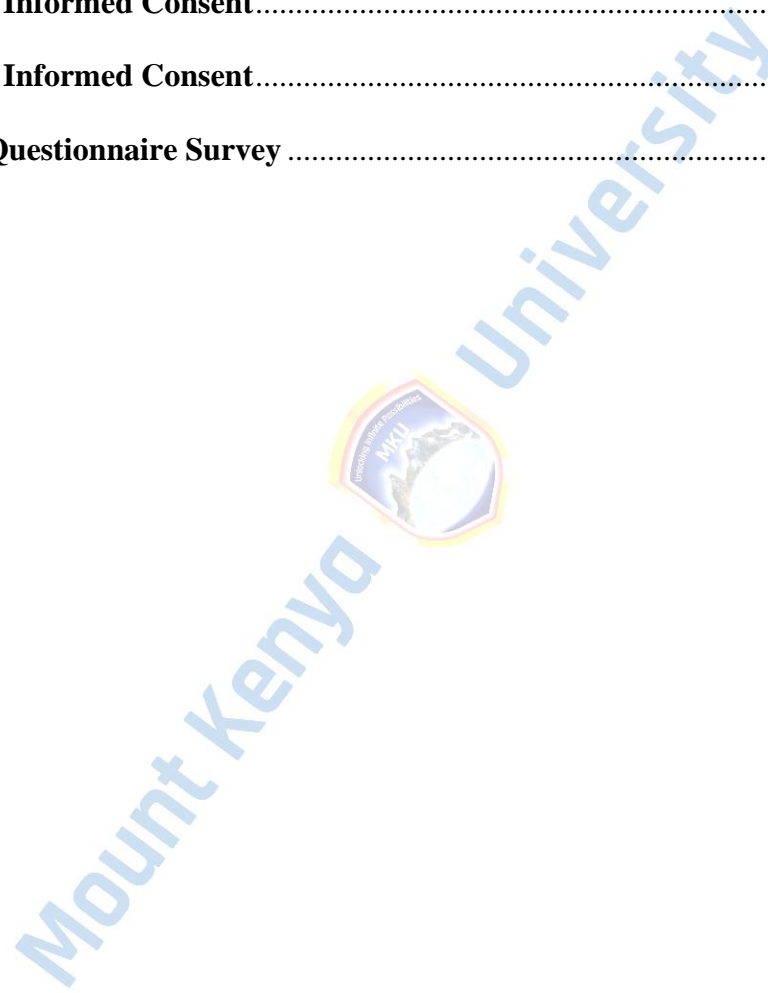
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ABSTRACT

The successful transition of leadership across generations is a critical milestone for an organization to maintain longevity and competitive advantage. Firms that succeed in this endeavour build a strong industry reputation, while those that fail serve as cautionary examples in the succession planning process. The study aimed to determine the influence of leadership styles on the performance of projects. To achieve this objective, the relationship between leadership style components, team commitment, and organizational culture on project performance was analysed. This study examined ongoing construction projects in Uasin Gishu County. The research objectives were: (1) To assess the influence of transactional leadership styles on housing construction project performance. (2) To examine the effect of transactional leadership style on project performance. (3) To establish the intervening influence of team commitment on project performance. (4) To determine the moderating effect of organizational culture on project performance. The study respondents included construction project managers and employees from ongoing construction projects in Uasin Gishu County. A descriptive survey design was used, targeting a population of 290 ongoing construction projects within the study area. The questionnaire was administered to one project manager and one project team member from each selected project, with a sample of 273 projects identified using a stratified random sampling technique. The questionnaire contained both open- and closed-ended questions. Data for project performance was collected from project records. A pilot test was conducted, followed by a reliability test. The collected data was reviewed for completeness. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27. Descriptive statistical methods were applied in the study. The results were displayed using frequency distribution tables and percentages. The findings showed a strong positive correlation between leadership styles (independent variables). The findings revealed a positive and strong correlation between leadership styles (independent variables) and succession planning (dependent variable). Transactional leadership had the most significant influence on succession planning, followed by transformational leadership, while laissez-faire leadership had the least impact. The study established a link between transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles and succession planning in private telecommunications firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. According to the research findings, leaders in the project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya should adopt leadership styles that lead to an effective succession planning program in their firms. This will ensure the smooth transition of businesses from one generation to the next. The study faced limitations due to time constraints and limited respondent availability, as most respondents worked remotely and preferred online questionnaires. The study recommended further research on other companies in the sector to generalize the findings.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAK	Communication Authority of Kenya
CEOs	Chief Executive Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
NFP	Network Facilities Provider
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the foundation for the study by offering a detailed background, examining relevant empirical literature, discussing major leadership theories, highlighting gaps within existing research, and presenting the conceptual framework that informed and guided the investigation.

1.1 Background of the Problem

In today's increasingly complex landscape of public sector management, leadership has emerged as a pivotal factor influencing institutional effectiveness and the long-term success of projects (Northouse, 2021; Al Khajeh, 2018). Across the globe, there has been a notable shift from rigid, hierarchical leadership models to more flexible and transformational approaches that encourage innovation, adaptability, and sustainable thinking (Bass & Riggio, 2018; Yukl & Mahsud, 2022). This paradigm shift is particularly pronounced within project-oriented public organisations, where the quality of leadership directly affects not only operational performance and employee morale but also the preservation of institutional knowledge during leadership transitions (Garman & Glawe, 2020).

Despite its acknowledged importance, leadership continuity remains a pressing concern for many public institutions worldwide. Evidence from developed countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom demonstrates the effectiveness of embedding succession planning within broader leadership development strategies (CIPD, 2022; OECD, 2019). These countries have adopted comprehensive leadership development models that incorporate mentorship, strategic workforce planning, and systematic knowledge transfer mechanisms (Van Wart, 2013; Day &

Dragoni, 2015). In such contexts, transformational leadership has been linked to enhanced organisational commitment, smoother leadership transitions, and increased public confidence (Breevaart et al., 2014). In contrast, the absence of structured leadership succession processes has often been associated with inefficiency, poor adaptability, and reduced employee engagement in the public sector (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Ustun, 2018).

In developing nations, however, succession planning remains sporadic and frequently entangled in political considerations (Abdullahi & Muturi, 2020; Osei-Kyei & Chan, 2017). Leadership changes in the public sector frequently take place without formal transition mechanisms or targeted capacity-building for incoming leaders, resulting in institutional instability and frequent policy reversals (World Bank, 2020). As Darnell and Campbell (2015) observe, the lack of proactive leadership planning significantly heightens the risk of project failure during leadership transitions. Moreover, scholars note that when leadership behaviours are not aligned with human resource strategies, the development of sustainable governance structures is greatly hindered (Christian Koropp & Gyax, 2013; Bhatti et al., 2021).

There is a growing call within academic circles for more contextually grounded studies to explore how leadership styles interact with succession preparedness to influence the sustainability of public projects (Mahmood & Hanafi, 2013; Getha-Taylor et al., 2011). Much of the existing research has been drawn from private sector experiences or focused on institutions in developed countries, leaving a notable gap in understanding public project organisations within decentralised governance settings such as those found in Kenya.

This study aims to address that gap by investigating the relationship between leadership styles and succession planning practices in project-based public entities within Kenya's devolved system. Devolution has introduced new governance dynamics at the county level, often accompanied by ambitious, project-driven development agendas targeting improved service delivery, infrastructure

growth, and community well-being. However, the success and sustainability of these initiatives largely depend on effective leadership and the presence of structured succession strategies that ensure continuity and institutional resilience.

By examining how leadership styles influence both the planning and execution of leadership transitions, this study aims to uncover the underlying factors that either facilitate or hinder sustainable governance in project-based public institutions. This focus is particularly relevant in devolved units, where unplanned leadership changes can severely disrupt project continuity, erode accountability, and lead to the loss of institutional memory. Through this lens, the study not only adds to academic discourse but also offers actionable insights for policymakers and development actors engaged in decentralised governance systems across Africa. Ultimately, the research advocates for the integration of structured leadership development and succession frameworks that align with county governance priorities and the broader goals of devolution.

Across the African continent, decentralisation has amplified concerns about leadership preparedness and institutional capacity at the local level (Smoke, 2015; Cheeseman, Lynch & Willis, 2016). While devolution is widely regarded as a mechanism to enhance citizen participation and improve service delivery, its effectiveness is largely contingent on the calibre of leadership within sub-national governments (Bosire & Ghai, 2017). Countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Uganda have adopted legislative reforms aimed at strengthening county and regional governance, but challenges like leadership fragmentation and inadequate planning continue to impede sustainable development (Kanyinga, 2016; Mutongu et al., 2020). The absence of formal succession strategies often results in project stagnation, duplication of initiatives, and a general decline in service quality (Gikonyo & Odhiambo, 2019).

In Kenya, the enactment of the 2010 Constitution established 47 county governments tasked with implementing local development agendas. However, the transition to devolved governance

revealed significant weaknesses in leadership continuity mechanisms and institutional memory preservation (Mitullah et al., 2018). Research by Njuguna and Wambua (2023) highlights that many counties operate without structured succession plans, leading to delays in project execution, inefficiencies in resource utilisation, and declining public trust. The Public Service Commission and the Council of Governors have raised repeated concerns about the absence of systematic succession planning, identifying it as a major threat to institutional resilience and uninterrupted service provision (PSC, 2021).

Political interference in public appointments has further complicated leadership development efforts in many counties. The replacement of senior officials—such as County Executives and Chief Officers—following electoral cycles often undermines institutional stability and reduces opportunities for mentorship and internal promotion (Kiptoo & Wanjala, 2019). This pattern of leadership disruption negatively affects the sustainability of major development initiatives, particularly in critical sectors such as health, infrastructure, education, and youth empowerment (CRA, 2021). In counties like Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu, high turnover rates among senior staff have been linked to erratic service delivery and weakened institutional memory (Wagana, 2021). These realities underscore the importance of linking leadership style with succession readiness in project-centric environments.

Uasin Gishu County offers a pertinent case study for exploring the intersection between leadership approach and succession planning in the context of public project management. As a key economic hub in the Rift Valley region, the county manages diverse projects spanning agriculture, infrastructure, social housing, and youth development (KNBS, 2019). Nonetheless, frequent staff rotations, shifting political alliances, and administrative turnover have often disrupted project timelines and diluted implementation outcomes (Kabale & Onyango, 2022). Research by Wangari

and Gikonyo (2019) attributes many of the county's project-related setbacks to leadership gaps, inadequate succession systems, and insufficient stakeholder coordination.

Langas Ward, a densely populated and demographically diverse urban ward within Uasin Gishu, presents distinct leadership and governance challenges. Its developmental needs require stable, inclusive, and strategic leadership. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that leadership exits—due to transfers, retirements, or electoral shifts—often result in project delays, reallocation of funds, and diminished staff motivation (Zhang & Lin, 2022; Hollander et al., 2013). The absence of robust succession planning structures further aggravates these disruptions, leaving new leaders with minimal institutional orientation and continuity.

In project-based organisations, leadership style significantly influences how succession planning is conceptualised and implemented. Transactional leaders tend to emphasise compliance and performance outcomes, often at the expense of long-term leadership development and mentorship (Khan & Adnan, 2014). Conversely, transformational leaders are more likely to prioritise capacity building, shared vision, and participatory decision-making—key elements in preparing future leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2018; Breevaart et al., 2014). Nonetheless, without formal succession policies in place, even the most progressive leadership approaches may fall short of ensuring continuity (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003; Lategan & Fore, 2015).

This study is anchored in three key theoretical frameworks: Trait Theory, Transformational Leadership Theory, and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory. Together, these theories provide insights into how leadership behaviours shape employee development, knowledge retention, and the effectiveness of institutional knowledge transfer (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Northouse, 2021). While national institutions such as the Public Service Commission and the Kenya School of Government have initiated leadership training programs for county officials, the

practical implementation of succession planning at the grassroots level remains limited and inconsistent (KSG, 2021).

To address this gap, the current study investigates how different leadership styles impact succession planning within public project management institutions in Uasin Gishu County. The findings are expected to contribute both to the theoretical understanding of leadership and succession in public administration and to practical reforms aimed at strengthening leadership continuity in Kenya's devolved governance system.

1.1.1 Leadership Styles

Northouse (2016) defines leadership as the process of influencing individuals or groups to work toward shared goals. A leader's style reflects how they issue directives, execute plans, and motivate team members. These styles have a significant impact on succession planning, employee satisfaction, and overall organisational performance (Kibai & Awuor, 2024).

Transformational leadership, in particular, is concerned with meeting higher-order intrinsic needs by inspiring individuals to exceed expectations. Bass and Avolio (2004) outline four key components of this approach: intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealised influence, and individualised consideration. Research has shown that transformational leadership positively affects project performance, especially through enhanced teamwork and innovation (Yang et al., 2024). However, its high expectations and constant push for innovation can sometimes contribute to staff fatigue and burnout (Yin et al., 2019).

Transactional leadership, on the other hand, is based on a system of rewards and penalties to guide followers. It prioritises clearly defined roles, structured workflows, and performance-driven outcomes (McCleskey, 2014). While this style supports short-term goal attainment and

organisational consistency, it may stifle creativity and hinder long-term progress (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Democratic or participative leadership invites team members to contribute to decision-making processes. This inclusive approach often enhances employee satisfaction and fosters ownership and creativity (Khan et al., 2020). Nevertheless, if not well managed, it can slow down decision-making and create room for interpersonal conflict (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014).

Laissez-faire leadership is characterised by minimal interference from the leader, allowing team members considerable independence. While this approach can empower highly skilled and self-driven teams, it may also lead to poor accountability and lack of clear direction when oversight is necessary (Puni et al., 2014). Research indicates that this style is generally less effective in environments requiring structured guidance and firm control (Mwathi & Mwenda, 2024).

In the context of succession planning, strong leadership plays a vital role in identifying, nurturing, and preparing future leaders. Succession planning is a structured process that aligns leadership development with organisational goals to ensure continuity (Rothwell, 2015). Key components include pinpointing critical roles, evaluating internal talent, and deploying focused development initiatives (Reeves, 2024). Leadership development programmes are instrumental in equipping potential successors with the necessary competencies and easing leadership transitions (LinkedIn, 2024).

In Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, the success of Compassion International's projects has been significantly shaped by the leadership styles of its project managers. Transformational leadership has been associated with improved project outcomes due to its focus on motivation and innovation (Kariuki, 2018). In contrast, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership approaches have been linked to

delays and inefficiencies (Mwathi & Mwenda, 2024). As such, adopting robust succession planning and leadership development strategies is essential for enhancing project execution and meeting organisational goals within this context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing recognition of the vital role leadership plays in enhancing public sector performance, many project-based institutions within Uasin Gishu County continue to face significant challenges due to the absence of well-structured succession planning systems. Frequent leadership turnovers—often resulting from political changes, retirements, or lapses in contract renewals—have led to stalled development initiatives, declining staff morale, and the gradual erosion of institutional memory (Chege & Gakure, 2021; Njuguna & Wambua, 2023). These disruptions compromise service delivery and impede the attainment of development goals, particularly within Kenya’s devolved governance framework, where local leadership capacity and continuity are critical for success.

Research indicates that leadership style plays a central role in shaping whether organisations nurture a culture of mentorship and leadership development. Transformational leaders, for instance, tend to foster staff empowerment, strategic foresight, and innovation. However, in the absence of formal succession structures, the long-term benefits of such leadership may fail to translate into institutional sustainability (Zhang & Lin, 2022). In contrast, transactional and laissez-faire leadership approaches—both relatively common in Kenya’s public sector—often prioritise routine compliance or hands-off administration, with little emphasis on leadership development or talent grooming (Ustun, 2018; Mwathi & Mwenda, 2024). This creates a leadership vacuum when senior managers exit, exposing critical public projects to delays, inefficiencies, or outright abandonment.

Although national bodies such as the Council of Governors and the Public Service Commission have issued policy guidelines encouraging counties to invest in leadership development and succession planning, the uptake at the county level remains slow, fragmented, and under-resourced (Kiptoo & Wanjala, 2019). Key barriers include political interference in appointments, a lack of enforceable succession policies, and minimal investment in leadership training programmes. These challenges have collectively hampered efforts to institutionalise leadership continuity within devolved units.

Crucially, there remains a significant gap in empirical research linking leadership styles with succession planning within Kenya's devolved governance structure. Most existing studies tend to focus on corporate entities or general public administration, offering limited insights into how project leaders in county governments either foster or inhibit the development of future leaders. This study seeks to bridge that gap by examining how succession planning influences leadership styles in project-oriented public institutions within Uasin Gishu County. The findings are expected to generate practical recommendations that promote institutional resilience and strengthen governance outcomes in Kenya's counties.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to explore the influence of different leadership styles on the operational effectiveness of Uasin Gishu County Government in Kenya. In particular, the research focused on evaluating how various leadership approaches shape succession planning practices within project-based entities operating under the county's jurisdiction. The study assessed the extent to which leadership styles—namely transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and democratic—either facilitate or hinder the design and implementation of structured succession planning strategies in these organisations.

This investigation seeks to contribute empirical evidence that can guide policymakers, county executives, and human resource practitioners in strengthening leadership systems within the devolved governance framework. By analysing the connection between leadership behaviour and succession preparedness, the study aims to provide actionable insights that support the establishment of resilient leadership pipelines and institutional continuity. Ultimately, the research aspires to improve service delivery, enhance strategic talent management, and promote sustainable governance practices across Uasin Gishu County.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This research was guided by the following specific objectives, which served as the foundation for investigating the research problem in a focused and structured manner. These objectives were formulated to clearly outline the key areas of inquiry and to ensure that the study remained aligned with its overall aim and scope:

- i) To examine the influence of transactional leadership style on succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.
- ii) To examine the influence of transformational leadership style on succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.
- iii) To examine the influence of laissez-faire leadership style on succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

These were the research questions that the study attempted to address.

- i) What is the influence of transactional leadership style on succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya?

- ii) How does transformational leadership style influence succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya?
- iii) To what extent does laissez-faire leadership style affect succession planning among project firms in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds substantial relevance for a wide array of stakeholders engaged in organisational management, particularly within the Kenyan context where leadership effectiveness is a key determinant of success in development initiatives under devolved governance. These stakeholders include project managers, county government officials, policymakers, development partners, and community-based organisations, all of whom play a role—direct or indirect—in the planning, execution, and oversight of public sector projects.

Understanding the relationship between leadership styles and project performance is essential for improving the delivery of services across vital sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture. In resource-constrained environments where public expectations remain high, the calibre of leadership often serves as the tipping point between project success and failure. This research is therefore expected to offer valuable insights into how leadership styles—such as transformational, transactional, democratic, and laissez-faire—along with core leadership competencies, impact project efficiency, timeliness, and overall effectiveness. The findings may inform the development of more focused leadership training programmes, enhance succession planning practices, and guide policy interventions aimed at strengthening governance and service delivery within Kenya's devolved units.

Firstly, project managers and practitioners stand to benefit directly from the study's outcomes. By identifying leadership attributes that positively influence project performance, the research may

help current and aspiring project leaders cultivate the necessary competencies to adopt more effective leadership approaches. These insights may improve project outcomes in terms of cost control, timeline adherence, quality assurance, and stakeholder satisfaction.

Secondly, institutions tasked with the recruitment, training, and development of project personnel will find the study valuable. The evidence generated can inform the design of competency-based leadership development frameworks, enhance professional training programmes, and refine performance evaluation metrics. Such data-driven approaches can aid organisations in identifying and nurturing leadership talent capable of steering projects toward successful outcomes.

Thirdly, the research has important implications for policymakers in both the public and private sectors. As project-based management becomes increasingly central to national and local development strategies, there is a growing need for policy frameworks that promote effective project leadership. The study's findings may support the formulation of leadership guidelines, succession policies, and governance models that align with best practices in project execution.

Fourthly, this study contributes to the academic community by expanding the empirical base of leadership and project management literature in Kenya—an area that remains relatively under-explored. It offers a context-specific analysis that future researchers and scholars can build upon, thereby encouraging more nuanced investigations into leadership dynamics across different regions, sectors, and organisational settings.

Finally, the research supports the broader conversation on organisational success and sustainable development. Well-managed projects are critical to the achievement of strategic goals and national development priorities. By clarifying the role of leadership in driving project success, the study advances efforts to improve accountability, institutional resilience, and results-oriented management in Kenya's devolved governance landscape.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study aimed to explore the influence of specific leadership characteristics on the performance of Compassion International's programs within Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. In particular, it examined how various leadership dimensions—including leadership control, talent, experience, and style—affect the effectiveness and outcomes of program implementation. By focusing on these core elements, the research sought to provide a deeper understanding of how leadership practices shape organisational success in a real-world, project-based setting.

The study was geographically and institutionally confined to projects managed by Compassion International within Uasin Gishu County. This focused approach allowed for a more detailed analysis of the local leadership dynamics that impact program effectiveness. By narrowing the scope to a single organisation operating within a defined area, the research provided a concentrated lens through which to assess leadership practices in a decentralised development environment.

The target population included both senior executives and staff members actively involved in the planning, coordination, and implementation of Compassion International's projects. By engaging these key actors, the study aimed to generate first-hand insights into how leadership characteristics influence day-to-day decision-making, team collaboration, and the achievement of program goals.

While the findings offer valuable insights that may inform leadership practices in similar non-governmental and faith-based organisations, the conclusions are primarily applicable to the context of Uasin Gishu County. Regional factors—including socioeconomic conditions, cultural dynamics, and resource constraints—were acknowledged and considered in interpreting the data. However, a comprehensive analysis of these external influences was beyond the scope of this particular investigation.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the researcher's commitment to facilitating a smooth and effective data collection process, several challenges emerged during the study.

Firstly, a notable number of respondents were hesitant to participate fully due to fear and suspicion. Some participants expressed concern that the information they provided could potentially be misused, possibly exposing them or their institutions to threats, intimidation, or disciplinary consequences. This atmosphere of mistrust created difficulties in obtaining open, candid, and comprehensive responses from all intended participants.

Secondly, a segment of the targeted respondents displayed uncooperative behaviour and negative attitudes toward the research exercise. Some declined to complete the questionnaires, citing disinterest, personal biases, or misunderstandings regarding the study's intent. As a result, the initial response rate was lower than anticipated, posing a challenge to achieving broad representation.

To address these concerns, the researcher obtained an official introductory letter from the hosting academic institution. This letter clarified the academic nature of the study and reassured participants that the information gathered would be used strictly for research purposes. Additionally, a confidentiality clause was clearly stated and verbally explained to all respondents, assuring them that their identities and individual responses would be treated with the highest level of privacy and discretion.

Another constraint encountered was the limited availability of respondents due to their demanding work schedules. Many of the participants were deeply involved in project execution or held other time-intensive responsibilities, which made it difficult for them to dedicate time to completing the research instruments. To accommodate this, the researcher extended the data collection timeline, offering respondents more flexibility to complete the questionnaires at their convenience.

Despite these challenges, the researcher employed appropriate strategies to enhance participation and data quality. Every effort was made to ensure that the data collected remained valid, reliable, and reflective of the target population's perspectives.

1.8 Delimitation

To mitigate the anticipated challenge of low response rates and ensure the success of the data collection process, the researcher employed a series of proactive and strategic measures aimed at promoting respondent participation. A key initial step involved raising awareness about the academic nature and significance of the study. Participants were thoroughly informed of the study's objectives, with particular emphasis on how their input would contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between occupational health and safety (OHS) practices and employee performance in county hospitals.

To build trust and allay fears regarding confidentiality, the researcher issued a formal confidentiality statement assuring participants that their identities would be protected and that all data collected would be used strictly for academic purposes. This assurance was further supported by an official introductory letter from the researcher's affiliated institution, which reinforced the legitimacy and scholarly intent of the study.

In addition, the researcher conducted respectful and non-intrusive follow-ups, both to encourage participation and to offer assistance in cases where clarification or support was needed in completing the questionnaires. These personal engagements helped to resolve misunderstandings, foster rapport, and significantly improve the response rate without exerting undue pressure on participants.

Given the demanding nature of the respondents' roles as healthcare professionals, the researcher adopted a flexible approach by allowing respondents sufficient time to complete the questionnaires.

The data collection timeline was deliberately extended to accommodate those with tight work schedules, thereby reducing time-related constraints.

Through these thoughtful and well-coordinated strategies, the researcher successfully minimised non-responsiveness and enhanced the quality and reliability of the data collected. These efforts ensured that the study was grounded in a robust and representative dataset, aligned with its intended objectives.

1.9 Assumption of the Study

This study was grounded in several key assumptions deemed essential for the successful execution of the research process and the credibility of its outcomes.

First, it was assumed that respondents would demonstrate a willingness to cooperate and actively engage with the researcher during the data collection phase. Their cooperation was considered crucial in facilitating the smooth administration of questionnaires and in enhancing the reliability and completeness of the information gathered.

Secondly, the study presumed that all core research activities—ranging from data collection and analysis to the final report writing—would be completed within a six-month timeframe. This timeline was viewed as adequate based on the scope of the research, the availability of required resources, and the researcher's readiness to carry out the study within the planned schedule.

A further assumption was that the selected participants would be both available and accessible throughout the data collection period. It was also anticipated that they would provide responses that were honest, objective, and accurate, thereby contributing to the integrity and validity of the findings.

Additionally, it was assumed that all respondents possessed a clear understanding of the questionnaire items and had sufficient knowledge or experience related to succession planning

practices within their organisations. This assumption was critical to ensuring that the data collected was meaningful, contextually relevant, and reflective of actual practices on the ground.

Lastly, the study operated on the assumption that succession planning in project-based institutions within Uasin Gishu County is influenced by the three leadership philosophies under investigation. These leadership approaches—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—formed the conceptual and theoretical foundation for the research, providing a structured lens through which the relationship between leadership style and succession planning was explored.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Construction Project: A construction project refers to a structured and coordinated series of activities undertaken to design, develop, and deliver infrastructure that fulfils the functional needs of intended users. It typically encompasses several key phases, including planning, financing, design, engineering, procurement, and execution, all aimed at producing a finished structure that meets predefined standards of quality, cost, and time.

Contractor: A contractor is a formally registered and legally recognised construction firm or entity tasked with carrying out specific construction works on behalf of a client or project owner. The contractor assumes responsibility for delivering the project using its own resources—including labour, materials, and equipment—within the scope of the agreed contract, budget, and timeframe.

Contractor's Technical Skills: This term refers to the formal qualifications, technical certifications, and relevant work experience required for a contractor to successfully implement road construction projects. Within the context of this study, technical skills are evaluated based on the number of qualified technical personnel, their

academic and professional training, and their proven expertise in delivering roadworks.

Contractor's Equipment: Contractor's equipment encompasses the machines, tools, and construction plants deployed by a contractor to perform various tasks on a project site. This study assesses the adequacy of such equipment by examining its type, quantity, condition (including age), and ownership status—whether the machinery is company-owned or leased from third parties.

Contractor's Financial Capacity: Financial capacity refers to the contractor's ability to fund the construction project either through internal financial reserves or by accessing external financial support. In this study, financial capacity is measured using indicators such as cash flow availability, the firm's current assets, and its liquidity ratios, all of which provide insight into the contractor's financial health and stability.

Contractor's Management Skills: This concept relates to the organisational, leadership, and administrative competencies required to manage and coordinate all aspects of a construction project effectively. In this study, management skills are assessed based on the contractor's organisational structure, the qualifications and training levels of administrative staff, and the number of office-based personnel assigned to support the project.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter offers an in-depth review of empirical studies related to the core variables under investigation. It begins by exploring the key theoretical foundations that inform the study and sets out the hypotheses that frame the research inquiry. The chapter also presents a conceptual framework that provides both a visual representation and a theoretical guide to the study's focus. In addition, it critically analyses previous scholarly work to illustrate how different researchers have examined and interpreted the interrelationships among the study variables. Through this analysis, the chapter highlights existing gaps in the literature, which the current research aims to address.

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is grounded in two well-established theoretical frameworks: the Full Range of Leadership Theory (FRLT) and Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Evaluation. Together, these models offer a robust lens for examining leadership behaviours and assessing the effectiveness of leadership practices within organisational contexts.

2.1.1 Full Range of Leadership Theory

Bass and Avolio (1994) developed the Full Range of Leadership Theory (FRLT), a comprehensive model that categorises leadership behaviours along a continuum ranging from laissez-faire to transactional and transformational leadership. At the lowest end of the spectrum lies **laissez-faire leadership**, characterised by an absence of decision-making and minimal engagement, often leading to confusion, weak direction, and lack of accountability. **Transactional leadership**, situated at the midpoint, operates on a system of reciprocal exchanges between leaders and

followers, using rewards and sanctions to enforce compliance and drive short-term performance (Avolio & Bass, 2004). At the highest end of the spectrum is **transformational leadership**, which is widely regarded as the most effective style for promoting innovation, long-term development, and follower commitment (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Transformational leadership, as conceptualised by Bass (1999), comprises four key dimensions: *idealised influence*, *inspirational motivation*, *intellectual stimulation*, and *individualised consideration*. These elements empower leaders to inspire followers beyond transactional expectations, cultivate critical thinking, encourage creativity, and align personal goals with broader organisational objectives. This leadership style creates a nurturing environment that supports talent growth and leadership development, making it especially relevant to **succession planning** (Northouse, 2018; Antonakis & House, 2014).

According to FRLT, transformational leaders create lasting influence by fostering both the personal and professional development of their followers. In the context of succession planning, this approach is vital as it promotes leadership continuity through structured mentorship, skills enhancement, and systematic talent identification (Ismail et al., 2020). Organisations that prioritise transformational leadership practices are typically better equipped to identify high-potential individuals and prepare them for future leadership roles, thus enhancing institutional resilience and adaptability in dynamic environments (Dinh et al., 2014).

A growing body of empirical evidence underscores the positive influence of transformational leadership on organisational outcomes. For instance, Butt et al. (2020) found that transformational leaders significantly contribute to succession planning by cultivating a culture grounded in trust, empowerment, and active engagement. By modelling developmental behaviours, such leaders not only motivate employees to step into leadership roles but also create learning environments conducive to long-term capacity building.

Moreover, transformational leadership has been closely linked to the enhancement of **psychological capital**—such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience—among employees. These attributes are particularly important for those preparing for leadership succession (Luthans & Morgan, 2017). Research by Buil, Martínez, and Matute (2019) supports the view that organisations that foster transformational leadership are more agile and better positioned to manage leadership transitions, even in uncertain or disruptive contexts.

Avolio and Bass (2004) underscore the central role of transformational leadership in leadership development, arguing that leaders who exhibit these behaviours not only achieve superior results but also cultivate others to lead. This aligns directly with the objectives of succession planning, which centres on systematically grooming future leaders. As Carter et al. (2013) explain, transformational leadership serves as a developmental pathway through which experienced leaders pass on core values, strategic vision, and key competencies to emerging leaders, thereby reinforcing the organisation's leadership pipeline.

2.1.2 Kirkpatrick's Model of Training Evaluation

Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Training Evaluation Model—comprising **Reaction, Learning, Behaviour, and Results**—provides a structured, hierarchical framework for assessing the effectiveness of training interventions (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). This model is particularly valuable in the context of **succession planning**, as it offers a systematic approach to evaluating whether leadership development efforts are yielding a pipeline of capable, well-prepared future leaders.

At the **Reaction** level, the model assesses participants' immediate perceptions of the training, including their satisfaction and the perceived relevance of the content. A positive reaction is considered essential, as it often correlates with higher levels of engagement and openness to learning (Salas et al., 2015). Within leadership development, this stage is crucial for gauging

whether emerging leaders are receptive to the training and find it applicable to real-world leadership challenges.

The **Learning** level measures the degree to which trainees have acquired the intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In the context of succession planning, this involves evaluating whether individuals have effectively internalised key leadership competencies such as strategic thinking, communication, decision-making, and emotional intelligence (Grossman & Salas, 2011).

The **Behaviour** level focuses on the transfer of learning to the workplace. It assesses whether participants are applying what they learned in their roles, particularly in leadership contexts. This level is critical for succession planning, as the readiness of potential successors depends largely on their ability to demonstrate newly acquired leadership behaviours in real-time situations (Botke et al., 2016).

At the final level, **Results**, the model evaluates the broader organisational outcomes of the training. These include improvements in performance, productivity, team dynamics, and the organisation's overall readiness for leadership transitions. In the succession planning context, this could translate to higher retention of internal talent, smoother leadership handovers, and improved continuity in service delivery (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2019).

Recent empirical evidence underscores the model's relevance in succession planning. Almatrooshi and Ankit (2022) found that applying the Kirkpatrick model in public sector leadership training significantly improved the identification and preparation of future leaders by aligning training outcomes with strategic talent development goals. Similarly, Mohamad and Abdullah (2021) reported that the **Behaviour** and **Results** levels were the strongest predictors of long-term leadership effectiveness in Malaysian public institutions.

Moreover, using the Kirkpatrick model enhances both **accountability** and **continuous improvement** in leadership development initiatives. It allows organisations to track the

effectiveness of training over time and make necessary adjustments to strengthen leadership pipelines. This aligns with Burke and Hutchins (2015), who emphasised that robust evaluation frameworks are essential for sustaining talent development and organisational performance.

Adaptations of the model—such as the **New World Kirkpatrick Model**—have further strengthened its utility by integrating business drivers and strategic alignment into the evaluation process. These enhancements help organisations link leadership development more directly to succession goals and broader institutional outcomes (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016; Tam & Gray, 2023).

In summary, the Kirkpatrick model offers a comprehensive, evidence-based method for assessing the effectiveness of leadership training within succession planning. By evaluating training across all four levels, organisations can ensure their leadership development efforts are not only well-received and educational but also behaviourally impactful and strategically aligned with long-term leadership continuity.

2.2 Leadership Styles on Succession Planning

The sustainability and long-term success of private telecommunications companies increasingly hinge on how effectively leadership ideologies are aligned with succession planning, particularly within dynamic and competitive environments such as Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Leadership style—the manner in which leaders guide, influence, and manage people and organisational processes—plays a critical role in shaping both the present and future of these enterprises. Succession planning, by contrast, refers to the strategic process of identifying and developing high-potential individuals to fill key leadership roles as they become vacant, thereby ensuring organisational continuity and stability (Kim, Egan & Kim, 2020).

Various leadership styles—including transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire—exert different degrees of influence on succession planning. Among these,

transformational leadership has been widely recognised for its positive impact. Leaders who adopt this style exhibit traits such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, and individualised consideration. These qualities foster a supportive learning environment, promote mentorship, and encourage proactive career growth, all of which are crucial to cultivating a strong pipeline of future leaders (Nguyen et al., 2022; Afsar, Masood & Umrani, 2019).

Transactional leadership, which emphasises performance targets, rewards, and adherence to established procedures, presents a more nuanced influence. While effective in achieving short-term objectives, it may fall short in nurturing the creativity, innovation, and personal development needed for long-term succession planning. Nonetheless, when integrated with transformational elements—such as employee empowerment and vision-driven leadership—transactional approaches can support structured talent development and succession pathways (Alrowwad, Obeidat & Tarhini, 2020; Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2019).

Democratic leadership, characterised by shared decision-making and participatory management, has been positively associated with employee engagement and inclusive leadership development. This style fosters transparency, collaboration, and mutual accountability—factors that enhance the identification and grooming of emerging leaders through collective involvement in strategic processes (Chaudhry & Javed, 2021). On the other hand, **autocratic leadership**, which centres on top-down control and limited delegation, often stifles creativity and employee initiative. This can inhibit the identification of internal talent and constrain opportunities for long-term leadership development (Ali et al., 2018).

Laissez-faire leadership, which is marked by a hands-off approach and minimal leader involvement, has generally been linked to poor succession outcomes. The lack of strategic guidance

and mentorship under this style can result in weak leadership pipelines, unclear expectations, and low organisational preparedness for leadership transitions (Fiaz, Su & Saqib, 2017).

Within the context of private telecommunications firms in Uasin Gishu County, the need for proactive succession planning is particularly pressing. These companies operate in a fast-paced, technologically driven sector that demands adaptive leadership and future-focused strategies. Leadership preparedness—especially in planning for transitions and developing successors—shapes the organisational culture and significantly impacts long-term competitiveness and operational resilience.

Consequently, aligning leadership styles with deliberate succession planning practices is essential. Organisational leaders must actively invest in identifying and nurturing talent, facilitating knowledge transfer, and embedding leadership development into their broader strategic agendas (Liu, Gong & Liu, 2023). As Kenya's private telecommunications sector continues to expand, the role of strategic leadership in securing institutional longevity and performance will become even more critical.

2.2.1 Transactional Leadership and Succession Planning

Structured interactions between leaders and followers are hallmarks of transactional leadership as well as subordinates, whereby compliance and performance are rewarded and deviations are penalized. This style is commonly employed in formal, results-driven environments where clear expectations and short-term objectives prevail (Nguyen et al., 2022). According to Mgeni and Nayak (2016), transactional leadership is well-suited to scenarios that demand operational efficiency, immediate outcomes, and well-defined roles and responsibilities. These leaders tend to emphasize procedures, standardization, and task completion, aligning rewards with performance. Transactional leadership differs significantly from transformational leadership in terms of focus and outcomes. Transactional leadership centres on structured exchanges between leaders and

subordinates, where performance expectations are clearly communicated, and rewards or corrective actions are based on measurable outcomes. Unlike transformational leaders—who are often associated with vision-setting and personal development—transactional leaders focus on maintaining operational stability and ensuring compliance with established procedures (Breevaart & Zacher, 2019). Interestingly, while transformational leadership is frequently credited with inspiring innovation and long-term growth, it is the transactional style that often supports systematic succession planning through predictability and standardisation.

This distinction is consistent with **Contingency Theory**, which posits that leadership effectiveness depends on how well a leader's style aligns with situational demands (Girma, 2016). Transactional leadership, with its emphasis on clear hierarchies, control mechanisms, and performance-driven feedback, is particularly effective in contexts that demand order, accountability, and consistency—qualities essential to structured leadership development and succession planning.

Robbins and Judge (2017) identify three core components of transactional leadership:

- **Contingent reward**, where leaders provide incentives based on performance outcomes, ensuring that expectations and corresponding rewards are explicitly stated;
- **Active management by exception**, where leaders continuously monitor performance and proactively correct deviations;
- **Passive management by exception**, where intervention only occurs after problems have become apparent or performance deteriorates.

Recent empirical research supports the notion that transactional leadership can meaningfully contribute to succession planning. Zafar, Ishak, and Zulkifli (2021) found that transactional leaders enhance succession preparedness by establishing clear performance benchmarks and implementing structured training programs. Similarly, Thomas and Hillailiyah (2016) observed that transactional leaders often prioritise immediate task accomplishment and operational control over

visionary or developmental leadership, a stance that may be beneficial in maintaining organisational stability during leadership transitions.

Mohamad and Yahya (2016) further argued that transactional leadership improves operational efficiency by closely linking individual performance to organisational rewards. However, this approach must be carefully managed, as over-reliance on external incentives may undermine intrinsic motivation and reduce long-term organisational commitment if not balanced with interpersonal or developmental leadership practices (Alatailat, Elrehail, & Emeagwali, 2019).

The relationship between transactional leadership and employee commitment has also been demonstrated in industry-specific contexts. For instance, a study by Ramli, Magito, and Khotimah (2019) within a technology firm in Indonesia showed that transactional leadership—when applied with consistency—can promote a structured, predictable work environment that enhances employees' emotional attachment, loyalty, and willingness to remain committed to the organisation's mission. Interestingly, their findings revealed that transactional leadership was more influential in retaining employees than traditional career progression initiatives. This outcome underscores the importance of structured leadership approaches in cultivating workforce stability—an essential ingredient for effective succession planning.

Similarly, Rajagani and Diwyaa (2020) reported a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) between transactional leadership and succession planning, suggesting that organised leadership structures accelerate the development of leadership pipelines. Supporting this, McBurney (2017) found a moderately positive relationship ($r = 0.256$) between transactional leadership and succession planning in public educational institutions. This indicates that transactional leaders, through systematic performance evaluations and role-based oversight, are well-positioned to identify and groom future leaders.

Despite criticisms that transactional leadership may lack inspiration or be overly mechanistic, it remains a viable and often necessary strategy in organisational environments where accountability, clarity, and measurable outcomes are prioritised. In succession planning, its strengths lie in its ability to define roles, establish performance standards, and promote consistency in leadership development processes. As Breevaart and Zacher (2019) observe, transactional leadership ensures continuity by aligning organisational objectives with individual performance metrics, thereby creating a solid foundation for identifying, preparing, and promoting future leaders.

2.2.2 Transformational Leadership and Succession Planning

Transformational leadership has gained significant attention as a crucial factor in succession planning, particularly in the government where continuity of leadership is paramount. In 2019, Ahmad, Yusri, and Chulan conducted a study in the Malaysian state of Perlis to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and employee succession planning within the public sector. Drawing on data collected from 132 respondents across three government agencies, their findings revealed a strong and statistically significant association between transformational leadership behaviours and the overall effectiveness of succession planning efforts. The research further emphasised that leadership approaches which are responsive to the unique needs and developmental aspirations of employees play a critical role in enhancing succession readiness and fostering a sustainable leadership pipeline.

In similar research, Ismail, Hamzah, Arshad, and Armugam (2019) investigated the function of transformational leadership in succession planning among principals in Malaysian national secondary schools. They emphasized that succession planning is heavily influenced by how subordinates perceive the capabilities of their leaders. The findings indicated that transformational leaders often leave a lasting influence on their subordinates, as followers tend to mirror the

leadership styles and behaviours demonstrated by their leaders (Armugam et al., 2019). This generational transfer of leadership skills is critical to ensuring effective succession in organizations. The concept of inspirational motivation, a core component of transformational leadership, has been identified as essential in creating an organizational culture that supports succession planning. Jia, Liao, Yin, Ma, and Yu (2019) argued compelling vision and shared values, motivate their employees to dedicate themselves to organizational goals. Their research underscored that leaders who inspire commitment and align individual goals with organizational objectives create a conducive environment for succession planning. Muchiri and Hazel (2019) further explained that transformational leadership, particularly through inspiring motivation, facilitates strong teamwork and employee engagement, both of which are critical for the sustainability of leadership pipelines. Moreover, Ahmad, bin Mohamed, and Manaf (2017) conducted a study involving 576 respondents from 21 entities within the public sector of Malaysia. They concluded that motivational inspiration is significantly linked to succession planning. Leaders who connect individual aspirations with organizational goals foster greater engagement and commitment, which is crucial for grooming potential leaders within the organization.

The intellectual stimulation aspect of transformational leadership is also important in shaping succession planning. Al Harbi, Alarifi, and Mosbah (2019) noted that transformational leaders foster innovation within organisations by promoting creative thinking and encouraging employees to approach challenges with autonomy, ultimately enabling them to develop effective and original solutions. This not only improves organizational performance but also prepares employees to take on leadership roles in the future. Ahmad et al. (2019) echoed these findings, emphasizing that intellectual stimulation is essential for enhancing employee problem-solving skills and independence—key characteristics for potential successors.

Khan, Rehmat, Butt, Farooqi, and Asim (2020) highlighted that intellectual stimulation significantly boosts employees' self-efficacy and task engagement, which are vital for the success of succession planning initiatives. The authors demonstrated that when employees are encouraged to think critically and independently, they develop the confidence and skills necessary to assume leadership positions in the future.

Individualized consideration, another critical dimension of transformative leadership, is essential to succession planning. This concept involves leaders acknowledging and meeting each person's unique needs and potential employees. Ali and Islam (2020) argued that transformational leaders who provide tailored mentorship and development opportunities enable their employees to realize their full potential, which is crucial for leadership continuity. Tselot (2021) added that individualized consideration is vital for guiding employees according to their unique abilities, thus ensuring that succession planning aligns with both personal and organizational objectives.

Ahmad, Mohamed, and Manaf (2017) found that among the four components of transformational leadership, individualized consideration was the most significant predictor of successful succession planning. Their research indicated that leaders who invest in mentoring and coaching help employees develop leadership qualities necessary for future roles. This conclusion is reinforced by Lian (2018), who emphasised that customised leadership development—rooted in individualised consideration—plays a pivotal role in strengthening succession planning by improving employees' preparedness to assume future leadership responsibilities.

In a similar vein, Yamoah (2021) stressed that individualized consideration helps create an environment where leadership potential is identified and nurtured over time. This personalized approach allows employees to develop both professionally and personally, preparing them for leadership roles and ensuring that organizations have a strong pipeline of future leaders. Mwesigwa and Namiyingo (2022) further observed that the individualised consideration aspect of

transformational leadership plays a key role in identifying and grooming successors who align with the organisation's culture and operational priorities, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of succession planning strategies.

Each core component of transformational leadership—idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration—contributes significantly to the development and sustainability of leadership pipelines. However, the relationship between transformational leadership and succession planning is multifaceted and deeply interconnected. In addition to encouraging innovation and organizational dedication, transformational leadership makes ensuring that next leaders are equipped to assume important positions within the company.

2.2.3 LaissezFaire Management and Planning for Succession

Figueiredo (2022) conducted a study examining the relationship between succession planning and various leadership styles. The findings revealed that, somewhat unexpectedly, succession planning processes benefited under a laissez-faire leadership approach. Additionally, the implementation of specific leadership development strategies—such as 360-degree feedback and executive mentoring—was found to enhance the effectiveness and structure of the organisation's succession planning efforts.

Yang (2015) critically examined the prevailing perspective that laissez-faire leadership yields negative outcomes, arguing that such a view is overly narrow and somewhat biased due to its disregard for contextual factors. The study found that, when analysed through the lens of behavioural traits and time dynamics, laissez-faire leadership can, in fact, have potentially positive effects—particularly in environments where autonomy and self-direction are valued.

Skogstad, Hetland, Glaso, and Einarsen (2018) found a strong association between the laissez-faire leadership style and adverse workplace outcomes. Their study revealed that this hands-off approach was linked to diminished perceptions of leader effectiveness, lower employee satisfaction with

leadership, and a general decline in organisational performance. Notably, over a two-year period, laissez-faire leadership emerged as the only significant negative predictor of job satisfaction, highlighting its sustained harmful impact on employee morale and organisational health. Adding to this perspective, Wisse and Sleebos (2016) introduced a psychological lens, noting that employees with highly relational self-concepts—those who value social connection and interpersonal belonging—were especially susceptible to the negative effects of laissez-faire leadership. This leadership style often neglects guidance, feedback, and active involvement, which in turn threatens the goals, role expectations, and relationships that form the foundation of such employees' professional identities. As a result, laissez-faire leadership can be especially disruptive in environments where employees seek affirmation, structure, and meaningful engagement from their leaders.

Veronique and Vandenberghe (2020) explored the influence of laissez-faire leadership on employees' emotional commitment, particularly among individuals with a strong relational self-concept—those who derive a significant part of their identity from interpersonal relationships. Their study found that such individuals are especially susceptible to the negative effects of passive or disengaged leadership. Grounded in social exchange theory and the identity orientation framework, the research argued that employees with relational self-orientations depend heavily on meaningful interactions with their leaders to sustain motivation and emotional attachment to the organisation. In the absence of such connections, their organisational commitment tends to diminish. In environments characterized by, these employees tend to experience reduced affective commitment and a weakening of shared organizational goals.

Wong and Giessner (2018) observed that leaders who adopted a laissez-faire leadership style tended to distance themselves from active engagement, often shifting responsibility and decision-making onto their subordinates. Laissez-faire is frequently seen as a lack of leadership. These

leaders gave the impression that they cared nothing about their organization or their supporters. Ultimately, it was up to their followers to make decisions (Wong & Giessner, 2018). Another view suggested that because a laissez-faire leadership style increased the followers' prospects for leadership development, the followers had already reaped the benefits of it (Robert & Vandenberghe, 2020). Even the question of whether the laissez-faire leadership style qualifies as an empowering leadership paradigm was up for debate (Wong & Giessner, 2018).

2.3 Critique of Literature

The literature review is anchored in a robust theoretical framework, primarily informed by Bass and Avolio's (1994) Full Range of Leadership Theory (FRLT) and Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick's (2006) Four-Level Training Evaluation Model. While these frameworks are well-established in leadership and training literature, the review treats them as distinct rather than interconnected. A more integrative approach—linking leadership behaviour to measurable training outcomes—would enhance the theoretical rigour (Dinh et al., 2014; Burke & Hutchins, 2015). For instance, how transformational leadership behaviours influence learning transfer and succession outcomes is not explicitly articulated.

One notable limitation of the literature review lies in its heavy reliance on studies that predominantly affirm the positive impact of transformational leadership. Much of the referenced scholarship—such as Bass and Riggio (2006), Khan et al. (2020), and Ahmad et al. (2017)—focuses on the strengths of this leadership style, particularly in promoting mentorship, fostering innovation, and enhancing succession readiness. However, the review lacks engagement with alternative or critical perspectives. For instance, Tourish and Pinnington (2002) caution that transformational leadership can sometimes result in an overreliance on charismatic figures and contribute to employee burnout, especially within resource-limited public sector environments.

Incorporating such counterpoints would enrich the discussion and offer a more nuanced and critically balanced evaluation of the literature.

The discussion of alternative leadership styles—particularly democratic and autocratic—is limited, with the review offering more comprehensive coverage only of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire approaches. For example, while democratic leadership is associated with inclusivity and empowerment (Chaudhry & Javed, 2021), it is insufficiently explored. Autocratic leadership, though still common in bureaucratic systems, is barely critiqued for its potential to stifle succession pipelines (Ali et al., 2018). This narrow scope weakens the comparative strength of the analysis, especially when discussing public-sector leadership in politically dynamic counties such as Uasin Gishu.

The analysis of laissez-faire leadership is informative but lacks contextual grounding. While global studies (e.g., Skogstad et al., 2018; Wong & Giessner, 2018) link it to poor accountability and reduced performance, the review fails to discuss whether such leadership passivity might be adaptive—or even strategic—in contexts marked by political volatility or low resource availability, such as Kenyan counties (Chege & Gakure, 2021). The African context is notably underrepresented, with a disproportionate reliance on Malaysian, European, and American sources, limiting the study's local applicability.

Another missing element is a clearly articulated conceptual framework. While the relationships between leadership styles and succession planning are implied, the review does not include a visual or descriptive framework to illustrate mediating or moderating variables such as organisational culture, political interference, or training effectiveness (Almatrooshi & Ankit, 2022; Tam & Gray, 2023). Including such a framework would improve the logical structure of the study and guide empirical testing.

The review is also somewhat redundant, with multiple citations of similar studies (e.g., repeated use of Ahmad et al., 2017, 2019) without clear methodological or conceptual distinctions. More could be done to compare divergent methodologies, such as the difference in outcomes between self-report surveys and longitudinal evaluations (Mohamad & Abdullah, 2021; Veronique & Vandenberghe, 2020). Moreover, the literature gap is asserted rather than demonstrated. While the study claims to address a void in Kenyan county-level project environments, the specific gap—such as the informal leadership pathways or clan-based succession norms common in the region—is not empirically supported (Njuguna & Wambua, 2023; Kiptoo & Wanjala, 2019).

2.4 Research Gap

Succession planning is widely recognised as a strategic mechanism for enhancing organisational sustainability by ensuring leadership continuity and safeguarding institutional memory (Kigo & Gachunga, 2020). While the relationship between leadership and succession planning has been widely examined, much of the existing literature is predominantly focused on the private sector, especially within corporate settings (Gathungu & Wachira, 2013). Consequently, there remains a significant gap in context-specific research addressing public institutions—such as devolved units and project-based departments within county governments—even though these entities play an increasingly critical role in the governance and service delivery frameworks of developing countries.

Globally, leadership styles have been shown to influence succession planning outcomes. Empirical evidence suggests that transformational and participative leadership approaches tend to foster more structured, proactive, and effective succession planning processes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Garman & Glawe, 2004). However, these findings are not always transferable to the developing country context, where succession planning is often hindered by political interference, rigid bureaucratic cultures, limited funding, and unstable institutional frameworks (Mutungi, Oduor, & Oduol, 2023).

These contextual limitations raise questions about the applicability of mainstream leadership theories in decentralised public settings such as Kenyan county governments.

At the national level, research has established connections between leadership behaviour and organisational performance outcomes (Odhiambo & Muraguri, 2019). However, there is still a noticeable lack of empirical studies examining how distinct leadership styles—such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—specifically impact succession planning within project-based firms operating at the county level. Much of the existing literature either generalises across sectors or fails to account for the unique projectised and hybrid nature of county government departments (Njiru, 2022). As such, critical questions regarding how leadership behaviours shape leadership pipeline development, mentorship practices, and transition mechanisms in these public project environments remain underexplored.

In the context of Uasin Gishu County, no known empirical study has directly assessed the connection between succession planning procedures and leadership styles in departments that prioritize projects. The absence of such evidence presents a vulnerability for county governments, where leadership turnover—often prompted by political cycles, resignations, or contract expirations—can disrupt project continuity, stall service delivery, and weaken institutional performance.

To address this knowledge gap, the present study investigates how different leadership philosophies shape succession planning practices within project-based organisations operating under the Uasin Gishu County Government. By providing empirical insights tailored to the Kenyan devolved governance system, the findings are expected to inform leadership development initiatives, capacity-building programmes, and policy frameworks geared toward institutionalising succession planning at the county level.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

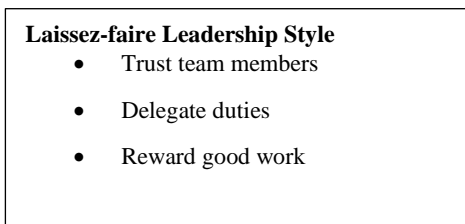
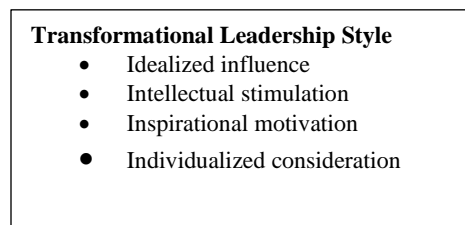
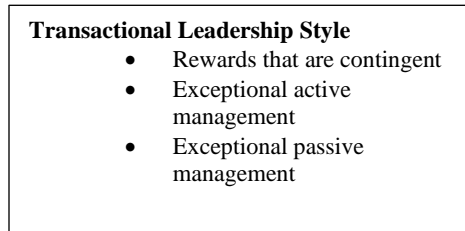
A systematic structure to guide research by clarifying the variables under investigation and illustrating the relationships between them. It operationalizes abstract ideas into measurable concepts, thereby supporting the process of scientific inquiry (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, 2018). A conceptual framework serves as a narrative and visual depiction of the main ideas and how they relate to one another, which aids in placing the research within an already-existing corpus of knowledge, claims Kivunja (2018).

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the presumed influence of three leadership philosophies—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—on succession planning within project-based firms under the Uasin Gishu County Government. Grounded in contemporary leadership theory, these leadership styles are positioned as the independent variables, whereas succession planning functions as the dependent variable, reflecting the outcomes shaped by leadership approaches.

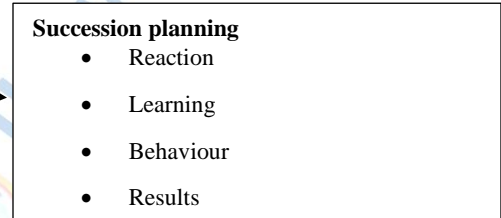
The significantly shapes how succession planning is initiated, structured, and implemented. For instance, transformational leaders are expected to inspire long-term vision and talent development, whereas transactional leaders may focus on structured planning through policies and rewards. On the other hand, because there is no guidance or involvement, laissez-faire leadership may result in poor or inconsistent succession plans (Al Khajeh, 2018; Bass, 2019).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable



Dependent Variable



Source: Researcher, (2025)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology, detailing the study's design, target population, data collection and analysis procedures, underlying research philosophy, quality assurance measures, and ethical considerations that guided the investigation.

3.1 Research Methodology

A clearly defined research methodology is fundamental in steering the entire process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation in a manner that aligns with the objectives of the study. As noted by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), research methodology serves as a strategic blueprint that outlines the tools, techniques, and procedures used to address the research problem, ensuring coherence with both the research questions and overarching aims.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) contend that a descriptive cross-sectional study design is particularly appropriate when the objective is to systematically examine and describe phenomena as they exist at a specific point in time. This approach enables researchers to capture relationships among variables without altering the natural environment, thereby facilitating an accurate understanding of patterns, associations, and observable trends (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). It is especially useful in studies aimed at examining current organisational practices, leadership behaviours, and planning processes.

The cross-sectional design was selected for this study due to its practicality and effectiveness in collecting data from a target population at a single moment in time, making it well-suited for capturing real-time insights in a time-efficient manner. This approach is widely used in social

science research where time, resources, and access constraints limit longitudinal observation (Bryman, 2016). Cross-sectional studies have proven effective in leadership and organizational research, especially when investigating cause-and-effect associations between leadership behavior and strategic outcomes like succession planning (Yukl & Gardner, 2020; Dinh et al., 2014).

The choice of this methodology is justified by its suitability for quantitative data collection, which is critical for hypothesis testing and generating statistically sound conclusions through both descriptive and inferential analyses (Hair et al., 2019). It also enables the researcher to explore patterns across a wider population while maintaining objectivity and replicability, crucial elements in contemporary leadership studies (Northouse, 2021).

Additionally, the selected design is consistent with other empirical research on succession planning and leadership styles in public sector organizations. For example, Mwangi and Kinyua (2020) as well as Mutungi, Oduor, and Oduol (2023) applied descriptive cross-sectional designs in their investigations of leadership's impact on organisational performance and continuity planning. Their work underscores the relevance and appropriateness of this methodological approach for the current study.

Data for this study were collected between September and October 2024, capturing real-time organizational practices within project-based departments under Uasin Gishu County Government. The cross-sectional nature ensured the accurate reflection of prevailing leadership behaviours and their relationship with succession planning practices during that period.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design, a non-experimental approach that allows for the collection and analysis of data at a single point in time to describe relationships among variables without introducing manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019). This design is particularly well-suited for examining leadership styles and organisational

practices, as it enables researchers to draw generalisations across a defined population. Moreover, it supports the collection of quantitative data necessary for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

This study adopts a multidimensional approach to examining leadership by focusing on three widely recognised styles—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—which serve as the independent variables. These leadership styles are operationalised using constructs established in contemporary leadership research and aligned with the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM), a foundational framework developed by Bass and Avolio (2004) and widely applied in empirical studies (Dinh et al., 2014).

Transactional leadership is measured through three core dimensions. First is contingent reward, where leaders clarify expectations and provide rewards in direct exchange for performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Second is active management by exception, which involves ongoing monitoring of employee output and immediate corrective action when deviations occur (Avolio et al., 2015). The third dimension, passive management by exception, reflects a more reactive stance, where leaders only intervene after issues have become significant (Northouse, 2021).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is evaluated using four key attributes. Idealised influence describes leaders who serve as ethical role models and gain the trust and respect of their followers (Ng, 2017). Inspirational motivation refers to the ability to articulate a clear and compelling vision that mobilises team members (Bass, 2019). Intellectual stimulation captures the extent to which leaders challenge assumptions and encourage creativity and innovative thinking (Wang et al., 2020). Lastly, individualised consideration involves providing personalised coaching, mentoring, and support tailored to each follower's developmental needs (Choi et al., 2016).

Laissez-faire leadership is defined through three dimensions that reflect a more hands-off leadership style. Task delegation entails allowing employees the freedom to self-manage their responsibilities without micromanagement (Skogstad et al., 2014). Trust in team autonomy indicates a leader's confidence in their team's ability to function independently with minimal guidance (Kraft et al., 2018). Recognition of initiative refers to acknowledging and rewarding employee-driven efforts and outcomes, often with minimal interference from leadership (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

Overall, these leadership constructs are rooted in the Full Range Leadership Model, which remains a central theoretical framework in leadership studies. Their inclusion in this study allows for a nuanced analysis of how different leadership styles influence succession planning within project-based organisations in the public sector.

The dependent variable is succession planning, defined as a systematic process of identifying and developing future leaders to ensure continuity in key organizational roles (Garman & Glawe, 2004; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Succession planning in this study is measured using four dimensions: Behavioural changes: Observable leadership behaviour shifts following succession efforts (Kim & Thompson, 2021). Learning and development: Formal and informal efforts to train future leaders (Rothwell, 2016). Response mechanisms: Organizational readiness in response to leadership transitions (Nguyen et al., 2020). Organizational outcomes: Improved performance, employee retention, and leadership continuity (Mutungi et al., 2023)

The type and degree to which succession planning and leadership styles are related procedures inside the project firms of the Uasin Gishu County Government can be determined quantitatively with the use of inferential statistics like regression modelling, made possible by this research methodology.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Eldoret, a prominent urban centre located within Uasin Gishu County. Eldoret is officially recognised as Kenya's fifth city, following Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru (Kenya Gazette, 2023). It has rapidly evolved into a key economic and administrative hub in the North Rift region, playing a central role in regional development. Its strategic importance continues to grow as the city expands in both infrastructure and population.

Geographically, Eldoret is situated on the Uasin Gishu Plateau, approximately 65 kilometres north of the equator, at an average altitude of 2,085 meters above sea level. The city enjoys a temperate highland climate, with temperatures ranging from 8°C to 27°C and an average annual rainfall of 1,124 mm (Kenya Meteorological Department, 2022). These climatic conditions make the region suitable for agriculture, residential settlement, and commercial activity. June is typically the coolest month, while January tends to experience the highest temperatures. The region's relative humidity averages around 56%, contributing to a generally mild and comfortable climate throughout the year.

Eldoret is located at latitude 0°31' N and longitude 35°16' E, positioning it as a major urban centre in Western Kenya and the administrative headquarters of Uasin Gishu County. The county is one of Kenya's 47 devolved units and spans an area of approximately 3,328 square kilometres. It shares borders with six other counties: Nandi, Kakamega, Elgeyo Marakwet, Trans Nzoia, Baringo, and Kericho (CRA, 2020), which enhances its strategic connectivity within the western corridor of the country.

According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Uasin Gishu County had a total population of 1,163,186 people, comprising 580,269 males, 582,889 females, and 28 intersex persons (KNBS, 2019). The county had 279,863 households, with an average household size of 4.1 individuals and a population density of 350 persons per square kilometre. The population structure is predominantly youthful, with 39.4% aged between 0 and 14 years, 56.7% aged 15 to 64 years,

and only 3.9% above 65 years. This demographic profile reflects a high dependency ratio and presents important considerations for public service delivery, particularly in sectors such as education, healthcare, employment, and succession planning in both public and private institutions (World Bank, 2020).

Administratively, Uasin Gishu County is divided into six constituencies: Ainabkoi, Moiben, Turbo, Soy, Kapseret, and Kesses. These constituencies encompass both urban and peri-urban populations, offering a diverse social and economic landscape that supports a wide range of development initiatives and research activities. Eldoret town itself is a vital commercial, industrial, and educational centre, hosting major institutions such as Moi University and Eldoret International Airport. As a rapidly expanding city, Eldoret faces increasing administrative demands, including leadership capacity building and succession planning in both public and private project-based institutions (Mutunga & Iravo, 2019; Makori & Kwasira, 2017).

As Kombe and Trompe (2006) emphasized, a research site serves as the critical ground for testing research concepts and validating hypotheses. Uasin Gishu County, with its dynamic leadership structures and evolving project-based governance, thus provides a relevant and rich context for investigating how leadership philosophies affect succession planning in organizations of devolved governance.

3.4 Population of the Study

A research census refers to the entire group of individuals, organisations, or elements that share common characteristics from which data relevant to a specific research problem can be collected (Etikan & Bala, 2017). It represents the full scope of potential subjects or units that meet predefined criteria, making it a foundational concept in determining the scope and depth of a study.

Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015) further explain that a population consists of all individuals or entities that possess at least one identifiable trait pertinent to the research question. This definable

trait serves as the basis for inclusion, ensuring that the population aligns closely with the focus of the inquiry.

Together, these perspectives underscore the importance of clearly identifying the study population. It serves as the broader universe within which the research is situated and ensures that findings can be appropriately generalised to the larger target group, enhancing both the relevance and applicability of the study outcomes.

In applied social research—particularly within the fields of organisational and leadership studies—the target population refers to the complete group of individuals or organisations from which the researcher intends to draw conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Solveman (2013) notes that the target population comprises those who possess the desired knowledge, experience, or attributes that are aligned with the study objectives—in this case, leadership practices and succession planning in project-oriented enterprises.

For this study, the target population comprises all officially registered project-based enterprises operating within Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. According to records obtained from the Uasin Gishu County Trade and Industry Department (2022), there were 56 registered and licensed project-based firms actively operating within the county as of February 2022. These organizations span various sectors including construction, engineering, ICT, consultancy, and community development. These firms were selected because they operate within formal organizational frameworks where leadership structures and succession policies can be observed and assessed.

Project-based firms are characterized by temporary organizational structures, distinct leadership arrangements, and defined timelines for deliverables (Turner, 2016). This makes them uniquely relevant for the study of leadership style effectiveness and succession planning, as they often rely on strategic continuity and leadership agility to survive beyond project cycles (Müller, Geraldi, & Turner, 2019). The relatively small population size allows for a census approach, where the entire

population is studied, ensuring high accuracy in data collection and representation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Moreover, focusing the study on a clearly defined and bounded population helps minimise sampling errors and enhances the overall rigour and reliability of the research findings (Bryman & Bell, 2015). It also enhances external validity, since the firms operate under similar regulatory and socio-economic conditions within the devolved county government structure (Republic of Kenya, 2021).

Therefore, the accessible population—defined as the portion of the target population that is available and eligible to participate in the research—comprises all 56 registered and licensed project enterprises in Uasin Gishu County. These organizations will form the basis for data collection, analysis, and interpretation about how different leadership philosophies affect succession planning.

3.5 Sampling Design and Sample Size Determination

In research methodology, the sampling design provides the structure through which specific units are selected from a broader population to take part in a study (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). When the population is relatively small, clearly defined, and manageable, scholars often recommend employing a census approach. This method involves including every unit within the population, thereby eliminating sampling error and improving the accuracy and representativeness of the research findings (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In the context of this study, the target population consisted of all 290 project-based enterprises that were officially registered and licensed to operate within Uasin Gishu County as of March 2025. This figure was confirmed using updated records obtained from the County Directorate of Trade and Industry. Given the moderate size of this population and the study's objective of gaining a

comprehensive understanding of how different leadership styles influence succession planning, a census approach was adopted for data collection.

Census methods are particularly valuable in contexts where the population is small enough to allow full participation without compromising logistical feasibility or resource availability (Kothari & Garg, 2019). Moreover, they are widely used in organizational behavior research when the researcher seeks rich, organization-wide perspectives from a finite number of decision-making entities (Taherdoost, 2016). By surveying the entire population, the study ensures maximum statistical power, minimization of selection bias, and increased validity of findings (Singh & Masuku, 2014; Acharya et al., 2013).

To collect data that accurately reflects organizational leadership and succession planning dynamics, each participating enterprise was asked to nominate two respondents: preferably mid-level or senior-level managers. These individuals are best positioned to offer insight into internal leadership strategies, staff development practices, and succession planning frameworks (Müller, Geraldi, & Turner, 2019). The categories of respondents include the Human Resource Manager, Finance or Operations Manager, and General Manager, based on the organization's structure. These roles were selected because they are generally engaged in, or have direct insight into, strategic leadership decision-making processes as well as succession planning initiatives within their organisations (Dulebohn et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020).

Following this framework, the study aimed to engage a total of 580 respondents, with two managers selected from each of the 290 identified enterprises. However, due to attrition, incomplete surveys, and non-responses, the final sample comprised 273 completed and usable responses. This response rate of approximately 94% is consistent with or higher than response rates reported in similar organizational research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). High response rates are essential for enhancing

data reliability and supporting generalization of results across the full population of project firms within the county.

This sampling approach aligns with recent best practices in project management and leadership research, where context-rich, holistic organizational perspectives are increasingly prioritized over fragmentary sampling (Turner, 2018; Clarke, 2021). The final sample, thus, represents a balanced, diverse, and high-level managerial perspective across a wide range of sectors including construction, ICT, consulting, healthcare, and infrastructure development—all sectors where effective leadership and succession planning are critical success factors.

3.6 Tools for Gathering Data

Structured for gathering for this investigation. Questionnaires have long been regarded as effective tools in empirical research for gathering standardized and comparable data across a wide respondent base (Bolarinwa, 2015). Their use in this study was informed by their efficiency in terms of time and cost, as well as their ability to maintain respondent anonymity, which has been shown to encourage more honest and accurate responses (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017). Furthermore, questionnaires facilitated data collection from geographically dispersed respondents and ensured consistency in the responses obtained (Taherdoost, 2016).

The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items designed using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). This scaling technique was chosen for its proven ability to effectively capture respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs in a format suitable for quantitative analysis. Its reliability and suitability for use in behavioural and organisational research have been consistently supported in existing literature (Boone & Boone, 2012; Joshi et al., 2015).

To ensure comprehensive data collection, the questionnaire was structured into three main sections. Section A focused on gathering demographic and background information—including

respondents' age, gender, job title, and years of professional experience. These details were essential for enabling subgroup analyses and interpreting variations in responses within relevant contextual groupings. Section B explored leadership styles, incorporating items that assessed different leadership behaviours, including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire orientations. These constructs were adapted from validated leadership models used in healthcare and organizational research (Aarons et al., 2015). Section C explored succession planning, capturing the presence, awareness, and perceived effectiveness of leadership development strategies within the respondents' institutions. Items were derived from strategic human resource management frameworks validated in previous empirical studies (Kim, 2021).

To ensure broad accessibility, the questionnaires were distributed both online and in printed format. The online version was disseminated via email and organizational networks, using platforms such as Google Forms. The printed questionnaires were distributed in person during scheduled sessions to accommodate participants without reliable internet access. This mixed-mode distribution approach enhanced participation rates and inclusivity, as supported by recent survey methodology literature (Dillman et al., 2014).

Each questionnaire began with a brief introductory statement explaining the purpose of the study and assuring participants that their responses would be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The voluntary nature of participation was explicitly communicated, and ethical safeguards—particularly those concerning participant privacy—were emphasised in line with established academic research ethics standards (APA, 2020).

To maximize response rates and address any uncertainties, the researcher conducted follow-up communication via phone calls and emails. This served as a reminder for participants who had not yet responded to the online survey and offered clarification where necessary. Research has shown

that such personalized follow-ups are effective in improving participation and response quality (De Leeuw et al., 2018).

In summary, the data collection instrument was carefully designed and administered to ensure that the information gathered was accurate, credible, and closely aligned with the study's objectives. Its structure enabled the systematic exploration of complex constructs such as leadership and succession planning, while maintaining strong ethical standards and methodological rigour.

3.7 Testing Instruments of Validity

In empirical research, validity plays a central role in determining how effectively a data collection instrument captures the intended construct. Ensuring that data genuinely reflect the phenomenon under investigation is essential to producing reliable and meaningful research outcomes (Boateng et al., 2018). As highlighted by Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2014), the effectiveness of any measurement tool depends on its ability to accurately represent the variables it is intended to assess—making validity a fundamental aspect of robust research design.

In this study, both construct validity and content validity were used to evaluate the questionnaire's effectiveness in capturing the core variables identified in the conceptual framework. This approach is consistent with the recommendations of Haynes, Richard, and Kubany (1995), who emphasise the importance of assessing multiple forms of validity—such as construct, content, criterion-related, and face validity—to maintain the quality and integrity of research instruments.

Content validity

Specifically, it denotes the extent to which a research instrument comprehensively captures the essential dimensions of the concept under investigation (Polit & Beck, 2017). To establish strong content validity, the researcher consulted a panel of three academic experts with recognised knowledge in leadership, succession planning, and strategic human resource management. These

experts reviewed the questionnaire to evaluate its clarity, relevance, language use, and alignment with the study's theoretical constructs.

To further enhance content validity, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was used as a quantitative metric to assess expert feedback. Each questionnaire item was rated on a four-point scale for clarity and relevance. Following established guidelines by Yusoff (2019) and Zamanzadeh et al. (2015), any item receiving a CVI score below 0.80 was revised, refined, or removed. This rigorous screening process ensured that only items meeting the accepted benchmark for high content validity—particularly in health and social science research—were retained for the final instrument.

Construct Validity

The instrument's construct validity was assessed to see if it accurately measured the theoretical constructs it was designed to assess—namely, leadership styles and succession planning. This involved mapping questionnaire items to elements of the conceptual framework to ensure alignment with underlying theories such as Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and Strategic Human Resource Planning principles.

The development of the research instrument was carried out with close guidance from the research supervisor, whose expertise was instrumental in evaluating the relevance of individual items, ensuring alignment with theoretical foundations, and confirming comprehensive coverage of the study constructs. To enhance construct validity, a pilot study involving 20 participants—carefully selected to reflect the study population—was conducted. Data from the pilot were analysed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), a method used to uncover the underlying factor structure and determine whether each item appropriately corresponded to its intended construct. This methodological choice aligns with scholarly recommendations by Brown (2015) and Worthington and Whittaker (2016), who emphasise the usefulness of EFA in refining instruments and establishing construct validity during scale development.

To assess whether the dataset was suitable for factor analysis, the study utilised both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A KMO value above 0.6, combined with a statistically significant outcome from Bartlett's test, confirmed that the data were appropriate for identifying underlying factor patterns (Field, 2018). Items that showed low factor loadings or did not clearly associate with any factor were either refined to improve clarity or removed entirely, thereby strengthening the instrument's internal consistency and alignment with the intended conceptual framework.

Face Validity

Although face validity is often regarded as the most subjective and least empirically robust form of validity, it was still recognised in this study. It pertains to the degree to which a measurement tool appears, on the surface, to assess what it is intended to measure—based primarily on intuitive judgement rather than statistical evaluation (Holden, 2010). To address this, selected participants from the pilot study were invited to review the questionnaire and share their impressions regarding its clarity, structure, and overall comprehensibility. Their feedback was instrumental in refining the wording and visual layout of the items, thereby enhancing the questionnaire's user-friendliness and ensuring that respondents could engage with it comfortably and confidently.

Concurrent Validity

In alignment with the recommendations of DeVellis (2017), concurrent validity was considered by comparing patterns in the responses from the pilot study with known trends from prior literature. Consistencies in these patterns suggested that the instrument was likely capturing the constructs it intended to measure, although full validation required further statistical analysis in the main study. Overall, these procedures were consistent with the standards set forth by Boateng et al. (2018) and Taherdoost (2016), who advocated for comprehensive validity testing using both qualitative expert

evaluation and quantitative statistical methods to ensure measurement rigor in organizational and behavioural research.

3.8 Testing Instruments of Reliability

Collis and Hussey (2014) assert that a reliable questionnaire should yield consistent results when administered to the same respondents under similar conditions. Zikmund et al. (2012) describe reliability as the degree to which a measurement instrument consistently produces results that align with those obtained from established tools designed to assess the same construct. In this study, internal consistency—one of the fundamental aspects of reliability—was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to George and Mallery (2019), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.9 are interpreted as excellent, those above 0.8 as good, and values above 0.7 as acceptable. Scores ranging between 0.6 and 0.7 may be considered questionable, while values exceeding 0.5 are typically viewed as poor. Any alpha below 0.5 is generally regarded as unacceptable.

Cooper and Schindler (2006) also support the view that alpha values between 0.7 and 0.9 suggest satisfactory reliability. While Gliem and Gliem (2003) recommend a minimum acceptable threshold of 0.7, Asikhia (2009) argues that a value of 0.6 may be sufficient in certain research settings. Similarly, Bagozzi and Yi (2012) contend that a coefficient of 0.5 can still indicate acceptable reliability under specific conditions. Kerlinger, Lee, and Bhanthumnavin (2000) further assert that the overall consistency of responses plays a crucial role in reinforcing both the credibility and validity of the research instrument used.

3.9. Data Collection Methods and Procedures

This study will rely on primary data collected through the use of structured questionnaires. This method is chosen for its practicality in administration and its capacity to protect respondent anonymity. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2011), questionnaires are particularly effective for studies of this nature, as they allow researchers to gather consistent and organised data from a large sample within a relatively short period.

The questionnaire will consist of closed-ended items presented on a five-point Likert scale, which is well-suited for generating measurable and comparable responses. To ensure clarity and coherence, the tool will be divided into three main sections. Section A will gather demographic and background information about the respondents. Section B will explore different aspects of leadership styles, while Section C will address succession planning practices within the organisational setting.

The study will offer both online and offline versions of the questionnaire to accommodate respondents' varying preferences and accessibility. Each questionnaire will begin with a brief introduction outlining the purpose of the data collection and reaffirming the study's commitment to maintaining the confidentiality of all information provided. For those completing the paper-based version, the researcher will organise scheduled sessions in advance to create a comfortable and focused environment for participation. Respondents opting for the online version will be contacted through phone calls and email to ensure they receive the necessary links and to underscore the significance of their input and participation in the research process.

3.10 Proposed Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

This section outlines the data analysis procedures and statistical methods employed in the study. Upon completion of data collection, the quantitative responses will undergo coding, cleaning, and

preparation for analysis. The researchers will use appropriate statistical techniques to summarise the data and determine the extent to which respondents agreed with statements related to the study's key variables.

Data analysis will be carried out using SPSS version 27, in alignment with the study's stated objectives. Descriptive statistics—including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions—will be used to provide a general overview of the dataset. For inferential purposes, the study will apply both correlation analysis and multiple linear regression to explore the strength and nature of relationships among the variables. The next section presents the specific multiple regression model applied in the analysis:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where

Y In this study, the dependent variable, denoted as Y, represents Succession Planning, which serves as the primary outcome the research seeks to explain or predict

β_0 represents the regression constant, also referred to as the intercept.

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , and β_4 represent the slope coefficients in the regression equation.

X1 represents the transactional style of leadership.

X2 signifies the transformational style of leadership

X3 reflects the laissez-faire leadership style, which is characterised by minimal direct supervision and a hands-off approach to decision-making

ϵ represents the error term

3.11 Ethical Consideration

The research process commenced with the acquisition of an official authorisation letter from Mount Kenya University, which was then used to apply for and obtain a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). As part of the preparatory phase, the researcher also engaged the Registrar of Companies, clearly outlining the study's objectives in a formal request for a current and comprehensive list of registered telecommunications firms operating within Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

Prior to data collection, the researcher took deliberate steps to ensure that all participants were adequately informed about the nature and scope of the study. Each participant received a detailed information sheet along with a consent form, both of which were signed to affirm their voluntary agreement to participate. The process was guided by ethical best practices, with an emphasis on transparency and respect for participants' autonomy. At no point were individuals coerced or unduly influenced to take part, thereby safeguarding both the integrity of the research and the dignity of the respondents. A covering letter explaining the study's objectives was included with every questionnaire to aid respondents in understanding the research and to serve as a reference. All written work used in the study, whether published in academic journals, books, or online platforms, or unpublished such as these, reports, or internal documents, was properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with academic standards. This approach was undertaken to uphold academic integrity and ensure that the research process remained transparent, ethical, and intellectually honest throughout. Accurate citation served a dual purpose in this study: it acknowledged the intellectual contributions of original authors and enabled readers to verify and

follow up on the sources referenced, thereby promoting transparency and academic credibility. In addition, strict adherence to recognised referencing standards was observed as a safeguard against plagiarism—an unethical practice that compromises the integrity and scholarly value of academic research.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis, along with corresponding interpretations and discussions. The findings are organised according to the study's specific objectives, providing a detailed account of how each research goal was addressed through the data collected.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the 290 questionnaires distributed to managers and proprietors of project-based enterprises in Uasin Gishu County, 273 were duly completed and returned, yielding an impressive response rate of 95.1%. This exceptionally high rate of return significantly enhances the credibility, dependability, and generalisability of the study's findings. In survey-based research—especially within the disciplines of social sciences and organisational studies—a strong response rate is vital in minimising the likelihood of nonresponse bias and ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the wider target population (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). This consideration is especially important in managerial and organisational contexts, where participation can be limited by competing responsibilities, lack of motivation, or general survey fatigue.

The high return rate in this study was largely attributed to a multi-pronged engagement strategy by the researcher, which included personalized follow-ups, clarification of questionnaire items, and ongoing communication through both phone and email. These techniques align with recommendations in current literature, which emphasize the importance of responsive, multimodal follow-up procedures in achieving high participation (Groves & Peytcheva, 2017). Specifically,

the proactive engagement fostered a sense of trust and importance, which often increases participant motivation to complete and return questionnaires (Edwards et al., 2018).

Moreover, the study implemented strategies such as clear questionnaire design, use of neutral and accessible language, and assurance of confidentiality, all of which have been identified as effective in improving response rates in both online and face-to-face data collection settings (Revilla, Saris, & Krosnick, 2014). Including an introductory statement in the questionnaire that clearly explained the purpose of the study and assured participants of their anonymity contributed to increased response rates. This aligns with observations by Keusch (2015), who noted that when participants are informed about how their data will be used and are assured of their privacy, they are more likely to complete surveys willingly.

As noted in methodological literature, response rates above 70% are typically regarded as highly satisfactory within the context of social science research. The 95.1% return rate obtained in this study substantially surpassed these conventional thresholds, reflecting strong participant engagement and commitment. This high level of participation not only enhanced the credibility and reliability of the data but also strengthened the ability to generalise the study's conclusions to the wider population of project firm leaders within Uasin Gishu County.

Contemporary research supports the view that response rates in organisational studies often fall below optimal levels. For example, Baruch and Holtom (2008) reported that typical response rates in this field average around 52.7%, while responses exceeding 80% are both uncommon and highly commendable. Likewise, Fincham (2008) highlighted that when response rates surpass 70%, the risk of response bias is substantially reduced, thereby enhancing both the internal consistency and external applicability of the findings. Against this backdrop, the response rate achieved in the

current study stands out as exceptionally strong, reinforcing the dependability and representativeness of the collected data.

The unusually high response rate formed a critical pillar of the study's methodological strength, greatly enhancing the credibility of the findings and reinforcing the robustness of the subsequent data analysis. The response rate results, which are summarised in Table 1, provide a quantitative snapshot of participant engagement and the effectiveness of the data collection strategy.

Table 1

Response Rate

Response Rate	Population	Percentage (%)
Returned	273	95.1%
Not returned	17	4.9%
	290	100%

As shown in Table 1, out of the 290 questionnaires distributed, 273 were correctly filled out and returned, resulting in an impressive response rate of 95.1%. The researchers' follow-up on questionnaire completion and explanation of any confusing information to the respondents were responsible for the high 95.1% of respondents responded. Based on the criteria outlined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is deemed adequate for analysis, 60% is considered good, while a rate of 70% or higher is regarded as outstanding. In light of this, the response rate achieved in this study qualifies as excellent.

4.3 Background Data of the Participants

The section provides a thorough examination of the respondents' demographic data, with particular attention to their gender, age, and greatest degree of education, and the position or job title held within their respective organisations. Additionally, this section provides essential contextual information regarding the organisations represented in the study. This includes the total number of

employees and the duration for which each organisation has been in operation. This information plays a crucial role in shedding light on the participants' backgrounds and the organisational contexts in which they operate, thereby enhancing the depth and clarity of the study's overall findings and interpretations.

4.3.1 The respondents' gender

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents based on the completed questionnaires. It offers a concise overview of the number of male and female participants involved in the study, thereby illustrating the gender composition of the research sample. Understanding this demographic aspect is essential, as it supports a more nuanced interpretation of the findings and informs the extent to which the results can be considered representative of various gender groups. Moreover, gender—as a key demographic variable—can shape individual experiences, perceptions, and responses, making its inclusion valuable in the analysis and contextualisation of the data.

Table 2
Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	115	43%
Female	158	58%
	273	100.0%

Table 2's results show that there was a slight female majority among participants, with 57.5% of responses being female and 42.5% being male. Because it matches larger demographic trends in Kenya's devolved sectors—where women are increasingly taking on business and project management roles—this gender distribution is noteworthy. The findings also align with the gender equity principle enshrined in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, which stipulates that no more than two-thirds of individuals in elective or appointive positions should be of the same gender. Despite the fact that this rule is mostly targeted at public governance structures, it sets a benchmark for gender inclusion that organisations and project-based firms are increasingly aligning with. The

observed representation implies that gender parity is not only being recognised at the policy level but is also gradually taking root in operational settings at the county level. This pattern could also shape the way leadership development and succession planning initiatives are carried out, given that leadership approaches have been shown to differ across genders in certain studies (Eagly & Carli, 2018).

4.3.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

As part of the demographic section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to indicate their age group. Collecting this data was important for assessing the age distribution within the sample, which could influence how participants perceived or responded to various aspects of the study. Grouping respondents into defined age brackets also enabled the identification of potential trends or differences linked to generational perspectives. A summary of these findings is presented in Table 3, offering a clear overview of the number and percentage of respondents within each age category.

Table 3

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
Under age of 30	114	41
From 30 to 50	91	34
More than 50	69	25
Total	273	100

According to the research outcomes results in Table 3, 113 (41.4%) of the respondents were under 30, 92 (33.7%) were between 30 and 50, and 68 (24.9%) were above 50. According to this report, young people make up the bulk of those living in Uasin Gishu County's projects.

4.3.3 Education Level

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of educational attainment, with the results summarised and presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Education Level

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	220	80
Graduate	42	16
Post graduate	11	4
Total	273	100

As shown in Table 4, the majority of participants—222 respondents, representing 81.3% of the sample—reported secondary school as their highest level of education. This indicates that a large segment of the study population had acquired foundational formal education, which could have influenced both their interpretation of the questionnaire items and their level of engagement with the themes explored in the study. Additionally, 41 respondents, accounting for 15.0%, reported that they were graduates, indicating that they had completed a degree-level programme, possibly providing them with more advanced knowledge and analytical skills. A smaller proportion, 10 respondents or 3.7%, stated that they had attained postgraduate qualifications, reflecting a higher academic achievement beyond the undergraduate level. These findings highlight the educational diversity among the respondents and suggest that most participants had at least a secondary education background, which may have affected their capacity to comprehend and respond to the research questions effectively. According to the findings, every responder was informed and had a

sufficient degree of education to perform well. The findings also suggest that every respondent was able to comprehend the subject and the study's goals.

4.3.4 Workforce Size of the Company

As part of the demographic information, participants were asked to indicate the total number of employees within their organisations. This data was collected to gauge the size of the companies represented in the study, given that organisational size can affect key operational aspects such as leadership frameworks, distribution of resources, and overall organisational effectiveness. Understanding the distribution of respondents across different organizational sizes also helped in contextualizing their views and experiences, particularly in relation to the study variables. The responses were categorized into different employee ranges to allow for easier analysis and comparison. The summarized findings, showing the number and percentage of respondents within each category of organizational size, were clearly presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Organisational workforce size

Number of employees	Frequency	Percentage
Under 5	53	18
From 5to10	163	61
More 10	57	21
Total	273	100

According to the survey data presented in Table 5, 52 respondents (19.0%) indicated that their businesses had fewer than five employees, 165 (60.4%) reported employing between five and ten staff members, while 56 participants (20.5%) stated that their organisations had more than ten

employees. These findings suggest that most small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County tend to operate with a workforce ranging from five to ten employees.

4.3.5 Years of Operation for the Organization

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of years their respective organizations had been in operation. This item aimed to offer a better understanding of the organisations' duration of operation and accumulated experience within their respective industries. The duration a company has been in business can influence its stability, reputation, and operational maturity, which may in turn affect employee perceptions and organizational performance. The responses were grouped into relevant time categories to facilitate analysis. The summarized data showing the distribution of organizational age among the respondents was presented in Table 5.

Table 6

Years of Operation for the Organization

Operational Years	Frequency	Percentage
Under 5 years	49	18
From 5 to 10	174	63
More than 10	50	19
Total	273	100

According to the research outcomes presented from Table 6, 48 respondents, representing 17.6% of the total sample, indicated that their organizations had been in operation for less than five years. A significant portion of respondents, totaling 176 or 64.5%, indicated that their organisations had been operating between five and ten years. Additionally, 49 participants (17.9%) reported that their businesses had been in existence for over ten years. These results suggest that most Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County are relatively young but steadily developing,

having likely acquired valuable operational experience and some degree of stability. This pattern may also reflect a dynamic entrepreneurial climate that fosters the sustainability and growth of SMEs beyond the initial stages of establishment.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics are essential in research as they allow scholars to condense extensive datasets into clear and interpretable summaries, facilitating easier comprehension and communication of key findings. They involve the use of numerical indices or statistical measures to characterize the distribution, central tendency, and variability of scores or responses within a dataset. Choosing the right descriptive statistics depends on the nature of the variables involved—whether they are categorical or continuous—as well as the measurement scale used, including nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio levels. This study utilised various descriptive statistical methods to accurately summarise and clearly present the key characteristics of the collected data. The analysis involved the use of frequencies and percentages to illustrate the distribution of responses across various categories. Additionally, measures of central tendency, such as means, alongside measures of variability, like standard deviations, were employed to capture the typical response patterns and the degree of variation within the data. This combination of descriptive statistics offered a clear and succinct summary of the dataset, establishing a solid basis for subsequent in-depth statistical examination and interpretation.

4.4.1 How Transformational Leadership Influences Project Success

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of transformational leadership on project success within Uasin Gishu County. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7*Effects of Transformational Leadership on Project Performance*

Statements			VLE	LE	ME	SE	NA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	The leaders within your organisation possess a clear vision of their goals and communicate these objectives effectively to their teams.	F %	95 34.8	119 43.6	36 13.2	5 1.8	18 6.6	3.98	1.07
2.	Your organization's leaders are brave enough to take calculated chances, take on new challenges, and make the difficult choices required to reach the objectives.	F %	106 38.8	122 44.7	23 8.4	9 3.3	13 4.8	4.09	1.01
3.	Your organization's leaders motivate the group, persuade them to support their goals, and carry them out at all levels.	F %	123 45.1	109 39.9	9 3.3	19 7.0	13 4.8	4.13	1.08
4.	Your organization's leaders live up to the standards they set.	F %	97 35.5	136 49.8	9 3.3	22 8.1	9 3.3	4.06	1.00
Valid N		273						4.07	

Furthermore, when asked about the leaders' willingness to take strategic risks, embrace new challenges, and make difficult decisions necessary to achieve objectives, 228 respondents (83.5%) largely agreed, reflecting a strong perception of bold and decisive leadership within their organizations. Meanwhile, 22 respondents, or 8.1%, somewhat agreed, suggesting a more cautious but still generally positive view of their leaders' capacity to take calculated risks and pursue ambitious goals.

According to the findings presented in Table 7, a significant portion of respondents—214 individuals, representing 78.4%—strongly affirmed leaders within their organization a clear understanding of the objectives to be get as well as are effective in conveying this vision. A smaller group, comprising 23 respondents or 8.4%, indicated moderate agreement, reflecting partial confidence in the clarity and communication of organizational goals by their leaders. These findings indicate that the majority of participants regard their leadership as having a clear vision

and effective communication skills, a perception supported by a mean score of 3.98 and a standard deviation of 1.07.

With a mean score of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 1.01, the majority of respondents concurred that leaders within their organisations exhibit the courage to undertake carefully evaluated risks, embrace new challenges, and make tough decisions essential for accomplishing organisational objectives. Additionally, 232 participants (85.0%) affirmed that their leaders are capable of motivating the team, effectively communicating their vision, and ensuring its implementation across all levels of the organization. A smaller proportion—32 respondents (11.8%)—expressed moderate agreement with this view. This positive perception is reinforced by a mean score of 4.13 and a standard deviation of 1.08, suggesting that most respondents view their leaders as motivating individuals who effectively secure team commitment and actively champion the organisation's vision.

Lastly, a substantial majority of 233 participants, accounting for 85.3% of the sample, expressed agreement that the leaders in their organisation consistently uphold the standards they set. A smaller group of 31 respondents (11.4%) expressed moderate agreement, indicating that their leaders somewhat maintain the expectations they set. The overall mean score of 4.06, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.00, indicates that most respondents perceive their leaders as consistently upholding the standards they advocate. This leadership approach often involves mechanisms such as monitoring production processes, setting clear goals, and exercising supervisory controls. Typically, this model is characterised by three key components: the application of contingent rewards, where leaders motivate followers through financial or psychological incentives linked to performance; vigilant oversight to identify and correct errors;

and a structured leadership style that emphasises clear expectations alongside consistent enforcement of organisational standards.

4.4.2 How Transactional Leadership Influences Innovation Outcomes in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

SME Innovation and the Role of Transactional Leadership. The second objective of this study was to explore the impact of transactional leadership style on project performance. The findings related to this objective are presented in Table 9, within the section dedicated to project performance.

Table 8

The Influence of Transactional Leadership Style on Project Outcomes

Statements			VLE	LE	ME	SE	NA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	The leadership within your organisation employs a system of incentives and consequences to encourage team members' adherence to established expectations.	F %	109 39.9	100 36.6	34 12.5	22 8.1	8 2.9	4.03	1.06
2.	The leaders within your organisation engage in negotiation processes to meet organisational objectives, carefully navigating the limitations imposed by existing systems and structures.	F %	94 34.4	110 40.3	39 14.3	9 3.3	21 7.7	3.90	1.14
3.	The leaders in your company are committed to improving the working environment.	F %	113 41.4	59 21.6	64 23.4	25 9.2	12 4.4	3.86	1.18
4.	Your organization's leaders make all of the decisions so that the team just follows orders.	F %	52 19.0	157 57.5	48 17.6	8 2.9	8 2.9	3.87	.86
Valid N			273					3.92	

As shown in Table 8, 209 respondents, representing 76.5% of the sample, strongly agreed that compliance. Another 30 participants (11.0%) indicated moderate agreement with this statement, suggesting that such leadership practices are somewhat evident in their workplaces. The average

most participants believe their leaders rely on incentives and corrective measures to influence team behaviour. Similarly, 204 respondents (74.7%) largely agreed that their leaders engage in negotiation within the boundaries of existing systems to accomplish organizational objectives. An additional 30 respondents (11.0%) also expressed partial agreement, indicating that this approach is recognized, though to a lesser degree, across different organizations.

Based on agreed that leaders in their organizations engage in negotiation to achieve organizational objectives while operating within the limitations of existing systems. Furthermore, a significant portion of respondents—172 individuals, representing 63.0%—agreed that their leaders are committed to enhancing the work environment. An additional 37 respondents (13.6%) indicated moderate agreement, suggesting some recognition of leadership efforts to improve workplace conditions. This view is reinforced by a mean score of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.18, suggesting that respondents generally agree their leaders prioritise efforts to improve the workplace environment.

Finally, 209 respondents, representing 76.5% of the sample, strongly agreed that team members in their organization primarily follow instructions because decision-making is solely handled by the leaders. A smaller portion—16 respondents or 5.8%—moderately agreed with this view, indicating that in their workplaces, team members tend to comply with directives without contributing to decision-making. The overall sentiment is reflected in the calculated mean 3.87 and standard deviation 0.86, suggesting most participants their organizational leadership as highly centralized, with limited input from team members.

According to the findings, leaders completed a 13-item questionnaire developed by De Clercq and Pereira (2020) to assess employee innovativeness.

4.4.3 The impact of an inspirational leadership project performance

The third objective of this study was to examine the impact of inspirational leadership on the innovation performance of SMEs in Uasin Gishu County. The findings related to this objective are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

The impact of an inspirational leadership style on project performance

Statements			VLE	LE	ME	SE	NA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	The team's vision and strategy are well-defined by the leaders in your organization.	F %	110 40.3	130 47.6	28 10.3	0 0.0	5 1.8	4.25	0.78
2.	Even when things are chaotic, the team is kept on course by the leaders in your organization.	F %	116 42.5	25 9.2	35 19.3	16 5.9	5 1.8	4.16	0.95
3.	Your organization's leaders acknowledge that their accomplishments are rarely their own and give credit where credit is due.	F %	101 37.0	24 8.8	1 0.6	4 1.5	9 3.3	4.15	0.89
4.	Your organization's leaders promote original and creative ideas.	F %	114 41.8	30 11.0	50 27.6	11 4.0	4 1.5	4.18	0.89
Valid N		273						4.19	

Table 9 presents the survey findings, showing that 240 respondents (87.9%) strongly agreed team leaders organization possess a clear vision strategic plan. An additional five respondents (1.8%) somewhat agreed with this statement. With a mean score of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.78, most respondents expressed agreement that their team leaders provide clear vision and direction. Moreover, 141 respondents (51.7%) strongly agreed that even in chaotic situations, their leaders remain focused on goals and strategy, while 21 respondents (7.7%) somewhat agreed with this view. A mean score of 4.16, coupled with a standard deviation of 0.95, reflects a strong consensus among respondents that leaders maintain focus even in uncertain situations. Additionally, 125

respondents (45.8%) largely agreed that leaders in their organization recognize that achievements are a collective effort and give credit appropriately, while 12 respondents (6.6%) somewhat agreed. This finding is reinforced by a mean score of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.89, indicating that the majority of respondents perceive their leaders as openly sharing credit for achievements.

Lastly, 144 respondents (52.8%) largely agreed leaders in organization encourage the generation of original as well as creative ideas. An additional 15 respondents (5.5%) somewhat agreed with this sentiment. Based on calculated mean(4.18) as well as standard deviation(0.89), can be concluded a majority of participants believed their leaders actively promote creative thinking within the workplace. However, these findings contrast with those of Jack, Passarelli, and Boyatzis (2023), who argued that individuals tend to be more creative when driven by intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards or punishments. Similarly, Amabile emphasized that creativity flourishes when individuals are given autonomy, particularly in managing their own time. In essence, environments that support personal freedom and allow individuals to follow their own creative rhythms are more likely to enhance innovative performance.

4.4.4 The Impact of Paternalistic Leadership on Innovation Performance in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The fourth objective of this study was to investigate the impact of paternalistic leadership style on project performance within Uasin Gishu County. The findings related to this objective are summarised in Table 10.

Table 10 Assessment of Project Performance by a Paternalistic Leadership Style

Statements			VLE	LE	ME	SE	NA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	The leaders in your organisation foster an environment where employees feel valued and supported.	F %	132 48.4	108 39.6	14 5.1	9 3.3	10 3.7	4.26	.97
2.	Leaders in your company create priorities and accomplish objectives.	F %	131 48.0	108 39.6	24 8.8	5 1.8	5 1.8	4.30	.85
3.	Your organization's leaders bring out the best in their staff to accomplish objectives and advance personally.	F %	127 46.5	107 39.2	23 8.4	14 5.1	2 .7	4.26	.87
4.	Your organization's leaders are highly skilled communicators who possess in-depth understanding of the tasks at hand.	F %	148 54.2	85 31.1	8 2.9	28 10.3	4 1.5	4.27	1.02
Valid N	273							4.27	

The findings shown in Table 10 reveal that a significant majority of respondents—240 individuals, representing 88.0%—strongly agreed that their organisational leaders create an environment where employees feel valued and comfortable. Additionally, 19 participants (7.0%) somewhat agreed with this view. The overall mean score of 4.26, along with a standard deviation of 0.97, suggests a strong consensus among participants that leadership within their organisations effectively promotes a sense of appreciation and well-being among staff members. Furthermore, 239 respondents (87.6%) agreed that leaders in their organization are effective in setting priorities and achieving goals, while 10 respondents (3.6%) somewhat agreed with this view.

The findings indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that organisational leaders effectively establish priorities and accomplish set goals, as demonstrated by a mean score of 4.30

and a standard deviation of 0.85. Additionally, 234 respondents (85.7%) strongly agreed that their leaders support employees in achieving their goals and fostering personal growth, while 16 respondents (12.1%) somewhat agreed. This is also reflected in a mean score of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.87, suggesting that most respondents view their leaders as playing a significant role in fostering both their professional growth and personal development.

Finally, 233 respondents (85.3%) strongly agreed that leaders in their organization demonstrate excellent communication skills and a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. An additional 32 respondents (11.8%) somewhat agreed with this view. The results, reflected by a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 1.02, suggest that the majority of participants perceive their leaders as having strong communication skills and a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. This observation supports Saunila's (2016) argument that effective leadership is central to encouraging employee voice within organisations. Employees tend to closely observe their leaders' communication styles and, based on these interactions, adjust their own level of engagement. This interplay aligns with social exchange theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to reciprocate positive treatment—such as support and recognition—with cooperative and committed behaviour.

4.4.5 Leadership Attributes for Creative Outcome

The main aim of this study was to investigate the influence of various strategic leadership styles on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County. To collect pertinent data, a five-point Likert scale was employed, enabling respondents to express their level of agreement with statements related to quality management practices within their organisations. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 11.

Table 11*The Influence of Leadership Styles on Innovation Performance*

Statements			VLE	LE	ME	SE	NA	Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Our organisation consistently embraces and puts into practice new ideas and approaches.	F %	136 49.8	105 38.5	13 4.8	9 3.3	10 3.7	4.27	.97
2.	Our company looks for innovative ways to carry out its work.	F %	138 50.5	102 37.4	23 8.4	5 1.8	5 1.8	4.33	.85
3.	In our organization, innovation in working practices is crucial.	F %	124 45.4	108 39.6	22 8.1	15 5.5	4 1.5	4.22	.92
4.	Our company often introduces new goods and services to the market first.	F %	142 52.0	89 32.6	10 3.7	28 10.3	4 1.5	4.23	1.02
5.	In our organization, innovation is viewed as a risk and is met with resistance.	F %	125 45.8	112 41.0	22 8.1	12 4.4	2 .7	4.27	.84
6.	In the last five years, the market has witnessed a steady rise in the introduction of new products and services.	F %	137 50.2	95 34.8	13 4.8	24 8.8	4 1.5	4.23	.99
Valid N		273						4.26	

As illustrated in Table 11, a significant majority of respondents—241 individuals (88.0%)—strongly agreed that their organisation consistently adopts new ideas, while an additional 19 respondents (7.0%) indicated moderate agreement. This is reflected in a mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.97, suggesting broad support for the statement across the sample. Likewise, 240 respondents (87.9%) strongly agreed that their organisation actively pursues innovative ways of executing tasks, with a further 10 respondents (3.6%) somewhat agreeing. The corresponding mean score of 4.33 and standard deviation of 0.85 reinforce the notion that the organisation fosters a culture of innovation within its operational practices.

Additionally, 232 respondents (85.0%) strongly agreed that their organization places significant emphasis on creativity in its work methods, while a further 19 respondents (7.0%) somewhat agreed

with this view. The computed mean score of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.92 suggest that the majority of respondents strongly recognised the value of incorporating creative strategies into their organisation's daily operations. Additionally, 231 participants (88.2%) firmly agreed that their firm frequently leads the way in launching new products and services, while 32 respondents (11.8%) expressed moderate agreement. This perspective is further reinforced by a mean score of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 1.02, highlighting a broad consensus that the organisation is viewed as an innovation frontrunner within its respective market.

In addition, 237 respondents (86.8%) strongly agreed that their organisation perceives innovation as a potential source of risk, suggesting a degree of reluctance toward change. A further 14 respondents (5.1%) indicated moderate agreement with this viewpoint. The mean score of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.84 reinforce the perception that most participants view their organisations as cautious when it comes to adopting new innovations due to the associated uncertainties. Moreover, 232 respondents (85.0%) reported that their organisation has experienced a notable rise in the launch of new products and services over the past five years, with an additional 28 respondents (10.2%) also agreeing to a moderate extent. This pattern is further supported by a mean score of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.99, indicating that most respondents acknowledged a notable increase in the introduction of innovative products and services in recent years.

4.5 Test of Multiple Regression Assumption

Prior to conducting the regression analysis, key assumptions underpinning the model were thoroughly assessed. These included tests for autocorrelation, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity, all of which are essential for ensuring the validity and reliability of the regression results.

4.5.1 Linearity Test

To evaluate the linearity assumption, a correlation analysis was carried out to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. A strong and statistically significant correlation coefficient suggests the existence of a linear association between the variables. In contrast, if the coefficient is close to zero and not statistically significant, it implies that no meaningful linear relationship exists. The outcomes of this analysis are summarised in Table 12.

Table 12

Linearity Test

Variables	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
TransformationalLeadership	.376**	.000
Transactionalleadership	.356**	.000
Inspirational leadership	.445**	.000
Laissez-fare leadership	.450**	.000

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

As presented in Table 12, transformational leadership exhibited a correlation coefficient of 0.376, while transactional leadership recorded a slightly lower value of 0.356. Notably, inspirational and paternalistic leadership styles demonstrated stronger relationships with the dependent variable, with coefficients of 0.445 and 0.450**, respectively. These positive and statistically meaningful correlations indicate that all four leadership styles were linearly associated with the dependent variable. Since none of the coefficients approached zero, the results confirm that the linearity assumption was satisfied, suggesting the data followed a linear pattern suitable for regression analysis.

4.5.2 The Premise of Homoscedasticity

To assess the assumption of homoscedasticity, Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was applied. The results of this diagnostic test are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13

Homoscedasticity Assumption

Variables	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Transformational Leadership	1.690	20	262	.350
Transactional leadership	5.120	18	264	.194
Inspirational leadership	8.176	20	262	.303
Laissez-faire leadership	3.742	22	260	.143

As shown in Table 13, Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances returned p-values of 0.350 for transformational leadership, 0.194 for transactional leadership, and 0.143 for both inspirational and paternalistic leadership.

4.5.3 Normality Assumption Test

To determine whether the data conformed to the assumption of normality, both the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were conducted. These tests assess the extent to which the dataset follows a normal distribution, and the results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Normality Assumption Test

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig.
Transformational Leadership	.327	.193	.750	.145
Transactional leadership	.256	.208	.809	.108
Inspirational leadership	.256	.261	.754	.165
Laissez-faire leadership	.275	.149	.711	.218

To assess whether the dataset met the assumption of normality, the study employed both the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. These tests are designed to evaluate whether the distribution of the data meaningfully departs from a normal distribution. In both cases, a p-value greater than 0.05 suggests that the data do not significantly violate the assumption of normality, thereby supporting the suitability of the dataset for further parametric analysis.

As indicated in Table 14, the data for all four leadership styles met the assumption of normality. For transformational leadership, the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a p-value of 0.193, exceeding the 0.05 significance threshold and suggesting a normal distribution. In the case of transactional leadership, both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($p = 0.208$) and Shapiro-Wilk ($p = 0.108$) tests returned values above 0.05, further confirming normality. Similarly, inspirational leadership yielded p-values of 0.261 (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and 0.165 (Shapiro-Wilk), while paternalistic leadership returned values of 0.149 and 0.218, respectively. These findings demonstrate that none of the variables significantly deviated from a normal distribution, thereby justifying the application of parametric statistical techniques in the subsequent analysis.

4.5.4 Multicollinearity Assumption Test

To assess the presence of multicollinearity, Tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were employed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Multicollinearity Assumption Test

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
Transformational Leadership	.734	1.363
Transactional leadership	.842	1.188

Inspirational leadership	.850	1.177
Laissez-faire leadership	.739	1.354

To assess the presence of multicollinearity, Tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were employed. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 15.

4.5.5 Autocorrelation Assumption Test

The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to test for autocorrelation in the residuals of the regression model. This analysis helps to identify whether there is a consistent pattern in the residuals—either positively or negatively correlated—which would suggest a violation of the independence assumption. A Durbin-Watson value near 2 indicates no autocorrelation, whereas values noticeably below or above 2 point to positive or negative autocorrelation, respectively. The findings, as outlined in Table 16, were instrumental in verifying whether the residuals in the model were statistically independent.

Table 16

Autocorrelation Assumption Test

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.587 ^d	.344	.335	.66951	1.462

According to research outcomes on Table 16, the given that the Durbin-Watson was between 0 and 4, it was indicated that the autocorrelation assumption was made. A Durbin-Watson value cutoff of 1.0 to 2.5 is advised. Consequently, observations fall under the threshold, as indicated by the Durbin-Watson Coefficient of 1.462.

4.6 Inferential Analysis

This section applied both multiple regression and correlation analyses to draw inferential conclusions. These statistical techniques were used to explore and illustrate the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

4.6.1 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to examine both the direction and strength of the relationship between strategic leadership styles and project innovation success in Uasin-Gishu County. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in Table 17.

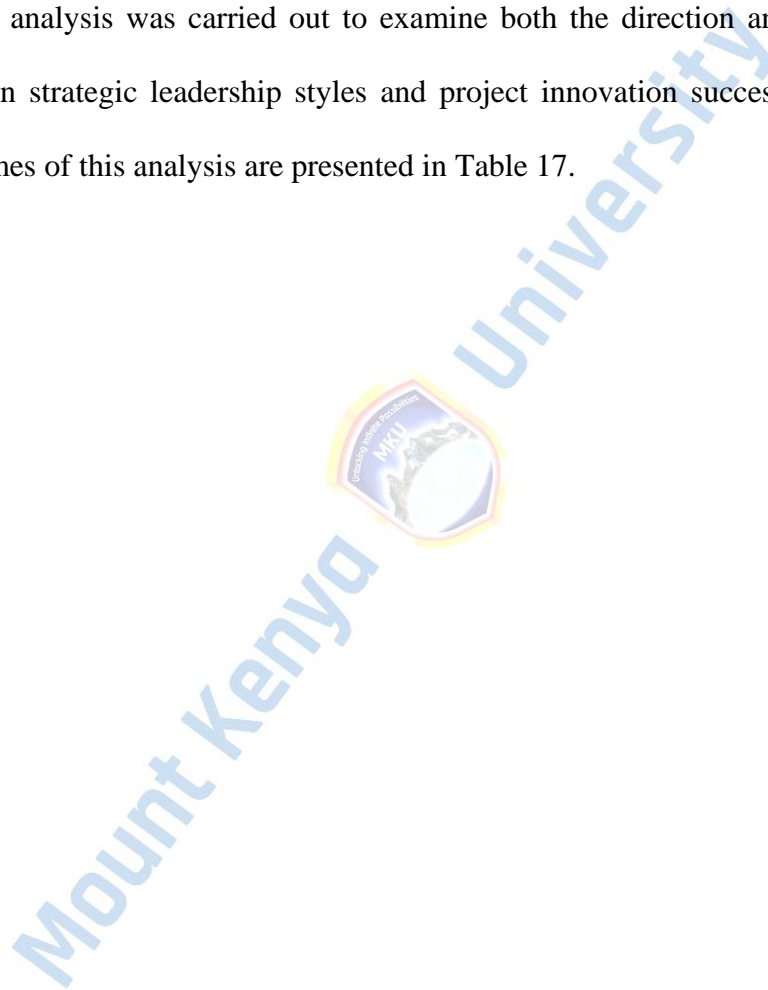


Table 17*Multiple Correlation Analysis Results*

		Projects performan ce	Transformatio nal leadership style	Transactio nal leadership style	Inspiratio nal leadership style	Laisses- fare leadersh ip style
Project performance	Pearson correlati on Sig. (2- tailed)	1				
Transformatio nal leadership style	Pearson correlati on Sig. (2- tailed)	.376** .000	1			
Transactional leadership style	Pearson correlati on Sig. (2- tailed)	.356** .000	.334** .000	1		
Inspirational leadership style	Pearson correlati on Sig. (2- tailed)	.445** .000	.314** .000	.242** .000	1	
Laissez-fare leadership style	Pearson correlati on Sig. (2- tailed)	.450** .000	.451** .000	.318** .000	.320** .000	1
	N	273	273	273	273	273

As presented in Table 17, the findings of the study revealed a moderately strong and statistically significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and creative performance ($r = 0.376^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, transactional leadership style was found to have a moderately positive and significant relationship with innovative performance ($r = 0.356^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). The results also indicated a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between inspirational

leadership and inventive performance ($r = 0.445^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). In addition, paternalistic leadership style showed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant association with innovative performance ($r = 0.450^{**}$, $p < 0.01$).

These findings align with the view of Orodho (2003), who explains that a strong correlation suggests a close association between two or more variables, while a weak correlation implies a limited relationship. Correlation coefficients range from -1.00 to +1.00, where -1.00 indicates a perfect negative relationship, +1.00 indicates a perfect positive relationship, and a value of 0 implies no relationship between the variables.

4.6.2 Findings from the Multiple Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the degree to which strategic leadership styles impacted the innovative performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within Uasin Gishu County.

4.6.3 Summary of the Model

The extent of the relationship between strategic leadership styles and innovation performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County was evaluated using the correlation coefficient (R) and the coefficient of determination (R^2). The findings from this analysis are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18*Summary of the Multiple Regression Model*

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error the Estimate
.587 ^d	.342	.334	.67695

As presented in Table 18, the regression analysis yielded an R value of 0.587, indicating a moderate positive linear association between strategic leadership styles and innovation performance among SMEs in Uasin Gishu County. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was found to be 0.344, implying that strategic leadership styles accounted for approximately 34.4% of the variance in innovation performance. This suggests that while leadership styles contribute meaningfully to innovative outcomes, a substantial portion of the variation may be attributed to other factors not captured within the current model.

4.6.4 Assessment of the Regression Model's Goodness-of-Fit

To establish whether the regression model was appropriate for the data, a model fitness test was conducted. The results of this evaluation are presented in Table 19.

Table 19*Findings on the Goodness-of-Fit of the Regression Model*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	66.477	4	15.354	37.518	.001 ^b
Residual	134.614	281	.458		
Total	191.089	.273			

As illustrated in Table 19, the regression model was found to be statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 36.51 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a strong overall fit between the model and

the data. The results suggest that the combined influence of transformational, transactional, inspirational, and paternalistic leadership styles plays a significant role in shaping the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County. The significance of the F-test confirms that the independent variables included in the model collectively contribute to explaining the observed variations in innovation outcomes.

4.7.5 Output of the Regression Coefficients

The regression coefficients were computed and subsequently used to construct the corresponding regression equation. A summary of these results is provided in Table 20.

Table 20

Results of the Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Constant	.934	.279		3.343	.001
Transformational Leadership	.119	.058	.116	2.048	.041
Transactional leadership	.157	.050	.167	3.156	.002
Inspirational leadership	.258	.047	.287	5.455	.000
Laissez-faire leadership	.271	.061	.252	4.463	.000

The results shown in Table 20 reveal that transformational leadership had a positive and statistically significant effect on innovation performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County ($\beta_1 = 0.119$, $p = 0.041$). This suggests that a one-unit increase in transformational leadership practices leads to a 0.119-unit improvement in innovation performance. In a similar manner, transactional leadership was also positively and significantly

related to innovation outcomes ($\beta_2 = 0.157$, $p = 0.002$), indicating that strengthening this leadership approach results in a 0.157-unit gain in innovation.

Inspirational leadership recorded a relatively strong and statistically significant positive influence on innovation performance ($\beta_3 = 0.258$, $p = 0.000$), implying that greater application of inspirational leadership is associated with a 0.258-unit increase in innovation outcomes. Among the four styles examined, paternalistic leadership demonstrated the strongest positive effect ($\beta_4 = 0.271$, $p = 0.000$), meaning that an increase in the use of paternalistic leadership corresponds to a 0.271-unit rise in innovation performance within SMEs in the county.

Based on these findings, the regression equation generated from the model is expressed as follows:

Innovation Performance = 1.746 + 0.119(Transformational Leadership) + 0.157(Transactional Leadership) + 0.258(Inspirational Leadership) + 0.271(Paternalistic Leadership)

$$Y = 0.934 + 0.119X_1 + 0.157X_2 + 0.258X_3 + 0.271X_4 \quad (\text{Equation 4.1})$$

Where:

Y = Innovation Performance

X₁ = Transformational Leadership

X₂ = Transactional Leadership

X₃ = Inspirational Leadership

X₄ = Paternalistic Leadership

4.8 Testing the Stated Hypotheses

The objective of the study was to evaluate the stated hypothesis in order to determine whether the null hypothesis should be accepted or rejected. Drawing from the regression findings summarised in Table 21, the analysis revealed that transformational leadership style had a statistically significant influence on innovation performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County ($\beta_1 = 0.119$, $p < 0.05$). Based on this outcome, the study concluded that transformational leadership contributes positively and significantly to enhancing innovation performance within SMEs in the region. As a result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which proposed that transformational leadership style does not significantly affect innovation performance, was rejected.

The regression analysis results presented in Table 4.21 show that transactional leadership style has a statistically significant effect on innovation performance among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County ($\beta_2 = 0.157$, $p < 0.05$). Based on this outcome, the study concluded that transactional leadership positively contributes to innovation performance. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}), which stated that there is no significant relationship between transactional leadership and innovation performance, was rejected.

However, these findings differ from those reported by Moss and Ritossa (2007), who found no statistically significant association between the two variables. This contrast implies that other contextual or organisational factors may influence how transactional leadership affects innovation. One possible explanation is provided by empowerment theory, which emphasises the importance of psychological empowerment and a supportive organisational climate as potential moderators of leadership effectiveness. According to Sun, Zhang, Qi, and Chen (2011), psychologically

empowered individuals view themselves as competent, autonomous, and meaningfully involved in their work—factors that enhance motivation and stimulate innovative, proactive behaviour in the workplace.

In addition, the regression results in Table 21 indicate that inspirational leadership style has a statistically significant influence on innovation performance among SMEs in Uasin Gishu County ($\beta_3 = 0.258$, $p < 0.05$). This finding led to the conclusion that inspirational leadership enhances innovation performance in these enterprises. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{03}), which proposed that inspirational leadership has no significant impact on innovation performance, was rejected.

Similarly, the analysis revealed that paternalistic leadership style also had a statistically significant effect on innovation performance among SMEs in the county ($\beta_4 = 0.271$, $p < 0.05$). Based on this evidence, the study concluded that paternalistic leadership has a strong and positive influence on innovation outcomes in SMEs. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{04}), which stated that paternalistic leadership does not significantly influence innovation performance, was rejected.

Table 21

Summary of Hypotheses Test Results

Hypotheses	B	p-value	Decision
H₀₁: Transformational leadership style does not have a statistically significant effect on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County.	B1=0.118	p=0.042	H01 was rejected
H₀₂: Transactional leadership style does not have a statistically significant effect on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County.	B2=0.158	p=0.03	H02 was rejected
H₀₃: Inspirational leadership style does not have a statistically significant effect on the innovation performance of small and medium-	B3=0.258	p=0.000	H03 was rejected

sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County.

H₀₄: Paternalistic leadership style does not have a statistically significant effect on the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Uasin Gishu County.

B₄=0.271 p=0.000

H₀₄ was rejected



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed summary of the main findings derived from the data analysis and offers an interpretation of their significance in light of the study's objectives. It further presents conclusions drawn from the results, showing how they respond to the research questions and enhance the overall understanding of the subject under investigation.

5.2 Synthesis of the Main Findings

This section presents a summary of the ways in which transformational, transactional, inspirational, and paternalistic leadership styles affect the innovation performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

5.2.1 Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Innovation Performance in Project-Based Firms

The findings of the study revealed that a majority of respondents strongly supported the core principles of transformational leadership—particularly those centred on articulating a clear vision, embracing innovation, encouraging risk-taking, and inspiring team commitment. A considerable proportion of participants confirmed that leaders within their project-based firms consistently demonstrated and communicated a compelling organisational vision across all levels. This observation is in line with existing scholarship, which underscores the critical role of transformational leaders in articulating long-term objectives and aligning team efforts with organisational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Wang et al., 2020).

Respondents further agreed that their leaders exhibited boldness in confronting new challenges, often engaging in well-considered risk-taking and making strategic decisions that advanced the firm's innovation agenda. This leadership behaviour mirrors the findings of Liao et al. (2019), who identified a strong association between transformational leadership and an organisational culture that fosters innovation, experimentation, and learning from failure.

Moreover, leaders in these firms were described as motivational figures who galvanised teams to take ownership of organisational goals while contributing creatively to innovation processes. These insights align with Zhao et al. (2018), who highlighted the capacity of transformational leaders to stimulate intrinsic motivation, thereby encouraging innovative employee behaviour. Similarly, Podsakoff et al. (2020) argued that transformational leadership is instrumental in creating a psychologically safe climate that nurtures creativity, knowledge-sharing, and continuous improvement.

Another critical finding was that leaders often modelled the values and behaviours they expected from their teams—essentially embodying the vision they communicated. This form of role modelling was found to enhance employee trust, loyalty, and engagement, all of which are conducive to improved innovation performance. These results echo the assertions made by Kark and Shamir (2002) and Jung et al. (2003), who stressed the significance of authentic leadership and behavioural modelling in building innovative, high-performing teams.

Interestingly, transformational leadership was seen to impact not only the development of novel services and processes (exploratory innovation) but also the refinement and optimisation of existing ones (exploitative innovation). This dual influence supports the ambidextrous innovation model proposed by Zhou and Lee (2017), which highlights the ability of transformational leaders to simultaneously explore new opportunities while capitalising on existing capabilities.

Overall, these findings reinforce the view that leadership style—specifically transformational leadership—is a key driver of innovation performance in project-oriented firms. Given the complex and uncertain nature of the environments in which these firms operate, leadership that promotes creativity, adaptability, and strategic responsiveness is essential. Wang et al. (2020) argue that transformational leaders are particularly well-suited to navigating such dynamic contexts, as they cultivate a shared vision, strengthen collective confidence, and guide teams through the intricacies of the innovation process.

In summary, this study confirms that transformational leadership has a significant and positive impact on the innovation performance of project firms in Uasin Gishu County. Leaders who inspire, challenge, and support their teams create a conducive environment for innovation to flourish. These findings are consistent with a growing body of literature that positions leadership as a central enabler of innovation within project-driven environments (De Massis et al., 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2020; Liao et al., 2019). The practical implication is that firms seeking to strengthen their innovation capabilities should prioritise the cultivation and reinforcement of transformational leadership across all organisational levels.

5.2.2 Relationship Between Transactional Leadership Style and Innovation Performance in Project-Oriented Enterprises

Transactional leadership is primarily characterised by reward-based motivation, a strong focus on task execution aligned with set goals, and the enforcement of compliance through clearly defined rules and procedures. Although traditionally perceived as less supportive of creativity, the findings of this study suggest that transactional leadership can still influence innovation—particularly by fostering a structured and predictable environment where incremental improvements and process-based innovation are more likely to occur (Yang et al., 2021).

Many respondents confirmed that leaders in their organisations frequently employed reward systems and corrective measures to align team performance with predetermined targets. This reflects the foundational principles of transactional leadership, which emphasise an exchange-based relationship between leaders and followers—where compliance is met with rewards, and deviations are addressed through disciplinary action (Bass, 1990; Podsakoff et al., 2018). Such an approach has been linked to short-term gains in efficiency and performance, especially in environments that prioritise consistency and routine task execution, such as project-based firms (Clarke, 2013; Kim & Park, 2020).

Furthermore, several respondents observed that their leaders often operated within existing organisational systems, relying on standardised procedures, formal chains of command, and hierarchical negotiation to achieve operational objectives. This corresponds with what Judge and Piccolo (2004) describe as the “management-by-exception” and “contingent reward” dimensions of transactional leadership. In structured contexts like project management, this leadership style can help reduce uncertainty, standardise operations, and support gradual innovation (Jensen et al., 2020).

Interestingly, some participants pointed out that while transactional leaders were mainly focused on meeting performance benchmarks and ensuring operational efficiency, they also made efforts to create stable and well-coordinated work environments. This aligns with findings by Braun et al. (2013), who argue that transactional leaders can indirectly contribute to innovation by cultivating predictable and organised settings where employees feel equipped to focus on technical or procedural enhancements.

Nonetheless, the study also revealed notable limitations of transactional leadership in the context of project-oriented firms. Several respondents indicated that decision-making was often centralised, with leaders maintaining tight control and offering limited space for employee

autonomy or creative input. This top-down leadership approach, although effective in ensuring discipline and task completion, tends to restrict intrinsic motivation and stifle innovation—especially in knowledge-intensive or dynamic work environments (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008; Iqbal et al., 2021).

Despite these constraints, transactional leadership still plays an important role in supporting innovation—particularly in terms of structuring processes, clarifying roles, and reinforcing accountability. As noted by Zhu et al. (2018), transactional leadership can be highly effective when integrated with transformational elements to form an ambidextrous leadership model. In such cases, leaders maintain operational discipline while also encouraging creativity and adaptability when circumstances demand it.

In conclusion, the study found that transactional leadership exerts a meaningful yet context-specific influence on innovation performance within project-based firms. While it may not drive breakthrough or radical innovation, it provides the organisational structure, clarity, and discipline necessary for implementing incremental and process-driven innovations. For project firms operating in highly regulated or complex sectors, the predictability and goal orientation associated with transactional leadership can offer valuable support—especially when balanced with more visionary and flexible leadership approaches.

5.2.3 Inspirational Leadership Style and Project Firm Performance

The third objective of this study was to determine the effect of inspirational leadership style on the innovation performance of project firms in Uasin Gishu County. The study revealed that respondents largely agreed with all dimensions of inspirational leadership, indicating its strong presence and perceived impact in their organizational settings. Leaders who demonstrated inspirational leadership were noted to possess and communicate a clear vision and strategic

direction, which contributed significantly to aligning team efforts with long-term innovation goals, even amidst environmental uncertainty or operational turbulence.

Instead, the findings demonstrated a strong positive correlation between inspirational leadership and improved innovation outcomes, thereby validating the role of visionary and emotionally intelligent leadership in driving performance in dynamic project-based environments.

Respondents acknowledged that leaders within their firms articulated a compelling purpose, demonstrated commitment to shared goals, and actively involved team members in strategic vision execution. This finding aligns with Antonakis and House (2014), who assert that inspirational leaders evoke strong emotional connections by communicating a clear and meaningful vision, instilling optimism, and motivating followers to go beyond self-interest for collective success.

Furthermore, the study found that inspirational leaders provided continuous recognition and appreciation, celebrating team achievements and highlighting the contributions of others. This leadership trait has been closely linked to increased employee morale, engagement, and organizational citizenship behaviour, which are vital components of innovation performance in project-oriented settings (Ng, 2017). Acknowledging team efforts also fosters a collaborative culture, which facilitates idea sharing and boosts team resilience—both critical to maintaining innovation momentum in project firms (Hoch et al., 2018).

In addition to articulating vision and offering recognition, inspirational leaders in the observed project firms were noted to promote creativity and independent thinking. They encouraged team members to challenge the status quo, test new ideas, and explore alternative solutions without fear of punitive consequences. According to Yukl and Mahsud (2017), such behaviour by leaders cultivates psychological safety and empowers individuals to contribute innovatively, ultimately leading to enhanced project outcomes and adaptive capacities.

These results are further supported by Ismail et al. (2021), who demonstrated that inspirational leadership significantly improves project innovation capabilities, especially in fast-paced environments where rapid decision-making and adaptive strategies are required. Inspirational leadership also influences employees' intrinsic motivation—a critical factor in encouraging knowledge sharing, cross-functional collaboration, and continuous process improvement in project firms (Newman et al., 2020).

Another key insight from this study is that inspirational leaders help maintain strategic focus during challenging times. Respondents indicated that despite market volatility or operational disruptions, their leaders remained committed to the broader mission, reinforcing team alignment and maintaining morale. This echoes the findings of Clarke (2018), who emphasized the role of inspirational leadership in sustaining team performance through ambiguity and uncertainty—a common occurrence in project-driven sectors.

Additionally, the emotional appeal and passion exhibited by inspirational leaders were seen to energize teams, foster commitment, and build trust, all of which contribute to the successful execution of innovative ideas and projects. As Rego, Sousa, Marques, and e Cunha (2017) explain, inspirational leadership influences employees' emotional and cognitive engagement, which not only enhances individual contribution but also strengthens the collective creative capacity of the organization.

Ultimately, the study concluded that inspirational leadership style significantly enhances innovation performance in project firms by promoting a vision-driven culture, recognizing team achievements, and encouraging innovative thinking. These outcomes reinforce the growing consensus in contemporary leadership literature that inspiration, rather than command-and-control, is the foundation of innovation success in project-based organizations (Banks et al., 2017; Eisenbeiß & Boerner, 2013).

5.2.4 Paternalistic Leadership Style and Project Firm Innovation Performance

Respondents broadly agreed that their leaders demonstrated behaviours associated with paternalistic leadership, including a genuine concern for employee well-being, authoritative guidance, and moral integrity. These leaders were reported to make employees feel valued, secure, and respected within their organizations—key psychological conditions that have been empirically linked to enhanced creativity, engagement, and ultimately, innovation output (Aycan, 2018; Chen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that paternalistic leaders played a vital role in nurturing employees' personal growth while maintaining high expectations for performance. Employees noted that their leaders often went beyond task management to offer individualized support, personal mentorship, and emotional guidance, helping staff to realize their full potential. This aligns with the findings of Gelfand et al. (2017) and Zhang et al. (2019), who argue that paternalistic leadership fosters a high level of affective trust, which in turn enhances employee motivation and innovation-related behaviours.

Additionally, respondents observed that their leaders were highly competent in planning, prioritizing, and strategically executing projects. This was attributed to their deep knowledge of operational processes, technical expertise, and exceptional communication skills. Such capabilities are crucial in the innovation process, where leaders must constantly balance structure and flexibility, manage resource allocation, and encourage knowledge sharing (Farh et al., 2019). The presence of a leader who combines benevolence with discipline was seen to instil both confidence and accountability, encouraging employees to take calculated risks and contribute novel ideas without fear of retribution.

The theoretical underpinning for these results is supported by role theory and social exchange theory, both of which emphasize the reciprocal nature of trust and respect in leader-subordinate

relationships (Chen & Farh, 2017). Paternalistic leaders, by demonstrating moral authority, personal integrity, and supportive behaviour, cultivate an environment of psychological safety and mutual obligation, which research has shown to be essential for innovation performance, particularly in project-based organizations (Liu et al., 2021; Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Gumusluoğlu, 2019).

It is also important to highlight the cultural relevance of paternalistic leadership within the Kenyan project firm context. Paternalistic leadership, though traditionally associated with East Asian cultures, has been found effective in collectivist and hierarchical societies where respect for authority, loyalty, and communal values are deeply embedded (Pellegrini et al., 2020). Within this study's setting, leaders who adopted paternalistic traits were better positioned to align organizational values with community norms, creating a culturally congruent leadership approach that supports innovation diffusion and team cohesion.

In conclusion, the findings affirm that paternalistic leadership is a potent enabler of innovation performance in project firms operating in Uasin Gishu County. These results underscore the importance of contextually appropriate leadership styles and suggest that nurturing people-centric leadership approaches can yield substantial innovation gains in project-based enterprises. This finding contributes to a growing body of evidence highlighting the multidimensional impact of leadership on innovation, particularly in emerging market settings.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Drawing from the findings of the study, it is evident that the leadership style adopted by an organization plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of succession planning strategies.

This section presents detailed conclusions organized according to each of the leadership styles assessed: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and paternalistic.

5.3.1 Transformational Leadership Style and Succession Planning

The study concluded that transformational leadership style significantly and positively influences succession planning among project firms. Such leaders effectively communicate a compelling vision, inspire and motivate their teams to exceed expectations, and encourage creative problem-solving. These actions help identify, mentor, and prepare future leaders, thereby enhancing organizational continuity.

Respondents strongly agreed that transformational leaders in their firms consistently demonstrated commitment to employee development and vision-sharing, which translated into a structured and forward-looking approach to succession planning. This conclusion aligns with recent empirical evidence, such as Avolio et al. (2021), who found that transformational leadership is highly effective in promoting talent development and preparing organizations for leadership transitions.

5.3.2 Transactional Leadership Style and Succession Planning

Transactional leaders focus on short-term goals, clear structures, and performance-based rewards. While these leaders are effective in maintaining operational efficiency and reinforcing accountability, they may not prioritize the long-term development of potential successors.

However, the presence of goal clarity, performance monitoring, and structured reward systems within transactional frameworks supports a level of organizational stability conducive to implementing basic succession strategies. Studies such as Podsakoff et al. (2020) and Yukl & Mahsud (2022) support this outcome by indicating that transactional leadership can provide a

foundation for consistent performance, which, although not transformative, can support rudimentary forms of succession planning.

5.3.3 Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Succession Planning

The findings revealed that laissez-faire leadership style negatively influences succession planning efforts. Respondents indicated that under laissez-faire leadership, employees lacked guidance, mentorship, and career development opportunities—all of which are essential components of effective succession planning.

This leadership vacuum can lead to confusion, inefficiencies, and a breakdown in communication—factors that compromise the continuity and sustainability of leadership pipelines. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Skogstad et al. (2017) and Wang et al. (2021), who identified laissez-faire leadership as a barrier to employee performance and leadership development.

5.3.4 Paternalistic Leadership Style and Succession Planning

The study also concluded that paternalistic leadership style has a significantly positive influence on succession planning among project firms. Leaders characterized by paternalism combine authority with benevolence, creating a family-like work environment that fosters trust, loyalty, and personal growth. Respondents acknowledged that such leaders genuinely cared for their employees' well-being, provided career guidance, and involved themselves in both professional and personal development.

This emotionally supportive leadership style promoted an atmosphere of mentorship and learning, which naturally fed into effective succession planning. These leaders often nurtured talent informally through daily interactions and formally through structured development programs. Literature supports this observation; Farh et al. (2018) and Aycan (2020) argue that paternalistic

leadership enhances organizational commitment, improves job satisfaction, and increases employees' willingness to take on leadership roles—all essential for succession readiness.

5.3.5 Overall Conclusion

In summation, the study confirms that leadership styles significantly shape the success or failure of succession planning within project firms. Transformational and paternalistic leadership styles emerged as the most effective in facilitating the identification, nurturing, and empowerment of future leaders. These styles emphasize mentorship, strategic vision, employee development, and emotional intelligence—core drivers of sustainable leadership pipelines.

Transactional leadership, while supportive of operational consistency, was found to be limited in its capacity to promote innovation and leadership growth. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership style was identified as a risk factor for succession planning due to its hands-off approach and lack of developmental engagement.

The results from this study contribute meaningfully to the existing literature by highlighting the nuanced relationship between leadership behaviour and succession outcomes in the project-based sector of a developing country. Project firms in Uasin Gishu County and beyond can benefit from adopting leadership styles that not only drive performance but also proactively cultivate the next generation of leaders to ensure strategic continuity, innovation, and growth.

Future research could extend this study by exploring additional moderating variables such as organizational culture, generational dynamics, and digital transformation, which may further influence the relationship between leadership styles and succession planning outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are provided to enhance succession planning through the adoption of effective leadership styles in project firms

operating in Uasin Gishu County. The recommendations are organized according to each leadership style examined in the study.

5.4.1 Emphasizing Transformational Leadership for Strategic Succession Planning

Project firms should prioritize the adoption and institutionalization of transformational leadership practices. Leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and show individualized consideration should be cultivated through leadership development programs and internal mentorship schemes. Studies by Avolio and Walumbwa (2014) and Ismail et al. (2021) have shown that transformational leadership not only improves employee engagement but also facilitates long-term talent development, making it ideal for succession planning.

Leadership coaching and training initiatives that promote visionary thinking, emotional intelligence, and team empowerment are essential for establishing a sustainable leadership pipeline. Research by Khan et al. (2020) affirms that transformational leadership significantly enhances strategic thinking and employee alignment with organizational goals, thereby increasing readiness for leadership transition.

5.4.2 Leveraging Transactional Leadership for Operational Continuity

While not as influential as transformational leadership in succession planning, transactional leadership offers valuable structural benefits. Project firms are advised to utilize transactional leadership frameworks for setting clear performance goals, establishing accountability mechanisms, and reinforcing discipline within the workplace. These elements provide a foundation upon which more developmental leadership practices can be built.

According to Breevaart et al. (2016), transactional leadership ensures consistency and reliability, which can stabilize the organizational environment and make succession planning efforts more predictable. Furthermore, Sadeghi and Pihie (2018) argue that performance-based reward systems under transactional leadership can foster a culture of meritocracy, which may aid in identifying potential leaders from within.

5.4.3 Avoiding Over-Reliance on Laissez-Faire Leadership

Project firms are strongly recommended to minimize the use of laissez-faire leadership, as it hinders effective succession planning. Leaders who demonstrate a hands-off approach risk creating leadership vacuums, poor communication, and employee disengagement.

To mitigate these effects, organizations should implement clear guidelines for leadership engagement and hold leaders accountable for the development of their teams. Research by Breevaart and Zacher (2019) suggests that clear role expectations and regular feedback mechanisms can reduce ambiguity and increase the likelihood of positive leadership influence.

5.4.4 Promoting Paternalistic Leadership to Foster Loyalty and Mentorship

Given its positive effect on succession planning, paternalistic leadership should be promoted among senior managers in project firms. Leaders who combine authority with benevolence should be recognized and encouraged through performance evaluations and leadership recognition initiatives. According to Farh et al. (2018) and Aycan (2020), paternalistic leadership fosters trust and loyalty, two critical factors in employee retention and leadership development.

Moreover, Chou et al. (2015) found that employees under paternalistic leadership are more likely to emulate leadership behaviour and develop a long-term commitment to the organization, thus

enhancing succession readiness. Project firms should institutionalize mentorship and wellness programs that reflect the nurturing attributes of paternalistic leadership to improve leadership continuity and employee satisfaction.

5.4.5 Strengthening Leadership Development Policies

To ensure effective succession planning, project firms in Uasin Gishu County should establish robust policies that institutionalize leadership development as a strategic objective. These policies should incorporate regular leadership assessments, structured mentorship programs, and succession tracking systems. Studies such as DeRue and Myers (2014) recommend the integration of experiential learning, peer coaching, and feedback systems to create a dynamic environment for leadership growth.

Additionally, recent evidence from Hoch et al. (2018) shows that leadership development programs grounded in organizational values and tailored to specific leadership styles improve internal promotion rates and overall firm performance. Aligning these policies with the firm's long-term strategic goals ensures that the right individuals are developed and positioned for future leadership roles.

5.4.6 Encouraging Further Research and Policy Engagement

Finally, stakeholders, including government agencies and academic institutions, should invest in continued research and policy dialogue around leadership and succession planning in the project-based sector. Future studies could examine the role of digital transformation, intergenerational leadership dynamics, and organizational culture as mediating factors.

Scholarly engagement in these areas will enrich understanding and provide context-specific solutions for leadership sustainability across project firms in Kenya and other developing

economies. According to van Dierendonck et al. (2020), such initiatives create a collaborative knowledge base that can guide both policy and practice in leadership development.

By implementing these recommendations, project firms can strengthen their leadership pipelines, improve innovation performance, and enhance their resilience in an ever-evolving business environment.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

In conducting this research on the influence of strategic leadership on innovation performance in project firms within Uasin Gishu County, several limitations were encountered. While efforts were made to mitigate their impact, it is important to acknowledge these constraints as they may influence the interpretation and generalizability of the findings.

5.5.1 Non-Responsive and Partially Truthful Participants

One of the primary limitations involved participant non-responsiveness and exaggeration in responses. Some respondents either declined to participate or provided inflated accounts regarding their organization's strategic leadership practices and innovation outcomes. This challenge is common in leadership and performance studies, where respondents may feel compelled to present their institutions in a favourable light due to social desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2015). This tendency can compromise the authenticity of self-reported data, particularly when dealing with subjective constructs such as leadership behaviour and innovation performance (Jordan & Troth, 2020). To mitigate this issue, the researcher emphasized the anonymity and confidentiality of the responses, consistent with ethical research practice as advocated by Saunders et al. (2019).

5.5.2 Accessibility of Project Managers

Another significant limitation was limited access to project managers, many of whom were extremely busy and unable to dedicate time to filling out the questionnaires. The high-level

responsibilities of these individuals meant that some questionnaires were either delayed or not filled in by the intended respondents. Similar issues have been documented in studies targeting high-ranking professionals, where time constraints and competing priorities affect response rates and data quality (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Brutus et al., 2013).

To address this, the researcher allowed for flexibility in the data collection process by scheduling follow-up appointments and offering the option of proxy respondents. In many instances, project managers delegated the task of responding to a qualified representative within the organization. While this helped improve the response rate, it may have introduced variability in the data depending on the proxies' understanding of strategic leadership practices at the top level (Kim & Mullins, 2016).

5.5.3 Geographic and Sectoral Scope Limitations

The research was limited to project firms within Uasin Gishu County, which restricts the generalizability of the findings beyond this specific geographical and institutional context. Leadership practices and innovation performance may differ significantly in other counties or in different types of project-oriented organizations. Studies such as those by Huang et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of contextual and cultural dynamics in evaluating leadership effectiveness, which suggests that broader comparative research could yield more comprehensive insights.

5.5.4 Limitations of the Questionnaire Design

Although the questionnaire was carefully developed and validated, the use of closed-ended questions and Likert scales may have constrained respondents' ability to fully express complex ideas regarding leadership behaviours. While such instruments are useful for quantitative analysis, they can sometimes lack depth and context (Fowler, 2014). This limitation is consistent with

critiques in leadership and innovation research that call for more mixed-method approaches to deepen understanding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

5.5.5 Potential Response Bias from Delegated Respondents

Lastly, although permitting representatives to respond on behalf of absent project managers helped enhance the overall response rate, it may have compromised the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. These representatives, while possibly familiar with day-to-day operations, might not have had comprehensive insight into strategic leadership decisions made at the executive level. This lack of firsthand knowledge could result in incomplete or imprecise responses, leading to the distortion of information and potential misinterpretation of leadership dynamics within the organization. As noted by Berson et al. (2015), relying on proxy respondents in studies involving leadership behaviours can introduce bias, especially when those respondents are not directly involved in high-level decision-making. To address this limitation, future research could adopt a triangulation approach—incorporating direct interviews with key decision-makers or reviewing internal documents—to cross-verify data obtained from proxies. This would enhance the credibility and validity of findings related to leadership and its influence on innovation performance.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Studies

Drawing from the findings and limitations of this study, several directions for future research are recommended to further enrich the understanding of how strategic leadership styles influence innovation performance, both within project-based firms and in other organizational settings. First, future studies could explore this relationship across different sectors and counties in Kenya to enhance generalizability. Since this study focused specifically on SMEs in Uasin Gishu County, comparative research involving diverse geographical regions or industry types could reveal whether contextual factors—such as organizational culture, economic environment, or sector-specific dynamics—moderate the impact of leadership styles on innovation outcomes.

Additionally, researchers could examine the role of mediating or moderating variables, such as employee engagement, organizational learning, or digital transformation capabilities, in shaping the link between leadership and innovation. A longitudinal approach may also offer deeper insights into how leadership behaviours evolve over time and influence sustained innovation performance. Furthermore, qualitative or mixed-method studies involving interviews or case studies could provide richer, context-specific perspectives on leadership practices and their real-time impact on innovation processes. These future efforts would not only build on the current study's foundation but also contribute to more nuanced and practical strategies for leadership development and innovation management in the Kenyan SME sector and beyond.

5.6.1 Expanding the Scope to Large Enterprises

While this study focused on project firms within Uasin Gishu County, future research should extend the investigation to include large-scale enterprises and multinational corporations. The dynamics of leadership and innovation performance may differ significantly in larger organizations due to complex hierarchies, diversified operations, and broader market reach. Research by Zuraik and Kelly (2019) underscores that strategic leadership functions differently in large firms, particularly in how leaders manage resources, structure innovation processes, and align strategic goals with operational innovation. Therefore, studying transformational, transactional, and paternalistic leadership within larger contexts would provide comparative insights and more generalizable conclusions.

5.6.2 Investigating Sector-Specific Variations

It is important to explore how different strategic leadership styles influence innovation performance across a broader range of industries beyond just project-based organisations. Sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, education, and information and communication technology (ICT) may exhibit distinct trends due to differences in innovation requirements, regulatory pressures, and the pace of technological integration. As observed by Kraus et al. (2022), the relationship between leadership practices and innovation outcomes is often shaped by the specific context of each industry, which presents unique challenges and opportunities.

5.6.3 Examining Moderating Effects of Entrepreneurial Orientation

Future studies could benefit from investigating how entrepreneurial orientation (EO) moderates the relationship between strategic leadership styles and innovation performance. EO, often characterised by traits such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and a willingness to take risks, significantly influences how organisations interpret and respond to leadership efforts aimed at driving innovation. Serving as a strategic mindset or posture, EO has the potential to either amplify or diminish the impact of leadership behaviours on innovation outcomes within firms.

Rauch et al. (2019) emphasize that firms with a strong entrepreneurial orientation are more agile and responsive to strategic leadership, allowing them to more effectively translate leadership visions into practical and innovative solutions. In such contexts, leadership styles that promote autonomy, experimentation, and future-oriented thinking are more likely to generate significant innovation gains. Conversely, in firms with low EO, even well-intentioned leadership practices may struggle to produce innovative results due to a lack of support for risk-taking or change.

Incorporating entrepreneurial orientation (EO) as a moderating variable within a conceptual framework can enable future research to reveal more intricate dynamics between strategic leadership and innovation performance. This approach would enrich theoretical perspectives by highlighting how contextual elements, such as an organisation's entrepreneurial posture, influence

the effectiveness of leadership. Additionally, it would provide valuable guidance for practitioners aiming to align their leadership strategies with their organisation's capacity for entrepreneurial activity. Ultimately, such insights could support the development of context-specific approaches to fostering innovation, especially in fast-paced and competitive sectors.

5.6.4 Longitudinal Studies to Capture Temporal Effects

Another valuable direction for future research is the use of longitudinal designs to capture how leadership styles influence innovation performance over time. Cross-sectional studies, such as the present one, provide a snapshot view but fail to account for temporal shifts in leadership behavior, organizational learning, and market dynamics. Anderson and Sun (2017) advocate for longitudinal methodologies to trace causal relationships and better understand how leadership styles evolve and contribute to sustained innovation over time.

5.6.5 Exploring Cultural and Regional Influences

Cultural and regional contexts can significantly shape how leadership styles are interpreted and how they affect innovation outcomes. For example, leadership approaches such as paternalism may foster greater innovation in cultures that value collectivism, while the same style might be less impactful in more individualistic settings (Aycaan et al., 2014). Therefore, future researchers should consider cross-cultural or multi-country studies to assess the generalizability of leadership theories and their influence on innovation across different cultural landscapes.

5.6.6 Integrating Digital Leadership and Technological Change

Finally, the growing prominence of digital leadership amid ongoing technological advancements presents a valuable direction for future research. Leaders who effectively integrate digital tools, data-driven decision-making, and technology-driven change management may significantly boost innovation performance (see Cortellazzo et al., 2019). Investigating how digital leadership interacts

with traditional leadership styles could uncover hybrid leadership models best suited for driving innovation in the digital age.



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APPENDIX I: Informed Consent

APPENDIX I: Informed Consent

To Research Participant

C/O Mount Kenya University

July, 2024

Dear participant,

I Kevin Kuju Lorich, a Post Graduate student at Mount Kenya University, pursuing a degree of Masters of Science in Project Planning wishes to request for your participation in a research thesis as project fulfilment for award of the degree. The study is titled **Influence of Leadership Styles on the Succession Planning among Project Firms: Uasin Gishu County Government, Kenya.**

As a participant in the research, you will be required to spare a few minutes to complete attached questionnaire. Your confidentiality will be protected: there will be no mention of your personal details anywhere throughout the research process or thereafter. No benefit shall accrue to you as a participant financially or otherwise. However, the research findings are expected to improve on knowledge and planning for all stakeholders.

You have a right to withdraw at any level. Any concern regarding this study should be raised with the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully,

Name of Participant (Optional).....Sign.....

Contact/For any concerns

The Chairman, MKU IREC, P O Box 342-01000, THIKA



Appendix II: Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire forms part of a MBA study conducted under supervision of the School of Business, Mount Kenya University and will only be used for academic purposes.

This questionnaire consists of three sections. Please mark the appropriate box with a tick [√].

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

i) The organization's name is optional

ii) Position/Title of Respondent

iii) Gender: Gender: Male or female

iv) Age: Under 30 30 to 50 years in excess of 50 years

v) Level of education: O level, graduate, postgraduate

An additional qualification

vi) The number of workers in the company:

vii) How long has the company been in business?

Section B: The Organization's Strategic Leadership Styles

How much of each of the following activities is carried out in your company?

Strategic Action	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent	Very Large Extent
Transformational leadership					
i) Your organization's leaders have a clear idea of what they want to accomplish and effectively convey this idea.					
ii) Your organization's executives possess the guts to take calculated chances, take on new challenges, and make the tough choices required to reach the objectives.					
iii) Your organization's leaders motivate the group, persuade them to support their goals, and carry them out at all levels.					
iv) Your organization's leaders live up to the standards they establish.					
Transactional leadership style					
i) To get team members to comply, leaders in your company employ rewards and penalties.					
ii) To achieve the organization's objectives, leaders in your company negotiate and operate within the framework of current systems.					
iii) Your organization's leaders are committed to improving the working environment.					
iii) The leaders of your company are committed to improving the working environment.					
Inspirational leadership style					
i) Your organization's leaders have a clear plan and vision for the group.					
i) The team's vision and strategy are well-defined by the leaders in your organization.					
iii) Your organization's leaders acknowledge that their accomplishments are rarely their own and give credit where credit is due.					

iii) Your organization's leaders provide credit where credit is due and acknowledge that their accomplishments are rarely their own.					
v) Your organization's leaders entrust the team with crucial decisions and assignments.					
Paternalistic leadership style					
i) Your company's executives provide workers a sense of comfort and worth.					
ii) The leaders within the organisation carefully set priorities, make strategic plans, and work systematically towards achieving the established objectives.					
iii) Leaders within the organisation inspire employees to perform at their highest potential, enabling both the achievement of organisational targets and the personal development of staff.					
iv) Leaders in your organization have extensive knowledge about the work to be done and have superior communication skills.					

SECTION C: INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE

Kindly fill in the matrix below by placing a tick in the box that corresponds to each statement as appropriate.

Select the option that best reflects the typical practices or characteristics of your organisation.

Aspects of performance	Not at all	Small Extent	Moderate Extent	Large Extent	Very Large Extent
Our organisation actively adopts and executes new ideas as part of its continuous improvement efforts.					
We are always looking for better and more efficient methods to execute our work processes.					
Our organisation places great importance on using creative strategies to improve how work is done.					

The organisation is typically a pioneer in introducing new products and services to the market.					
Even though our organisation knows that trying out new ideas can be risky, there's usually some reluctance to fully embrace change.					
In the last five years, more and more new products and services have been brought into the market compared to before.					



Appendix III: MKU ERC



REF: MKU/ISERC/4492
TO: KELVIN KUJU LORICH

Date: 12 October 2024

REG: MSCPM/2019/51509

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE SUCCESSION PLANNING AMONG PROJECT FIRMS A CASE OF UASIN GISHU COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

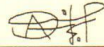
This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3214**. The approval period is **12/10/2024 - 11/10/2025**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC



Appendix IV: Institutional Letter



DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MSCPM/2019/51509

15th October, 2024

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: KELVIN KUJU LORICH- REGISTRATION NO. MSCPM/2019/51509

The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Science in Project Management** in the **Department of Management** in the school of **Business and Economics**.

The title of the research is **"Influence of Leadership Styles on the Succession Planning Among Project Firms. A Case of Uasin Gishu County Government, Kenya."** It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **October, 2024 and December, 2024**.


Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.


Thank you.


Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, Ph.D
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.

Mount Kenya University
P. O. Box 342 - 01000, THIKA
Office of the Director
Graduate Studies


Appendix V: NACOST


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **276609** Date of Issue: **24/October/2024**


RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr. KUJU LORECH KELVIN of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Uasin-Gishu on the topic: INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE SUCCESSION PLANNING AMONG PROJECT FIRMS A CASE OF UASIN GISHU COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA for the period ending : 24/October/2025.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/41463**

276609
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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See overleaf for conditions

Appendix VI: Turnitin

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE SUCCESSION PLANNING AMONG PROJECT FIRMS A CASE OF UASIN GISHU COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

20% SIMILARITY INDEX	16% INTERNET SOURCES	14% PUBLICATIONS	9% STUDENT PAPERS
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