

## **Effect of Management Commitment on Performance: A Case of County Governments in the Central Region, Kenya - Organizational Strategy Formulation, Implementation and Restructuring Models**

**<sup>1</sup>Wangui Charity, <sup>2</sup>Kahuthia Julius, <sup>3</sup>Muhoho John**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Business, Computer Science and Communication studies, St. Paul's University, Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya, E-mail: pbamlmr403617@spu.ac.ke

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Business, Computer Science and Communication studies, St. Paul's University, Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya, E-mail: jkahuthia@spu.ac.ke

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Business, Computer Science and Communication studies, St. Paul's University, Private Bag, Limuru, 00217, Kenya, E-mail: jmuho@spu.ac.ke

### **Abstract**

*Most organization's aim is to realize and uphold great performance. In order to achieve superior performance, organizations have enhanced strategy implementation process and concentrated efforts on strategy implementation imperatives. County governments in Kenya have fallen below expected performance due to challenges like high personnel emoluments, under-performance in own source revenue collection, low absorption of development allocation, high levels of pending bills, and weak budgetary controls. Management commitment is a strategy implementation imperative that could help in resolving these challenges and therefore this study sought to establish the effect of management commitment in addressing the county government performance. Descriptive and explanatory research design were adopted. Structured electronic questionnaire was sent to 252 respondents in the five counties in central region of Kenya. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis and overall model tested at 95 % confidence level. Results showed that management commitment has positive significant effect on the county government performance in the central region with a beta coefficient of 0.228 and p value of 0.000. Management commitment had an aggregate mean of 3.92 with a standard deviation of 0.740. Strategic Objectives had the highest mean of 4.12 the results indicated that top level personnel in the County have established quality policies and objectives with a mean of 4.16. Strategic direction and direct communication had almost the same means: 3.85 and 3.84 respectively. The summary shows that top level personnel in the Counties gave energy and loyalty to guiding implementation process towards attaining the County's vision with a mean of 3.9. This study contributes to knowledge by providing a conceptual framework for the relationship between management commitment and county government performance, it makes contribution to policy by showing areas to emphasize on for improved performance of the county governments and also, on areas management should enhance in their plans and daily activities that will translate to better performance.*

**Keywords: Strategy Implementation, County Government Performance, Management Commitment**

## **1.0 Introduction**

Globally, private and public organizations have constantly been challenged by different environmental forces, various business complexities, technological advancement, globalization, climate change, and shifting customer preferences that push them to relook at how they do business. Obtaining efficiency, productiveness and sustaining performance goals therefore has become a key concern to these organizations (Basalamah, 2017). Governments all over the globe are increasingly under pressure from their residents to show performance results from the resources collected, and to be accountable for the promises made in their political manifestos, development plans, electoral pledges, and commitments. In an era marked with rising demand to governments to provide quality services and flat revenues, it is critical to ensure optimal performance. Improved performance helps government to be excellent in provision of quality services to its citizens efficiently and effectively (Hrebiniak, 2016).

According to Malina and Selto (2004), both non fiscal and monetary measures are used by many large organizations as a quantifier for their performance. Measuring organizational performance is important as it validates a point of view that focuses on internal processes that measure how successful and coherent an action is with set metrics. Accordingly, performance of an organization is determined based on output and outcome, internal procedures and processes, profitability, organizational structure, employee's attitude, and receptiveness of an organization to the surroundings. According to Mutua (2009), organizational performance incorporates actual output or organizational outcome which is determined in relation to already set goals and objectives. According to Levenson, Van der Stede and Cohen (2016) measures used within and techniques of its implementation for instance, the company's key performance indicators (KPIs), affects the association between implementation and performance.

There has been grumbles about poor service delivery by the devolved units from its citizenry even though formulation of strategic plans upon which performance contracting was based in the devolved systems of governance in Kenya was incorporated since 2013. Counties have fallen way below their revenue collection targets, projects are incomplete while pending bills have continued to accumulate, high personnel emoluments, roads are poorly maintained, no markets for traders, poor or lack of street lighting, irregular garbage collection, rampant corruption and non-payment or delayed payments to contractors and service providers leading to overall poor performance. This scenario was the researcher's motivation to want to investigate the effect of management commitment on County Governments' performance in the Central Region of Kenya as the general objective.

According to World Bank Group (2016), devolved governments face challenges in instigating County integrated development plans which in turn affect performance. Management commitment in enhancing laid down processes and improving administration of existing resources, would be of greater importance, as it gives citizens a chance to see the outcomes of government effort, thereby giving them trust in County officials (Pangewa, 2015). The Kenyan government is facing challenges in its transitional procedure of realizing County integrated development plans (CIDP), which is a major strategy for accomplishing national development objectives, leading to unaccomplished goals which translates to poor performance. (Hantiro & Maina, 2020). The study by Hantiro and Maina noted that implementation of CIDP has not been ultimately accomplished in most County Governments due to management and resource challenges passed on to counties from former local authorities, which are now part of the County Governments.

According to Finch and Omolo (2015), the devolution process raised so much hope and high believes of how fast the development of the devolved government in Kenya will bring light to lives of ordinary citizens, better service delivery, supress corruption and improve performance. Nonetheless, County Governments in Kenya appear to have underperformed and have not lived up to expectations of the citizens (Mbaka & Mugambi, 2018).

According to Dooley, Fryxell and Judge (2016), management plays an important role in achieving organization's set objectives as they set pace for the rest of organization's members and stakeholders. According to Crittenden et al.(2008), management commitment entails executive leadership to demonstrate capability, competency and participatory approach in executing strategies that will lead to overall organizational performance. Pryor et al. (2007) noted that a manager can try to develop culture through communication since culture is influenced by the people in the organization, history, circumstances and management, therefore managers can set the tone, pace and character of the organization. There is therefore need to explore role management commitment plays towards performance of County Governments.

### **Research Objective**

To analyse the effect of management commitment on performance of County Governments in the Central Region of Kenya.

### **Research Hypothesis statement**

The study tested the following null hypothesis.

H<sub>01</sub>: Management commitment has no significant effect on performance of County Governments in the Central Region in Kenya.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Review**

This study was anchored on Higgins 8-S Strategy implementation Framework. This framework was developed by Higgins (2005) after his review of McKinsey's 7-S framework, the focus of this framework is execution of administration strategies. The development of 7-S strategy implementation framework was done back in 1982 by Peters and Waterman. Their study that focused on "best run" firms in America, Peters and Waterman established that there are 7 entwined techniques that should be main focus of managers during implementation of strategies in organizations. After his review of McKinsey's 7-S model, Higgins (2005) added another S (Strategic performance) forming 8-S which is derived from the interaction of the 7-S from McKinsey's 7-S's model. Higgins noted it is challenging for a company to effectively implement strategies without having to organize other assets like time, money, technology, and information, one "S" for skills was replaced by Re-Sources. According to Higgins, managers' competent and effective performance is enabled by the 8-S's framework which allows them to handle obligations across various functions. One perception of the model is that managers who recognize that implementation of strategies is of great importance as formulation of strategies tend to spend most time in implementation of strategies which helps the firms attain greater performance.

Based on the Higgin's 8-S's, effective execution of strategies relies on lining up key mechanisms in an organization (8-S's) with strategies the company intends to implement. Nonetheless, as a result of the dynamic environment and transformations observed in business environment it is important to constantly restructure strategies to be in line with transformations observed. This calls for constant readjustment of the 8-S's components to

ensure that they match the strategy in focus and lead to better performance. Because components of the 8-S's are interlinked, it is important for management to always ensure that all the eight components orient with the created strategy in order to enhance performance (Higgins, 2005). This theory therefore supports this study by pointing out the role of management in ensuring strategic performance.

### **Empirical Review**

The study reviewed and examined some past studies to answer the key research question by finding out the mixed results from study to study and obtain clarity on the combined results.

Chan (2016) researched on core competencies and performance management in Canadian public libraries. The findings revealed that the most important competencies to enhance employee performance were skills such as communication, interpersonal, creativity and leadership, customer service, analytical, adaptability, planning and organizing, accountability, technological competence, organization's knowledge. There is also the contextual gap that the study filled by conducting the study in developing countries like Kenya. A survey research design was used while the current study adopted descriptive and explanatory research design.

Muthondu and Gakobo (2018) carried out a case study to examine effect leadership commitment had on staff performance in Nairobi County using a cross-sectional survey design. Based on their findings, leadership commitment positively and significantly affected staff performance in County Governments of Kenya. While this study put into consideration leadership commitment and the effects it has on employee performance, the current study dug deeper and considered how managerial commitment affected the organizational performance of County Governments.

Syaifullah, (2017) researched on the effect of top management commitment and organizational culture on implementation of management accounting information system, a study at People's Credit Banks (BPR) in Pontianak City, Indonesia. The outcome of the study showed that: Top management commitment and organizational culture have significant influence simultaneously on implementation of management accounting information system, and that top management commitment has the most dominant influence when compared with organizational culture.

Babakus, Yavas, and Karatepe, et al. (2016) carried out research on the impact of management commitment to quality of service on employees' affective and performance results. This study adopted cross-sectional research design. The findings showed that top management commitment to quality of service, as reflected by frontline staffs' appraisal of training, empowerment, and rewards, significantly influenced perceptions of service recovery performance. A cross-sectional research design was adopted while the current study adopted explanatory research design

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

The study employed positivism philosophy, descriptive and explanatory research design, and multi-stage sampling to draw a sample of 252 respondents from the target population of 735 respondents. The unit of analysis was the five counties in central region while unit of observation was personnel in County Governments. Primary data was collected through structured electronic questionnaires. To analyse quantitative data, descriptive statistics were

computed using mean scores and standard deviations while inferential statistics entailed use of multiple regression and analysis of variance to test overall model using p-value <0.05. The study adopted descriptive and explanatory research design which does more than describe the phenomena as it also explains it. Explanatory research design is often used to deduce the cause-and-effect relationship between variables (Pinto, Lein, & Mahoque, et al., 2018). The researcher starts with general ideas and uses the research as a medium for identifying issues that can be focused on for further studies. The aim of explanatory research design is to improve researcher’s comprehension of a particular subject; flexibility of sources and to draw much better conclusions (Bryman & Bell, 2017). It assisted researcher to analyse findings and draw informed conclusions. Content validity was applied in evaluating extent to which data gathered represent a particular area or content of an actual concept (Kothari, 2017). Opinion from experts was solicited to check on validity of the questionnaire. Inferential analysis of data was conducted by use of one-way ANOVA, Pearson R, and multiple regression analysis. If correlation coefficient R values are closer to one (1), then the relationship between two variables is strong. Reliability test in which Cronbach’s alpha was adopted and a threshold of 0.7 used as the criteria showed that management commitment had an alpha coefficient of 0.857 on the seven items of tests implying that the data was reliable

#### **4.0 Results and Discussion**

The chapter presents study results, and it comprises of diagnostic tests, descriptive and regression analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the research findings.

##### **Diagnostic statistics**

**Table 1**

*Test for multicollinearity*

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Management Commitment	.427	2.341

a. Dependent Variable: County Performance

**Source: Study data (2021)**

Table 2 presents the test for multicollinearity results for regression analysis used to predict County performance based on the independent variable, Management Commitment. The results above present Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) which is used to detect multicollinearity when performing regression analysis. From the summary, the variance inflation factors are closer to 1 hence indicating that multicollinearity symptoms do not exist, since the VIF <10, therefore the results give sufficient evidence to fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that multicollinearity does not exist in the research variables. Where VIF statistics fall below the threshold of 10, as indicated by Cooper and Schindler (2003), it means the variables didn’t not indicate correlation to each other.

##### **Normality test of residuals**

To ascertain that sample data was drawn from a population that was normally distributed and that the model residuals followed a normal distribution, a normality test was carried out and residuals were plotted. It is important as it enables a researcher to compute the possibility of a random variable underlying the data set to be normally distributed (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). To compare data in the samples to a normally distributed set of data, Shapiro-Wilk test

was applied while, to test normality of data, plot of residuals was used for the visualization (Field, 2009). The null-hypothesis for Shapiro Wilk test is that the residuals are normally distributed; thus, if the value of Shapiro-wilk test is greater than 0.05, the residuals follow a normal distribution but if it is less than the p-value, we reject the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis for the study states that residuals follow a normal distribution. Shapiro wilk results for normality are as shown in table 2.

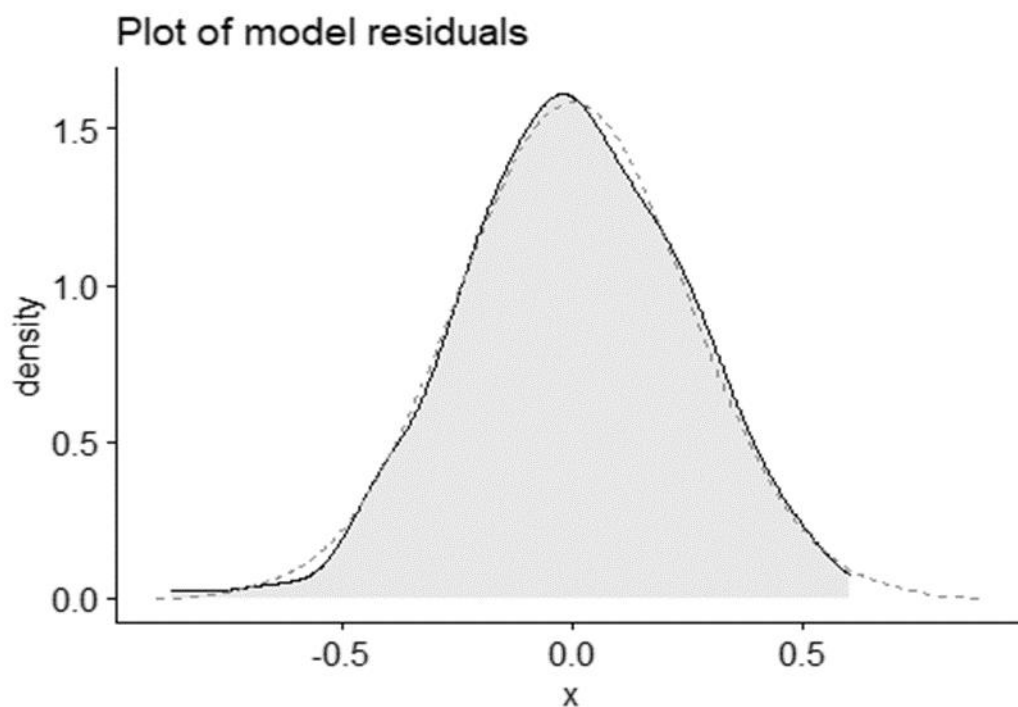
**Table 2**

*Normality test*

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Model residuals	.994	220	.508
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction			

**Source: Study data (2021)**

Shapiro-Wilk test is used to test for normality of large sample datasets and the null hypothesis of normality is rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05. From the results, significance value presented in “Sig” column is more than level of significance (0.05) which was used for analysis in this study indicating that the residuals follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the data gives enough evidence to fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the model residuals follow a normal distribution. The results indicated normality assumptions have been met and multiple linear regression can be conducted on the data. Figure 1 displays the plot of the model residuals.



**Figure 1: Plot of model residuals.**

### **Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity**

Heteroscedasticity is the condition whereby the variances of the errors of independent variable are not similar in the complete data (Tabachnick & Fidel 2012). If residuals are not spread uniformly and constantly around the horizontal line, then there is heteroscedasticity. The Breusch-Pagan test, was used to test for heteroscedasticity. It was used to test whether the variance of the errors from a regression is dependent on the values of the independent variables, in which case, heteroscedasticity would be present. If the test statistic has a p-value below the 0.05 threshold, then the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity is rejected, and heteroscedasticity assumed. If the Breusch-Pagan test indicates presence of conditional heteroscedasticity, then the researcher will choose to use weighted least squares where the weights will be computed from the unstandardized residuals. The null hypothesis of the test states that those variances of the residuals are equal. The results of heteroscedasticity are shown in table 3.

**Table 3**

*Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity*

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Studentized Breusch-Pagan test

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Data: model

BP = 15.584, df = 5, p-value = 0.008138

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**Source: Study data (2021)**

The results above present the Breusch-Pagan test of heteroscedasticity. From the summary, p-value = 0.008 and is less than 0.05 giving sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of equal variances. Therefore, the results give evidence of heteroscedasticity in the data meaning that there is unequal variance. Weighted linear regression which incorporates the covariance matrix of errors in the model was used to deal with heteroscedasticity (Tilo, 2010).

### **Pearson Correlation Co-efficient**

The study conducted a Pearson test to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Results showed strong correlation.

Table 4

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**Correlations**

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		<b>County performance</b>
Management commitment	Pearson Correlation	.696**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	220

\*\* Correlation is significant .

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**Source: study data (2021)**

### **Descriptive statistics**

The key indicators used in the current research to identify management commitment focused on strategic direction, strategic objectives, and direction of communication. The questionnaire developed for the research comprised of statements that assessed the indicators. Table 5 gives a summary.

**Table 5**

*Summary of Management commitment items*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
<b>Strategic objectives</b>		
1 Top level personnel in this County have established quality policies and objectives	4.16	0.747
2 Top level personnel in this County have clearly defined the statement mission of the County	4.07	0.622
<b>Sub variable aggregate</b>	<b>4.12</b>	<b>0.685</b>
<b>Strategic direction</b>		
3 Top level personnel in the County gives energy and loyalty to guiding implementation process towards attaining the County’s vision	3.9	0.752
4 There is adequate supervision of subordinates by the top-level personnel and employees have the opportunity to provide feedback	3.79	0.772
<b>Sub variable aggregate</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.762</b>
<b>Direction of communication</b>		
5 Top level management creates goals, communicates them and sets in motion the actions needed for achievement of the same	3.83	0.751
6 Top level personnel regularly hold meetings to plan how to perform duties and seek views from employees	3.82	0.773
7 Top level personnel have influenced employees to perform better leading to attainment of the County goals	3.87	0.7
<b>Sub variable aggregate</b>	<b>3.84</b>	<b>0.741</b>
<b>Variable aggregate</b>	<b>3.92</b>	<b>0.74</b>

**Source: Study data (2021)**

The variable consisted of 7 statements where respondents answered on a five-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= fairly agree, 4= agree and 5= strongly agree. Strategic objectives within management commitment had the highest mean within county employees with a mean of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.685 while strategic direction and direct communication had almost the same means: 3.85 and 3.84 respectively. Results of the study reveal that top level personnel in the County; had established quality policies and objectives, had clearly defined the statement mission of the County, gave energy and loyalty to guiding implementation process towards attaining the County’s vision and there was adequate supervision of subordinates by the top-level personnel where employees had the opportunity to provide feedback, regularly held meetings to plan how to perform duties and seek views from employees, and had influenced employees to perform better leading to attainment of County goals.

The results indicated that management commitment of the County Governments was relatively high. Several research studies have linked management commitment of staff in various organizations to job satisfaction and organization performance (Babakus et al., 2016, Syaifullah, 2017, Sari et al., 2018, among others).



## **Hypothesis testing**

The following null hypothesis was tested.

**H<sub>01</sub>: Management commitment has no significant effect on performance of County Governments in the Central region in Kenya.**

The objective of the research was investigating effect of management commitment on County government performance. Results obtained showed a beta coefficient of 0.228 and  $P < 0.001$ . These results gave information to reject the null hypothesis since the p value was less than 0.05 meaning that management commitment had a positive significant effect on County government performance in Central region of Kenya.

Research studies focusing on organizational performance have linked high levels of management commitment to improved performance in organizations. Based on results of this study, the regression model had a positive coefficient for management. The results of this study support the findings by Andrew (2017) who studied the effect of employee commitment on performance of an organization and found that employee commitment was significantly linked to performance of an organization. Further Babakus et al. (2016) reported that management commitment has a huge impact on service quality and performance of an organization. Similar to the results of this study, studies including Syaifullah (2017), Kim, Tavitiyaman, and Kim (2019) and Sari et al. (2018) have demonstrated the impact management commitment has on organizational performance.

Muthondu and Gakobo (2018) studied leadership commitment and employee performance in Nairobi County. Their findings suggested that leadership commitment significantly affected employee performance in County Governments in Kenya. Kim, et al, (2019) researched on influence management commitment has on employee service behaviors and role of job satisfaction in this relationship. The study showed that management commitment influenced employee job behaviour but failed to show how it affects organizational performance in relation to its influence on strategy implementation.

Sari et; al. (2018) did not establish the effect of management commitment on other organizational commitment in addition, the study adopted interpretivism research philosophy and survey research design while the current study used positivism research philosophy.

## **Regression Analysis**

The empirical model for relationship between Management Commitment and County Government performance was as follows:

$$\text{Percg} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Mc} + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots \text{equation 1}$$

Where:

Percg= Composite index for County Government performance

$\beta_0$  =constant

$\beta_1$ = Beta coefficients

Mc= composite index for management Commitment

$\varepsilon$ =error term

**Table 6**

*Summary of regression coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.935	.137		6.850	.000
Management Commitment	.228	.042	.316	5.436	.000

a. Dependent Variable: County performance

b. Weighted Least Squares Regression - Weighted by weight

$$\text{Percg} = 0.935 + 0.228M_C + \epsilon \dots\dots\dots \text{equation 1}$$

The t statistics and significance values (p-values) are presented in the “t” and “sig” columns on the table. The values are important in testing the hypothesis:

$$H_0: B_i = 0,$$

Where  $B_i$  is the regression coefficient, meaning that the Beta coefficient(slope) is not significantly different from zero.

From the summary, the slope, management commitment had p value < 0.001 which was less than 0.05 therefore giving sufficient information to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the coefficient was significantly different from zero.

**Table 7**

*Summary of the test results for the study hypotheses*

Hypotheses	Findings	Decision	Conclusion
$H_{01}$ : Management commitment has no significant effect on performance of County Governments in the central region in Kenya.	$P = 0.000 < 0.05$	Reject $H_{01}$	Management commitment has a significant positive effect on performance of County Governments in the central region in Kenya.

**5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The results of the study showed management commitment positively and significantly affect county governments performance. Demographic characteristics of respondents indicated that the respondents are top level management team whose role is directly related to establishment of quality policies and influencing employees to perform better.

From theory and in line with Higgin’s 8S’ framework that proposes that manager’s competent and effective performance is enabled by the 8 s’ which allows them to handle obligations across various functions and other undertakings that are linked with

implementation of strategy. One perception from the model is that managers who recognize that implementation of strategies is of great importance as the formulation of strategies tend to spend most time in implementation of strategies which helps their organization attain better performance. The proposition that fruitful strategy implementation calls for well coordination of efforts and harmonious interactions among various organizational constituents which implies management commitment to the coordination of these various constituents. Because components of the 8-S's are interlinked, it is important for management to always ensure that the eight components orient with the created strategy in order to enhance performance (Higgins, 2005).

This result is in agreement with previous studies reviewed in this study. Sari *et al.* (2018) pursued to investigate the effect of management commitment, amid other factors, on the quality of information of local government asset report in the districts of Indonesia. They postulated that management commitment is required in order to enhance performance and yield information quality. Muthondu and Gakobo (2018) conducted a case study to examine impact of leadership commitment on employee performance in Nairobi County. Based on their findings, leadership commitment positively and significantly affected employee performance in Nairobi County Government.

This study contributes to knowledge by providing a conceptual framework for the relationship between management commitment and county government performance, it makes contribution to policy by showing areas to emphasize on for improved performance of the county governments and also, on areas management should enhance in their plans and daily activities that will translate to better performance. As well, previous studies that have been done in other sectors are in agreement with these findings thus providing evidence that the findings obtained earlier can be generalized in county governments in the central region of Kenya despite their unique characteristics. The study recommends that County governments' management should establish quality policies and objectives, clearly define mission statement, give energy and loyalty to guiding implementation process towards attainment of county's goals, ensure adequate supervision and give room for feedback to improve on their performance. The study recommends that further study should be carried out on the effects of other strategy implementation imperatives on county government performance.

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