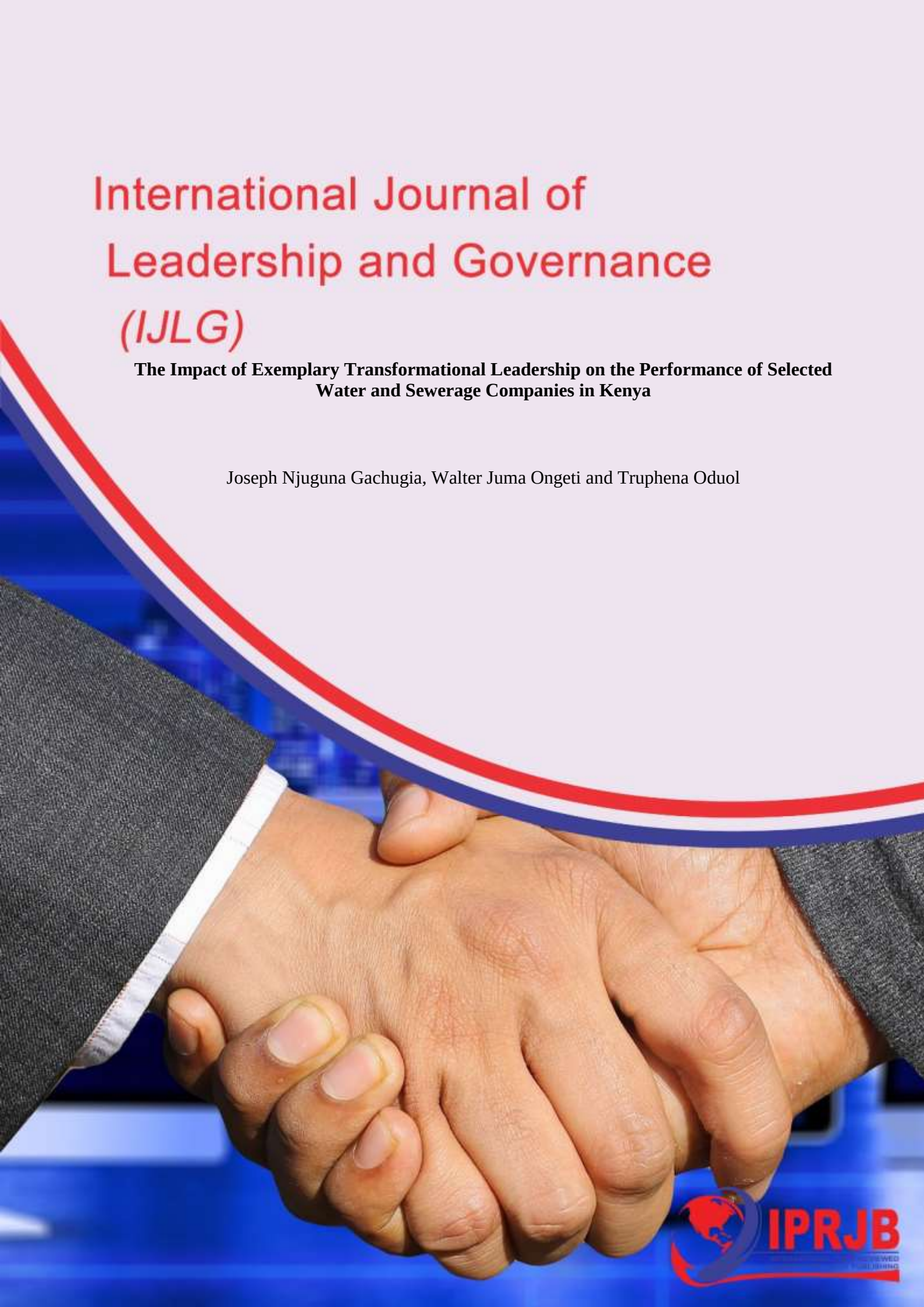
International Journal of Leadership and Governance (IJLG)

# The Impact of Exemplary Transformational Leadership on the Performance of Selected Water and Sewerage Companies in Kenya

Joseph Njuguna Gachugia, Walter Juma Ongeti and Truphena Oduol



International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026

www.iprjb.org

# The Impact of Exemplary Transformational Leadership on the Performance of Selected Water and Sewerage Companies in Kenya

Joseph Njuguna Gachugia[1]
[1]Postgraduate Student (PhD), Graduate School, Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya

Walter Juma Ongeti[2]
[2]Adjunct Lecturer, Pan Africa Christian University, Nairobi, Kenya

Truphena Oduol[3]
[3]United States International University–Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

**Article History**

***Received 12th March 2026***

***Received in Revised Form 10th April 2026***

***Accepted 8th May 2026***

How to cite in APA format:

Gachugia, J., Ongeti, W., & Oduol, T. (2026). The Impact of Exemplary Transformational Leadership on the Performance of Selected Water and Sewerage Companies in Kenya. *International Journal of Leadership and Governance*, *6*(1), 19–38. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijlg.3748

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The study examines the impact of exemplary transformational leadership on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya. It specifically assesses the effects of three exemplary transformational leadership practices modeling the way, challenging the process, and empowering followers on water company performance to enhance understanding of leadership performance dynamics and improve service delivery in the water sector.

**Methodology:** Guided by a positivist research philosophy, the study adopted a descriptive research design and quantitative approach. The target population was 4,655 employees from 13 water and sewerage companies under the Athi Water Works Development Agency. A sample of 368 respondents was selected using probability sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with multiple regression analysis conducted in SPSS version 27. The study was grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory and the Balanced Scorecard framework.

**Findings:** The results indicate that exemplary transformational leadership practices have differentiated effects on organizational performance. Empowering followers was the strongest and most significant predictor ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of participation, collaboration, and recognition in enhancing performance. Challenging the process also had a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.016$), emphasizing innovation and continuous improvement. In contrast, modeling the way showed no significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.022$, $p = 0.779$), suggesting it primarily functions indirectly by building trust and strengthening other leadership practices.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The study extends Transformational Leadership Theory by demonstrating that leadership practices exert unequal effects on performance, with empowering followers as the dominant driver and challenging the process reinforcing innovation and intellectual stimulation. Modeling the way is shown to operate mainly as an enabling mechanism that supports other leadership behaviors through trust and credibility. In relation to the Balanced Scorecard framework, the findings empirically link leadership behaviors to learning and growth, internal processes, and overall performance, showing clear causal pathways to effectiveness. Practically, the study underscores the need for leadership development focused on empowerment and innovation competencies. From a policy perspective, it supports competency-based leadership frameworks and institutional systems that enhance empowerment, innovation, and continuous improvement in the water sector.

**Keywords:** *Exemplary Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Exemplary Transformational Leadership, Water Company, Performance*

**JEL Codes:** *M12 L21 L95*

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

## INTRODUCTION

Reliable water supply and sanitation services are central to sustainable development and public welfare, as emphasized under Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which calls for universal access to safe and sustainable water services. Despite this global commitment, a significant proportion of the population, particularly in developing regions, still lacks access to reliable water and sanitation services (UNICEF, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). The performance of water utilities varies widely across countries due to differences in governance, infrastructure, and institutional capacity, with leadership increasingly recognized as a critical determinant of effectiveness (International Finance Corporation [IFC], 2020; Jenkins et al., 2017).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, water utilities face persistent challenges including water scarcity, infrastructure deficits, and institutional inefficiencies, which undermine service delivery. Kenya reflects these regional trends, where access to safe water remains uneven and many water services providers continue to struggle with operational inefficiencies such as high levels of non-revenue water, limited service coverage, and financial constraints (Muraya & Rambo, 2019; Muthoni & Odollo, 2024). Despite ongoing reforms and regulatory oversight by institutions such as the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB), sector performance remains below expected standards, with water coverage at approximately 55% and sanitation at 16%, far below the universal access target by 2030 (WASREB, 2019). Furthermore, nearly half of water service providers have experienced stagnation or decline in performance, raising concerns about the effectiveness of current management and leadership approaches.

Existing literature has largely attributed these performance challenges to structural and contextual factors such as infrastructure gaps, rapid urbanization, and institutional constraints (Ennis & Deller, 2019; Kairu & Muchemi, 2023). While these explanations are important, they provide limited insight into the role of leadership behavior as a strategic driver of organizational performance. Leadership is widely acknowledged as a key determinant of organizational success (Neema et al., 2019), yet empirical research has predominantly focused on conventional leadership styles and sectors such as education and private enterprises, with limited attention to public water utilities (Konuk & Posner, 2021; Miftahurrohmah et al., 2021).

Among the contemporary approaches, transformational leadership style, comprising idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been widely associated with improved employee motivation and organizational outcomes (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). Similarly, exemplary leadership style emphasizes behavioral practices such as modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart, which foster innovation, collaboration, and performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2017; Kirkpatrick, 2022; Díaz et al., 2019). However, there is limited empirical evidence on how an integrated perspective, which is conceptualized in this study as exemplary transformational leadership, affects performance in public water utilities, particularly in Kenya.

This gap is both conceptual and contextual, as existing studies have not sufficiently examined how combined leadership practices influence performance in resource-constrained and highly regulated environments. Accordingly, this study investigates the influence of exemplary transformational leadership, which focusses on modeling the way, challenging the process, and empowering followers, on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya. The study aims to generate empirical evidence to inform leadership practice and contribute to knowledge gap and improved service delivery in the water sector.

## Statement of the Problem

Despite the reforms and regulatory oversight within the water sector, the performance of Kenya's water and sewerage companies remains below expected standards. National statistics indicate that water coverage stands at approximately 55% and sanitation at 16%, far below the universal access target by 2030 (WASREB, 2019). In addition, nearly half of water service providers have experienced stagnation or decline in performance, reflecting persistent inefficiencies in service delivery (Muraya & Rambo, 2019). These trends raise concerns about the effectiveness of existing management and leadership approaches within the sector.

Existing studies have largely attributed poor performance in water utilities to structural and contextual challenges such as infrastructural deficits, rapid urbanization, and institutional constraints (Ennis & Deller, 2019; Kairu & Muchemi, 2023). While these factors provide important insights, they offer limited explanation of how leadership behavior influences organizational outcomes. Moreover, empirical research has predominantly focused on conventional leadership styles and on sectors such as education and private enterprises, with limited attention given to public water utilities (Konuk & Posner, 2021; Miftahurrohmah et al., 2021).

Although leadership is widely recognized as a critical determinant of organizational performance (Neema et al., 2019), there is insufficient empirical evidence on the role of exemplary transformational leadership, an integration of transformational leadership principles (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994) and exemplary leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2017) in influencing performance within Kenya's water sector. This represents both a conceptual and contextual gap in the literature.

Accordingly, this study examines the influence of exemplary transformational leadership on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya, with the aim of generating empirical evidence to inform leadership practice and improve service delivery outcomes. In this study, organizational performance is explicitly operationalized using the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) impact indicators—covering dimensions such as service coverage, water quality, efficiency, and financial sustainability—rather than relying solely on subjective employee perceptions.

## Study Objectives

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of exemplary transformational leadership on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the effect of the leadership practice, 'model the way', on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya.
2. To examine the effect of the leadership practice, 'challenge the process', on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya.
3. To assess the effect of the leadership practice, 'empowers the followers', on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

### Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory, introduced by Burns (2015), explains how leaders influence followers to transcend self-interest and pursue collective organizational goals through vision, motivation, and trust. The theory emphasizes that leadership effectiveness is achieved by inspiring commitment, fostering shared purpose, and enhancing organizational performance (Eaton et al., 2024; Pitichat & Riggio, 2025).

This theory underpins exemplary transformational leadership, which integrates transformational leadership principles with Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership. These include modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Together, these practices align closely with transformational leadership dimensions, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration highlighting leadership behaviors that promote trust, collaboration, and innovation (Neema et al., 2019; Siangchokyoo et al., 2020).

The theory provides a lens for explaining how exemplary transformational leadership enhances organizational performance. By demonstrating a value based modelling the way, challenging existing practices, and empowering followers, leaders enhance intrinsic motivation and commitment, leading to improved productivity and organizational outcomes (Ladkin & Patrick, 2022; Al-Thawabiya et al., 2023). In Kenya's water sector, this is particularly relevant for addressing persistent performance challenges through improved leadership practices.

However, the theory has been criticized for overemphasizing leader-centered influence, underplaying contextual factors, and assuming universal applicability across settings (Pitichat & Riggio, 2025).

### Balanced Scorecard Theory

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Theory, developed by Kaplan and Norton (1996), provides a strategic management framework that enables organizations to translate vision and strategy into measurable performance outcomes (Tuan, 2020). Unlike traditional approaches that focus solely on financial outcomes, the BSC promotes a balanced view of organizational performance across four key perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes, and learning and growth (Abedian et al., 2021; Pakurár et al., 2019).

The framework emphasizes aligning strategic objectives with operational activities to enhance performance, customer satisfaction, and organizational competitiveness (Bandono & Nugroho, 2023). Financial performance is assessed through profitability indicators, customer perspective through satisfaction and retention, internal processes through efficiency in goal achievement, and learning and growth through innovation and adaptability (Austine & Njuguna, 2019; Eklund, 2020). Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive mechanism for evaluating organizational effectiveness.

Despite its strengths, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) has been criticized for implementation delays, measurement ambiguity, and limited suitability for complex or long-term strategic environments (Gitonga & Nzulwa, 2019; Mbugua & Kinyua, 2019). These limitations are particularly evident in public sector settings, where performance measurement is often complicated by competing stakeholder expectations and non-financial service obligations.

In addition, a key adaptation challenge arises in public organizations, including water utilities, where the traditional hierarchy of the BSC perspectives is often reversed. Unlike private sector firms where the financial perspective is typically positioned at the apex as the ultimate performance outcome**,** public sector organizations tend to prioritize the customer/citizen perspective, reflecting their mandate for service delivery, equity, and public value creation. This inversion complicates direct application of the original BSC structure and requires contextual adjustment to align with regulatory and public service objectives.

Nonetheless, the theory remains relevant to this study as it provides a structured lens for assessing organizational performance in water service providers, particularly through indicators such as service quality, economic efficiency, and operational sustainability as defined by regulatory frameworks (WASREB, 2019).

**Goal-Setting Theory**

Goal-Setting Theory (GST), developed by Locke and Latham (1990), is premised on the idea that specific, clear, and challenging goals lead to higher levels of performance compared to vague or easy goals, as they regulate human action through effort, persistence, attention, and strategy development (Locke & Latham, 2019). In this study, the theory provides a foundation for explaining how the leadership practice of *challenging the process* influences internal process efficiency within the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework.

In the context of water service providers, *challenging the process* entails questioning existing routines, encouraging innovation, and setting ambitious operational targets such as reducing non-revenue water, improving service response time, and optimizing resource use. Consistent with GST, this leadership behaviour enhances internal process efficiency by directing employee effort toward critical activities, increasing work intensity, sustaining persistence under resource constraints, and promoting the development of innovative task strategies (Bozkurt et al., 2017; Jeong et al., 2023).

Thus, *challenging the process* operates as an independent leadership variable that drives internal efficiency by aligning employee behaviour with demanding goals and fostering continuous process improvement, in line with the BSC internal process perspective (WASREB, 2019).

**Conceptual Framework**

The identified conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps point to the need for an integrated analytical framework that explains how exemplary transformational leadership influences water company performance. In response to these gaps, this study conceptualizes exemplary transformational leadership as a multidimensional construct drawn from both transformational leadership theory and exemplary leadership practices. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive lens for understanding how leadership behaviors shape organizational outcomes in water utilities. The conceptual framework guiding this study therefore positions exemplary transformational leadership as the independent variable and water company performance as the dependent variable, with leadership dimensions collectively influencing performance outcomes within Kenya's water sector.

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

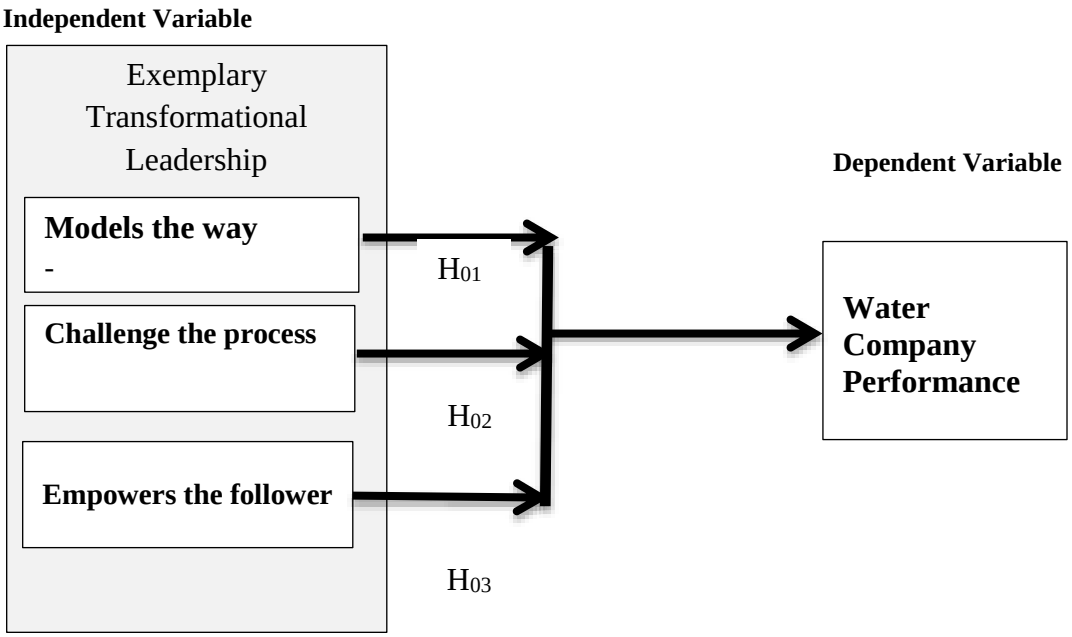



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

## Empirical Review

### Exemplary Leadership

Leadership is widely recognized as a key determinant of organizational success or failure (Neema et al., 2019). Empirical evidence indicates that exemplary leadership practices, as conceptualized by Kouzes and Posner, positively influence both behavioral and performance outcomes across diverse contexts.

Aritonang and Tung (2023) found that exemplary leadership enhances job satisfaction, which in turn improves teacher performance, indicating both direct and indirect effects on performance. Similarly, Maina (2021) established that exemplary leadership significantly improves organizational performance in Kenya's insurance sector by increasing employee engagement, accounting for 37% of its variation.

In the African governance context, Naankiel et al. (2023) proposed the IPACEEL model, arguing that integrating exemplary leadership with ethical accountability can address corruption, weak governance, and underdevelopment, reinforcing its relevance in public sector reform.

Further studies show that exemplary leadership strengthens relational outcomes. Zainaro et al. (2022) found a significant positive relationship between exemplary leadership and trust development in professional mentorship. Sulpakar et al. (2022) similarly reported that leadership styles aligned with exemplary leadership principles enhance organizational performance.

Comparable leadership approaches also demonstrate positive effects. Ibrahim and Daniel (2019) found participatory leadership improves employee effectiveness, while Ahmed et al. (2018) reported that strategic orientation and supportive culture enhance performance. In addition, Rawashdeh et al. (2021) confirmed that transformational leadership, closely aligned with exemplary leadership—significantly improves organizational performance.

## Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a behavior-based leadership approach comprising four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). Originating from Burns (1978), the theory explains how leaders elevate followers' values and align them with collective organizational goals, thereby improving organizational performance.

Empirical evidence consistently shows that transformational leadership enhances organizational performance through its core behavioral dimensions. Inspirational motivation improves performance by enabling leaders to articulate a compelling vision that aligns employees toward shared organizational goals (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). Similarly, individualized consideration enhances performance by ensuring that employees receive appropriate support and development, which improves efficiency and output quality (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Al-Thawabiya et al., 2023).

Idealized influence contributes to improved performance by fostering trust, credibility, and ethical leadership behavior, which strengthens organizational culture and enhances effectiveness (Bass, 1985; Demirtas & Karaca, 2020). Intellectual stimulation further improves performance by encouraging innovation, problem-solving, and adaptability, enabling organizations to respond effectively to dynamic operational environments (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023). This is particularly important in public service organizations where efficiency and innovation are critical to service delivery outcomes (Maina, 2021).

Meta-analytic findings confirm a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance across sectors (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, its effectiveness may vary depending on contextual and structural factors such as organizational complexity and resource availability, particularly in public sector institutions.

## Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is widely conceptualized as the extent to which an organization achieves its strategic objectives efficiently and effectively. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework provides a comprehensive approach for enhancing performance by translating strategic objectives into operational goals, clarifying cause-and-effect relationships, and improving internal communication and alignment (Abedian et al., 2021; Bandono & Nugroho, 2023; Lucianetti et al., 2019). Through these mechanisms, the BSC strengthens coordination, accountability, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Empirical studies further show that organizational performance is influenced by multiple internal capabilities. Organizational innovation and learning have been found to significantly enhance performance by improving adaptability and knowledge utilization (Soomro et al., 2021). Similarly, artificial intelligence combined with knowledge-sharing systems improves strategic decision-making and sustainable performance in dynamic environments (Olan et al., 2022). Other studies identify knowledge management, human resource practices, marketing strategies, and digital supply chain systems as key determinants of organizational performance (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021; Eniola & Olorunleke, 2020; Lee et al., 2022; Rezaei et al., 2021).

Leadership remains a critical determinant of organizational performance, either positively or negatively influencing outcomes depending on the style adopted (Cai, 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that transformational, participatory, transactional, and situational leadership

styles all contribute positively to performance when effectively applied (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019; Muchiri & Gachunga, 2018; Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2023; Specchia et al., 2021). In addition, ethical and entrepreneurial leadership have been shown to enhance organizational outcomes by strengthening integrity, innovation, and strategic responsiveness (Widyani et al., 2020).

Overall, empirical evidence suggests that organizational performance is a multidimensional construct influenced by strategic management systems, organizational capabilities, technological adoption, and leadership practices.

**Summary of Research Gaps**

The review of literature reveals several conceptual, contextual, and methodological gaps that justify the need for this study on exemplary transformational leadership and the performance Kenya water companies.

**Contextual gaps** are evident in the limited empirical focus on the water sector in Kenya. Most studies on transformational leadership and organizational performance have been conducted in other sectors such as education, manufacturing, insurance, and general public administration, or within non-African contexts. However, these sectors are largely competitive in nature, particularly insurance and manufacturing, where customers can switch providers in response to service quality, pricing, or satisfaction levels. In contrast, water utilities operate as natural monopolies, where customers have no alternative service providers and therefore cannot exit in response to poor performance.

This structural difference is critical because leadership in monopoly environments is exercised under fundamentally different accountability conditions compared to competitive markets. In water utilities, performance pressure is driven more by regulatory enforcement, public scrutiny, and service mandate obligations rather than market competition and customer retention dynamics. Despite this important distinction, existing studies have largely failed to isolate or adequately examine how leadership effectiveness manifests within monopoly-based service delivery systems.

This leaves a significant gap in understanding how exemplary transformational leadership operates within water utilities, which are further characterized by unique operational challenges, public accountability demands, and resource constraints. As a result, sector-specific evidence on the influence of leadership practices on organizational performance in Kenya's water sector remains limited.

**Methodological gaps** are evident because existing studies on leadership and organizational performance show a heavy reliance on qualitative, mixed-method, and basic quantitative approaches. While qualitative and mixed methods provide rich contextual insights, they often limit statistical generalization and constrain systematic testing of relationships among multiple leadership dimensions and performance outcomes. Similarly, longitudinal designs, although stronger in establishing causality, are rarely applied due to cost, time, and data accessibility constraints, particularly within public sector utilities in developing contexts such as Kenya.

In addition, many leadership studies are affected by **social desirability bias**, particularly where data are collected solely from managers or employees through self-reported questionnaires. Respondents may consciously or unconsciously overstate positive leadership behaviours and organizational outcomes to present their organizations in a favourable light. This introduces measurement distortion and weakens the validity of findings in leadership–performance research.

Within quantitative studies, the use of limited analytical techniques has further constrained the ability to examine leadership as a multidimensional construct within an integrated explanatory model. As a result, there remains a gap in robust, theory-driven empirical testing that can simultaneously assess the relative effects of different leadership practices on organizational performance.

To address these gaps, this study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional survey design complemented by data triangulation. Specifically, primary data collected through structured questionnaires are integrated with secondary performance data obtained from the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) reports. This triangulation approach strengthens construct validity by reducing reliance on self-reported perceptions alone and mitigating the effects of social desirability bias.

The cross-sectional survey design enables the collection of data from a large and diverse sample at a single point in time, enhancing representativeness and generalizability. At the same time, the integration of WASREB secondary data introduces an objective performance benchmark, allowing for more reliable assessment of organizational outcomes.

Accordingly, this combined methodological approach provides a practical yet rigorous solution that improves the robustness of empirical findings. It supports simultaneous examination of modeling the way, challenging the process, and empowering followers on organizational performance, while ensuring that results are both statistically reliable and less susceptible to respondent bias. Ultimately, this strengthens the study's contribution to leadership theory and policy-relevant evidence in Kenya's water sector.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Philosophy and Design

This study adopted a positivist philosophy and a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between exemplary transformational leadership and organizational performance among employees of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya. The target population comprised 4,655 employees from 13 public utilities under the Athi Water Works Development Agency, from which a sample of 368 respondents was selected using cluster random sampling and the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected using structured Likert-scale questionnaires measuring exemplary transformational leadership, operationalized through modeling the way, challenging the process, and empowering followers based on the amended Kouzes and Posner (LPI) framework—and organizational performance, assessed using Balanced Scorecard indicators of service quality, economic efficiency, and operational sustainability.

### Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument

A pilot study was conducted in Kiambu and Naivasha Water and Sewerage Companies, where 37 questionnaires were administered and 35 returned, to pre-test the instrument for clarity, relevance, and consistency. The pilot findings led to revisions, including balancing questionnaire items and adding of missing items. Validity was ensured through expert review (face and content validity) and factor analysis, which confirmed the suitability of items measuring exemplary transformational leadership and organizational performance. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with values above 0.7 indicating acceptable internal consistency. These procedures confirmed that the instrument was valid and reliable for the main study.

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

## Data Analysis

Data collected from the field was cleaned, coded, and prepared for analysis by correcting errors and removing incomplete responses. The coded data was then entered into SPSS (Version 27) for quantitative analysis, while ensuring secure storage of both physical and electronic records to maintain confidentiality and enable future reference.

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' background characteristics and key study variables. This facilitated interpretation of the relationship between exemplary transformational leadership and organizational performance.

Inferential statistics were used to draw predictions from the collected data, while regression analysis examined the relationships between variables. Specifically, multiple linear regression was applied to test the effect of exemplary transformational leadership practices on the performance of selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya and to evaluate the study hypotheses. The analysis assessed how water company performance (Y) was influenced by key leadership dimensions, modeling the way($X_1$), challenging the process ($X_2$), and empowering followers($X_3$) using the model:

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$, where alpha$\alpha$ is the constant, beta $\beta$ coefficients representing the predictors, and $\varepsilon$ is the error term.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

### Exemplary Transformational Leadership

**Table 1: Models the Way**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The leader clearly communicates their leadership philosophy | 17 (5.2%) | 36 (11.0%) | 86 (26.2%) | 131 (39.9%) | 58 (17.7%) | 3.54 | 1.066 |
| The leader breaks projects into manageable steps | 9 (2.7%) | 24 (7.3%) | 77 (23.5%) | 136 (41.5%) | 82 (25.0%) | 3.79 | 0.991 |
| The leader ensures that organizational values are consistently upheld | 10 (3.0%) | 36 (11.0%) | 74 (22.6%) | 134 (40.9%) | 74 (22.6%) | 3.69 | 1.035 |
| The leader openly shares their beliefs and values with others | 10 (3.0%) | 39 (11.9%) | 73 (22.3%) | 136 (41.5%) | 70 (21.3%) | 3.66 | 1.037 |
| The leader acts in alignment with their stated principles | 12 (3.7%) | 18 (5.5%) | 73 (22.3%) | 147 (44.8%) | 78 (23.8%) | 3.80 | 0.985 |
| The leader sets clear goals and milestones for the team | 10 (3.0%) | 26 (7.9%) | 67 (20.4%) | 128 (39.0%) | 97 (29.6%) | 3.84 | 1.034 |

From Table 1 above, the findings suggest that leaders in the water sector are generally effective in modeling the way, particularly in setting goals, breaking tasks into steps, and acting consistently with principles. However, they have lower ratings in communicating leadership philosophy and openly sharing beliefs and values indicate areas where transparency and team alignment could be strengthened.

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

### Challenges the Process - Individual Indicator

**Table 2: Challenges the Process - Individual Indicator**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The leader actively seeks new challenges | 9 (2.8%) | 23 (7.1%) | 73 (22.4%) | 159 (48.8%) | 62 (19.0%) | 3.74 | 0.939 |
| The leader stays informed and up to date in their field | 15 (4.6%) | 15 (4.6%) | 59 (18.0%) | 149 (45.4%) | 90 (27.4%) | 3.87 | 1.017 |
| The leader questions existing processes to encourage improvement | 10 (3.1%) | 37 (11.3%) | 77 (23.5%) | 126 (38.5%) | 77 (23.5%) | 3.68 | 1.049 |
| The leader looks for opportunities to innovate | 13 (4.0%) | 18 (5.5%) | 65 (19.8%) | 159 (48.5%) | 73 (22.3%) | 3.80 | 0.979 |
| The leader reflects on experiences to identify lessons learned | 12 (3.7%) | 20 (6.1%) | 74 (22.6%) | 147 (45.0%) | 74 (22.6%) | 3.77 | 0.988 |
| The leader experiments with new approaches and is willing to take risks | 19 (5.8%) | 49 (15.1%) | 72 (22.2%) | 118 (36.3%) | 67 (20.6%) | 3.51 | 1.148 |

Overall, the findings from the above Table 2 indicate that leaders in the water sector are largely perceived as change-oriented and improvement-driven, particularly in staying informed, seeking innovation, and reflecting on lessons learned. However, they are less consistent in risk-taking behaviors, highlighting an area that may require further development to strengthen transformational leadership practices.

### Empowers Followers

**Table 3: Empowers Followers - Individual Indicator**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The leader involves others in planning and decision-making | 10 (3.1%) | 35 (10.8%) | 64 (19.7%) | 142 (43.7%) | 74 (22.8%) | 3.72 | 1.029 |
| The leader treats others with respect and values their input | 17 (5.2%) | 22 (6.7%) | 54 (16.5%) | 122 (37.3%) | 112 (34.3%) | 3.89 | 1.112 |
| The leader fosters cooperative relationships within the team | 12 (3.7%) | 16 (4.9%) | 71 (21.7%) | 139 (42.5%) | 89 (27.2%) | 3.85 | 0.997 |
| The leader recognizes and praises individual and group contributions | 14 (4.3%) | 36 (11.0%) | 75 (22.9%) | 116 (35.4%) | 87 (26.5%) | 3.69 | 1.106 |
| The leader celebrates team achievements and milestones | 9 (2.8%) | 33 (10.2%) | 78 (24.0%) | 137 (42.2%) | 68 (20.9%) | 3.68 | 1.004 |
| The leader shares the group's accomplishments to instill pride | 31 (9.5%) | 38 (11.7%) | 83 (25.5%) | 114 (35.1%)(18.2) | 59 | 3.41 | 1.189 |

Overall, the findings from the above Table 3 indicate that leaders in the water sector are strongest in treating others with respect, valuing their input, and fostering cooperation. However, practices such as recognition, celebration, and instilling pride through shared accomplishments are less consistently applied, indicating areas where empowering followers could be strengthened to enhance engagement and morale.

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

**Water Company Performance**

**Table 4: Service Quality-Individual Indicator**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Consistently meets customers' expectations and promptly addresses their complaints | 5 (1.5%) | 17 (5.2%) | 66 (20.2%) | 157 (48.0%) | 82 (25.1%) | 3.90 | 0.889 |
| Provides high quality services and remains competitive in the water sector | 9 (2.7%) | 25 (7.6%) | 50 (15.2%) | 154 (47.0%) | 90 (27.4%) | 3.89 | 0.984 |
| Maintains strong customer relationships, and uses feedback to improve services | 8 (2.4%) | 13 (4.0%) | 54 (16.5%) | 139 (42.4%) | 114 (34.8%) | 4.03 | 0.944 |

From the above Table 4, the service quality dimension showed consistently high agreement across all indicators, with mean scores ranging from 3.89 to 4.03, indicating that respondents generally perceived their organizations as effectively meeting customer needs, delivering quality services, and using customer relationships and feedback to improve performance. The moderate standard deviations also reflected reasonable consensus among respondents, highlighting service quality as a key organizational strength.

**Economic Efficiency Dimension**

**Table 5: Economic Efficiency-Individual Indicators**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The company manages resources such as time, finances, and staff effectively | 10 (3.0%) | 23 (7.0%) | 70 (21.3%) | 157 (47.9%) | 68 (20.7%) | 3.76 | 0.960 |
| There is clear communication of goals, and employees understand their work contributes to company's success | 8 (2.4%) | 33 (10.1%) | 66 (20.2%) | 147 (45.0%) | 73 (22.3%) | 3.75 | 0.994 |
| The company maintains financial stability and actively minimizes unnecessary costs | 13 (4.0%) | 24 (7.3%) | 81 (24.7%) | 150 (45.7%) | 60 (18.3%) | 3.67 | 0.987 |

From the above Table 5 findings on the economic efficiency dimension indicates that respondents generally agreed their organizations manage resources effectively, communicate goals clearly, and maintain financial stability, with mean scores ranging from 3.67 to 3.76 and moderate standard deviations. However, the presence of notable neutral responses, particularly on financial stability, suggests opportunities to improve communication and resource optimization strategies.

**Operational Sustainability Dimension**

**Table 6: Operational Sustainability-Individual Indicators**

| Indicator | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work processes are well-structured and promote innovation and productivity | 8 (2.4%) | 25 (7.6%) | 65 (19.8%) | 164 (50.0%) | 66 (20.1%) | 3.78 | 0.936 |
| The organization adapts to challenges and invests in technology and improved systems | 14 (4.3%) | 13 (4.0%) | 61 (18.6%) | 168 (51.2%) | 72 (22.0%) | 3.83 | 0.960 |
| Employees are equipped with the tools needed to perform well and are guided by a clear long-term strategy | 11 (3.4%) | 18 (5.5%) | 97 (29.6%) | 140 (42.7%) | 62 (18.9%) | 3.68 | 0.953 |

International Journal of Leadership and Governance
ISSN 2789-2476
Vol.6, Issue 1, No.2 pp 19 - 38, 2026
www.iprjb.org

The findings from Table 6 above, operational sustainability dimension shows that respondents generally agreed their organizations maintain structured processes, adapt to challenges, and provide tools within a long-term strategy framework, with mean scores ranging from 3.68 to 3.83 and moderate standard deviations. However, neutral responses, particularly regarding long-term strategy and employee tools, indicate areas that require further strengthening.

**Inferential Statistics**

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of exemplary transformational leadership dimensions; namely, models the way, challenges the process, and empowers followers, on the water company performance.

**Table 7: Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .567[a] | .322 | .316 | .56736 | .322 | 51.249 | 3 | 324 | .000 |

The model in Table 7 above, demonstrated a strong positive relationship between predicted and observed performance (R = 0.567) and explained 32.2% of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.322$), indicating a large effect size and substantial predictive power, with the remaining variance attributed to other factors. The adjusted $R^2$ (0.316) confirmed model stability, while the standard error (0.567) indicated acceptable prediction accuracy.

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients**

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.814 | .169 | | 10.740 | .000 | 1.482 | 2.147 |
| | Models the Way | .019 | .068 | .022 | .281 | .779 | -.115 | .154 |
| | Challenges the Process | .175 | .073 | .192 | 2.414 | .016 | .032 | .318 |
| | Empowers Followers | .342 | .065 | .391 | 5.240 | .000 | .214 | .471 |

The overall model in Table 8 above, was statistically significant ($F(3, 324) = 51.249$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the leadership dimensions collectively predict company performance better than chance. In terms of individual contributions, empowering followers emerged as the strongest and most significant predictor ($\beta = 0.391$, $p < 0.001$), followed by challenging the process ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.016$), which had a moderate but significant effect. In contrast, modeling the way was not a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.022$, $p = 0.779$), suggesting that its influence may be indirect or mediated through other factors.

The multiple regression analysis provided insights into the predictive relationships between exemplary transformational leadership dimensions and water and sewerage company performance. The results suggested a hierarchical model of influence, where empowering behaviors demonstrated the strongest direct effects upon the water and sewerage company performance, process-challenging behaviors contributed moderately, and 'modeling the way' behaviors served as foundational enablers that reinforced the effectiveness of other exemplary transformational leadership practices.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

The study established that exemplary transformational leadership practices are generally evident in Kenya's water and sewerage companies, with *modeling the way*, *challenging the process*, and *empowering the followers* all receiving favorable employee ratings. However, their effects on organizational performance are not uniform. While *modeling the way* was positively perceived, it did not demonstrate a statistically significant influence on water company performance, indicating that it primarily functions as a foundational leadership practice. In contrast, *challenging the process* showed a significant positive effect, underscoring the role of innovation, adaptability, and continuous improvement in enhancing organizational outcomes. Most notably, *empowering the followers* emerged as the strongest predictor of performance, highlighting the importance of participatory leadership, employee engagement, and recognition in driving organizational success. Collectively, the findings suggest that leadership practices that promote empowerment and innovation are particularly critical in improving performance within the water sector.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that exemplary transformational leadership practices exert differentiated yet complementary effects on the performance of water and sewerage companies in Kenya. Not all leadership dimensions directly translate into performance gains, with *empowering the followers* emerging as the most influential predictor. This underscores the importance of leadership approaches that foster employee involvement, shared decision-making, and recognition as central mechanisms for enhancing organizational effectiveness.

Further, *challenging the process* is identified as a significant, albeit less dominant, determinant of performance, reinforcing the need for leaders to cultivate innovation, question entrenched practices, and pursue continuous improvement particularly within a sector facing structural and operational challenges.

Although *modeling the way* did not exhibit a statistically significant direct effect, its role remains foundational. By reinforcing ethical conduct, clarity of purpose, and alignment between values and actions, it contributes indirectly to performance by strengthening trust and credibility, thereby enabling other leadership practices to be more effective.

Overall, the study highlights that effective leadership in the water sector requires a balanced approach in which foundational behaviors support more performance-driven practices, particularly those that empower employees and encourage innovation.

### Recommendations

### Recommendations for Practice

The study findings inform several practical recommendations for water and sewerage companies in Kenya. Given that empowering followers emerged as the most significant predictor of performance, leadership development initiatives should prioritize the cultivation of empowering behaviors. This involves implementing comprehensive training programs that equip managers with skills to actively involve employees in decision-making, foster collaborative team environments, and provide meaningful recognition for contributions. Such programs should incorporate practical components, including workshops on delegation, participative decision-making techniques, and effective feedback mechanisms. In addition, organizations should establish mentoring and coaching structures that pair experienced leaders

who exemplify strong empowering behaviors with developing managers to facilitate the transfer of these critical competencies.

Furthermore, the significant influence of challenging the process on performance highlights the need for formal systems that support innovation and continuous improvement. Organizations should introduce mechanisms such as suggestion schemes, innovation task forces, and regular process review sessions to institutionalize innovative practices. Leadership training should also emphasize encouraging calculated risk-taking and reframing failures as opportunities for learning rather than setbacks. This can be reinforced through the establishment of innovation budgets, the creation of safe-to-fail environments, and the development of rapid prototyping capabilities that enable the testing and scaling of new ideas.

**Recommendations for Policy**

The findings also generate important policy recommendations for water sector organizations. First, there is a need to establish comprehensive leadership competency frameworks that explicitly incorporate empowering behaviors and process-challenging activities as core requirements. These frameworks should be embedded within recruitment, selection, promotion, and performance management systems to ensure consistency in application across the organization. In addition, they should define clear behavioral indicators for each competency and set measurable standards for leadership effectiveness that align with the study's findings.

Second, given the significance of challenging the process, organizations should develop clear policy guidelines that promote innovation while effectively managing associated risks. This includes instituting frameworks for experimentation, allocating dedicated innovation budgets, and creating safe-to-fail environments that enable employees to test new approaches without fear of negative repercussions. Such policies should also address intellectual property considerations, resource allocation for innovation initiatives, and criteria for evaluating and scaling successful innovations.

Finally, organizations should implement structured succession planning policies aimed at identifying and developing employees with strong potential for empowering leadership. This will help ensure continuity in effective leadership practices and build a sustainable pipeline of leaders capable of enhancing organizational performance. These policies should outline clear criteria for identifying high-potential employees, provide structured development programs, and incorporate regular assessments of leadership readiness.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The study points to several directions for future research on exemplary transformational leadership and organizational performance. First, further studies should examine the indirect effects of modeling the way on performance through potential moderating variables such as trust, psychological safety, and organizational culture. Investigating these pathways would deepen understanding of how foundational leadership behaviors contribute to organizational effectiveness and clarify the full value of role-modeling practices, particularly through the use of advanced techniques such as structural equation modeling to capture complex relationships.

Second, future research should adopt longitudinal designs to track the impact of leadership development interventions on both leadership behaviors and organizational performance over time. Such approaches would provide stronger evidence of causality and help determine the optimal duration and intensity of leadership development programs by capturing both short-term and long-term performance outcomes across complete development cycles.

Third, qualitative and mixed-methods studies are needed to explore the contextual factors within the Kenyan water sector that shape the effectiveness of leadership practices. Factors such as organizational size, geographic location, resource availability, and regulatory environment may moderate leadership outcomes, and in-depth inquiry would provide richer insights into how leadership influences performance across different contexts.

Additionally, comparative research should assess whether the study's findings are generalizable across other sectors and cultural settings. Cross-country studies within Africa or other developing economies could help determine whether the strong emphasis on empowering followers reflects universal leadership principles or context-specific dynamics.

Finally, given the increasing digitalization of water sector operations, future research should investigate how technology adoption and digital transformation initiatives interact with exemplary transformational leadership practices. This line of inquiry would be particularly valuable in understanding how leaders can effectively drive digital transformation while sustaining empowering and process-challenging behaviors that are critical to organizational performance.

**Acknowledgements**

The author gratefully acknowledges the support and guidance received from the faculty and supervisors of the School of Graduate Studies at Pan Africa Christian University during the development of this study. Their academic insights and constructive feedback greatly contributed to the successful completion of the research.

The authors also extends sincere appreciation to the management and staff of the selected water and sewerage companies in Kenya who participated in the study and provided valuable information that made this research possible. Their cooperation and willingness to share their experiences significantly enriched the quality of the data collected.

Finally, the authors acknowledges the institutions and scholars whose published works informed this study and contributed to the development of the theoretical and empirical foundations upon which the research is built.

**Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. The research was conducted independently, and no financial or personal relationships influenced the design, data collection, analysis, or interpretation of the study.

**Data Availability Statement**

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to confidentiality agreements with the participating water and sewerage companies and the need to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

**Funding Statement**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The study was conducted independently by the authors, with institutional support from Pan Africa Christian University, Nairobi, Kenya for academic purposes.

## REFERENCES

Abedian, M., Bagheri, S. M., & Zarei, A. (2021). The role of the balanced scorecard in improving organizational performance. *International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 70*(6), 1453–1470. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPPM-08-2019-0407

Aritonang, E. Y. S., & Tung, K. Y. (2023). The influence of Kouzes and Posner's exemplary leadership, self-regulation, and job satisfaction on teacher performance in XYZ Tangerang School. *Jurnal Dinamika Pendidikan, 16*(1), 94–100. https://doi.org/10.51212/jdp.v16i1.179

Bandono, A., & Nugroho, S. H. (2023). The assessment of company performance target using balanced scorecard methods. *International Journal of Professional Business Review, 8*(5), e01968. https://doi.org/10.26668/business review/2023.v8i5.1968

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Sage.

Bozkurt, Tulay, Fatos Bektas, Mahir Jibril Ahmed, Vehap Kola, and E. Serra Yurtkoru. 2017. 'Application of Goal Setting Theory'. *Pressacademia* 3(1):796–801. doi:10.17261/Pressacademia.2017.660.

Burns, J. M. (2015). *Leadership* (2nd ed.). Open Road Media. (Original work published 1978)

Cai, Y. (2023). Leadership styles and organizational performance: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology, 14*, 112233. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.112233

Demirtas, O., & Karaca, M. (2020). Ethical leadership, organizational trust, and performance. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 41*(2), 179–192. https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-06-2019-0241

Díaz, E. R., Sánchez-Vélez, C., & Santana-Serrano, L. (2019). Integrating the five practices of exemplary leadership model into entrepreneurship education. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 13*(3). https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2019.130310

Eaton, L., Bridgman, T., & Cummings, S. (2024). Advancing the democratization of work: A new intellectual history of transformational leadership theory. *Leadership, 20*(3), 125–143. https://doi.org/10.1177/17427150241232705

Eklund, M. A. (2020). Future prospects in balanced scorecard research: Sustainability perspective. *Indonesian Journal of Sustainability Accounting and Management, 4*(2). https://doi.org/10.28992/ijsam.v4i2.263

Ennis, S., & Deller, D. (2019). Infrastructure governance and service delivery in developing countries. *Utilities Policy, 60*, 100935. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jup.2019.100935

Ibrahim, A. U., & Daniel, C. O. (2019). Participative leadership and employee performance. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9*(6), 715–725. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i6/6019

International Finance Corporation. (2020). *Emerging trends in water utility performance and governance*. World Bank Group.

Jenkins, M. W., Sugden, S., & Scott, B. (2017). Water and sanitation development in low-income countries. *Water Policy, 19*(4), 627–642. https://doi.org/10.2166/wp.2017.021

Jeong, Yoon Hyuk, Laura Catherine Healy, and Desmond mcewan. 2023. 'The Application of Goal Setting Theory to Goal Setting Interventions in Sport: A Systematic Review'. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 16(1):474–99. Doi:10.1080/1750984X.2021.1901298.

Judge, T. A., & Piccolo, R. F. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(5), 755–768. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.755

Kairu, E. W., & Muchemi, A. W. (2023). Performance of public water utilities in Kenya. *African Journal of Public Administration, 15*(1), 78–92.

Kaplan, R. S., & Norton, D. P. (1996). *The balanced scorecard: Translating strategy into action*. Harvard Business School Press.

Kirkpatrick, N. (2022). Evaluating and embodying exemplary leadership. *Journal of Leadership Education, 21*(1), 177–183. https://doi.org/10.12806/V21/I1/A1

Konuk, S., & Posner, B. Z. (2021). The effectiveness of a student leadership program in Turkey. *Journal of Leadership Education, 20*(1), 79–101. https://doi.org/10.12806/V20/I1/R6

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2017). *The leadership challenge* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Ladkin, D., & Patrick, C. (2022). Critical perspectives on transformational leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 33*(5), 101623. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101623

Lee, S. M., Lee, D., & Schniederjans, M. (2022). Digital technologies and organizational performance. *Sustainability, 14*(3), 1234. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14031234

Locke, Edwin A., and Gary P. Latham. 2019. 'The Development of Goal Setting Theory: A Half Century Retrospective'. *Motivation Science 5(2).*

Lucianetti, L., Battista, V., & Koufteros, X. (2019). Performance measurement systems and effectiveness. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management, 39*(2), 326–348. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOPM-03-2018-0177

Maina, J. W. (2021). Exemplary leadership and organizational performance in Kenya's insurance sector. *International Journal of Business Management and Finance, 4*(2), 45–58.

Mbugua, J. W., & Kinyua, G. M. K. (2019). Personnel differentiation and organization performance: An empirical analysis of deposit-taking microfinance institutions in Nairobi City County. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 3*(7), 485–495.

Miftahurrohmah, U. U., Hariri, H., Rini, R., & Rohmatillah. (2021). Exemplary leadership practices in early childhood education in preparing the golden generations for Indonesia. *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education, 1*(4), 253–268.

Muraya, J. M., & Rambo, C. M. (2019). Performance of water service providers in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Information Sciences and Project Management, 3*(3), 120–138.

Muthoni, L., & Odollo, L. (2024). Water resource challenges in Kenya. *Journal of Environmental Policy and Management, 18*(1), 55–70.

Naankiel, P. W., Simon, R. O., & Abbas, G. (2023). Integrity, public accountability, ethical and exemplary leadership models as imperatives for resolving the problem of leadership in Africa. In B. Okyere-Manu, S. N. Morgan, & O. Nwosimiri (Eds.), *Contemporary development ethics from an African perspective* (Vol. 27). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-32898-5_18

Neema, S., Okurut, F. N., & Bbaale, E. (2019). Leadership styles and performance in public institutions. *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies, 10*(2), 189–204. https://doi.org/10.1108/AJEMS-03-2018-0092

Olan, F., Arakpogun, E. O., Suklan, J., & Elsayed, N. (2022). Artificial intelligence and organizational performance. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 173*, 121174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121174

Pakurár, M., Haddad, H., Popp, J., Khan, T., & Oláh, J. (2019). Supply chain integration, organizational performance and balanced scorecard: An empirical study of the banking sector in Jordan. *Journal of International Studies, 12*(2), 129–146. https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2019/12-2/8

Pitichat, T., & Riggio, R. E. (2025). Transformational leadership theory. In K. L. Guthrie & R. Whitney (Eds.), *Leadership theories, frameworks, and approaches in practice* (pp. 133–144). Emerald. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83708-948-220251020

Piwowar-Sulej, K., & Iqbal, Q. (2023). Transformational leadership and employee outcomes. *Sustainability, 15*(3), 2345. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032345

Rawashdeh, A. M., Almasarweh, M. S., Alhyasat, E. B., & Al-Rawashdeh, F. (2021). Examining the effect of transformational leadership to organizational performance through quality innovation: A developing country perspective. *International Journal for Quality Research, 15*(1), 353–368. https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR15.01-20

Rezaei, J., van Roekel, W. S., & Tavasszy, L. (2021). Supply chain management and performance. *Transportation Research Part E, 149*, 102292. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tre.2021.102292

Siangchokyoo, N., Klinger, R. L., & Campion, E. D. (2020). Transformational leadership review. *The Leadership Quarterly, 31*(1), 101341. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2019.101341

Soomro, B. A., Mangi, S., & Shah, N. (2021). Innovation and organizational performance. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 24*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJIM-09-2019-0255

Specchia, M. L., Cozzolino, M. R., Carini, E., Di Pilla, A., Galletti, C., Ricciardi, W., & Damiani, G. (2021). Leadership styles and nurses' job satisfaction: Results of a systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18*(4), 1552. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041552

Tuan, T. T. (2020). The impact of balanced scorecard on performance: The case of Vietnamese commercial banks. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 7*(1), 71–79. https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no1.71

UNESCO. (2019). *World water development report 2019*. UNESCO.

UNICEF, & World Health Organization. (2019). *Progress on drinking water and sanitation*. UNICEF.

Water Services Regulatory Board. (2019). *Impact report: Kenya water services sector*. WASREB.

Widyani, A. A. D., Sarmawa, I. W. G., & Dewi, I. G. A. M. (2020). Ethical leadership and performance. *Management Science Letters, 10*(1), 217–224. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2019.8.016

Zainaro, M. A., Gunawan, J., & Aungsuroch, Y. (2022). Leadership and trust in mentorship. *Nurse Education Today, 108*, 105185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.105185