



LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya has been declining over the years with some firms closing down and others shifting to the neighboring countries. This study therefore sought to assess the influence of leadership practices on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of participative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya and to examine the influence of delegative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design. According to Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM, 2023), there are 91 Food and beverage manufacturing companies in Nairobi County. These manufacturing firms were the unit of analysis while the management employees were the unit of observation. The object from which information is obtained is referred to as a unit of observation (Cooper & Schindler, 2019). Therefore, 546 managers in the 91 manufacturing companies were targeted. The Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size. The stratified random sampling method was adopted to select the study sample size. The study relied on primary data which was collected from the management employees in the firms using a semi structured questionnaire. Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis comprised of multiple regression and correlation analysis. The significant of each independent variable was tested at a confidence level of 95%. The study results were presented through use of tables and figures. The study concludes that participative leadership has a positive and significant influence on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Further, the study concludes that delegative leadership has a positive and significant influence on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. From the findings, the study recommends that the management of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya should actively involve employees in decision-making processes.

Key Words: Leadership Practices, Participative Leadership, Delegative Leadership, Performance of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms

Background of the Study

Manufacturing firms play a critical role in the development and sustainability of national and global economies. These firms convert raw materials into finished goods through various industrial processes, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, trade, and technological advancement (Pineau Stam *et al*, 2022). According to the World Bank, manufacturing accounted for approximately 16% of global GDP in 2022, underscoring its central position in economic development and industrial growth. Furthermore, manufacturing industries are typically characterized by high value-addition and innovation, making them essential drivers of productivity and economic competitiveness. One of the key economic contributions of manufacturing firms is their capacity to create jobs (Wiwiek, 2024). Globally, the manufacturing sector employs over 500 million people, directly and indirectly supporting livelihoods across supply chains. Additionally, manufacturing fosters industrial linkages by stimulating the growth of upstream (e.g., raw materials) and downstream (e.g., distribution and retail) sectors. Countries with robust manufacturing bases, such as Germany, China, and South Korea, tend to demonstrate higher levels of export earnings and economic resilience (Niveen, Taghrid & Rateb, 2023).

Within the broader manufacturing sector, food and beverage manufacturing holds a particularly vital position. This sub-sector not only addresses essential human needs but also operates at the intersection of agriculture, trade, and industry. Globally, the food manufacturing industry is among the largest manufacturing segments (Abdul, Sebastian & Zubair, 2023). According to the International Trade Administration, the global food processing industry was valued at over \$4.2 trillion in 2023, with expectations of steady growth driven by population increase, urbanization, and changing dietary patterns. Food manufacturing firms contribute significantly to employment and economic diversification, especially in developing countries where agriculture dominates (Amal & Nosheen, 2023). By processing agricultural produce into value-added products, these firms enhance food security, reduce post-harvest losses, and create market linkages for farmers. In developed economies, food manufacturers are also major exporters; for instance, the United States exported more than \$170 billion worth of agricultural and food products in 2022, with processed food products accounting for a large portion (Murayire, 2024).

Leadership can be defined as the ability to influence, guide, and inspire individuals or groups toward the achievement of goals and shared visions. It involves not only setting a direction but also motivating people to follow that direction willingly (Ojokuku, Odetayo & Sajuyigbe, 2023). Effective leadership requires a combination of personal attributes such as integrity, communication skills, decision-making capability, and emotional intelligence. Leaders play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture, fostering innovation, and ensuring sustainable performance across various settings, including business, education, politics, and community development. Leadership practices refer to the behaviors, strategies, and actions that leaders consistently apply to influence and guide their teams (Trespory & Parameswar, 2022). These practices may vary across different leadership styles but often include setting clear expectations, communicating effectively, encouraging participation, empowering others, and managing conflicts constructively. For instance, transformational leaders inspire through vision and motivation, while participative leaders promote collaboration and shared decision-making. Effective leadership practices not only drive organizational success but also enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and retention (Kawooya, 2020). This study sought to assess the influence of leadership practices on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya

Chege and Gakobu (2023) found that transformational and transactional leadership both have positive relationship with the organizational performance. However laissez-faire leadership

style had a weak and positive relationship with performance. Relational analysis as expected proved that all transformational leadership behaviors positively relate with organizational performance. The study concluded that leadership practices have a significant influence on employee performance.

Gachingiri (2025) found that majority of the respondents indicated that the respondents practiced transformational leadership. Findings further illustrated that the respondents considered leadership style practiced by overall management at United Nations environment programme as valid with regard to its effect on organizational performance. Research findings illustrated that the respondents considered transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style, and charismatic leadership style practiced by overall management at United Nations environment programme. The researcher therefore concluded that transformational leadership style significantly affects organizational performance at United Nations environment programme.

Koech and Namusonge (2023) found that transformational leaders encourage subordinates to put in extra effort and to go beyond what they (subordinates) expected before. Transformational leaders achieve the greatest performance from subordinates since they are able to inspire their subordinates to raise their capabilities for success and develop subordinates' innovative problem solving skills. The study concluded that all transformational leadership behaviors have a strong positive correlation with organizational performance.

Otieno and Njoroge (2024) showed that the most exhibited style at Technical University of Kenya is transformational leadership followed by the transactional leadership style and laissez-faire with autocratic being the least used. Employee performance was above average. The study concluded that leadership styles have a strong correlation with organizational performance.

Statement of the Problem

Food and beverage manufacturing firms play a vital role in Kenya's economic growth, food security, and employment creation. By transforming raw agricultural produce into consumable goods, these firms add value to the agricultural sector, reduce post-harvest losses, and ensure a consistent food supply (Kahuari, Muraguri & Kinyua, 2022). They contribute significantly to national income, generate employment opportunities, and stimulate industrial development, especially in urban centers like Nairobi City County. Additionally, they support public health by producing safe and nutritious food products, while also engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives that promote sustainability, community welfare, and environmental conservation (Chege & Gakobu, 2023).

Food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya face several critical challenges that impact their profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction. These challenges are driven by external economic pressures, evolving consumer demands, and operational inefficiencies (Gachingiri, 2025). Addressing them requires a strategic approach that balances innovation, efficiency, and responsiveness to market trends. Profitability remains a significant concern for many firms in the sector. Rising costs of raw materials, energy, and transportation have significantly eroded profit margins (Koech & Namusonge, 2023). For instance, Sasini Tea & Coffee reported a 53.6% decline in net profits during the 2023 financial year, primarily due to adverse weather conditions, lower production volumes, and increased costs of production. Similarly, Simbisa Kenya, the parent company of fast-food chains Chicken Inn and Pizza Inn, experienced a 13% decline in operating profit, attributing the downturn to high inflation, political uncertainty, and cost-of-living protests that reduced customer demand. These factors have made it challenging for firms to maintain profitability without compromising on quality or increasing prices (Otieno & Njoroge, 2024).

Market share is also under pressure due to intense competition and shifting consumer preferences. The Kenyan food and beverage sector recorded a 5% annual growth in 2023, driven by rising incomes, urbanization, and increased consumer spending (Kahuari, Muraguri & Kinyua, 2022). However, this growth is accompanied by increased competition from both local and international brands. The rise of e-commerce and online food delivery platforms has further intensified competition, with platforms like Glovo, Jumia Food, and Uber Eats capturing significant market shares. Firms that fail to adapt to these changes risk losing market relevance, particularly among younger, more digitally engaged consumers (Chege & Gakobu, 2023).

Customer satisfaction has become more difficult to maintain as expectations for product quality, consistency, and transparency have risen. Consumers are increasingly informed and are demanding not just quality products, but also ethical sourcing, eco-friendly packaging, and clear labeling (Gachingiri, 2025). Supply chain disruptions—such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic—have led to delays and stockouts, further straining customer trust. A growing number of complaints regarding inconsistent quality or delayed deliveries can quickly escalate on social media, damaging brand reputation. To stay competitive, firms must invest in quality assurance, supply chain resilience, and customer engagement strategies that foster trust and loyalty (Koech & Namusonge, 2023).

Leadership practices play a pivotal role in shaping the performance and success of organizations, including food and beverage manufacturing firms (Otieno & Njoroge, 2024). Effective leadership influences various aspects such as employee engagement, productivity, and organizational culture. For instance, a study by Gallup revealed that companies with high employee engagement are 21% more profitable than those with lower engagement levels (Kahuari, Muraguri & Kinyua, 2022). Various studies have been conducted in different parts of the world on leadership practices and organization performance. For instance, Kahuari, Muraguri and Kinyua (2022) in Kenya conducted a study on leadership practices on performance of Huduma Centres in Nairobi City County. In Kenya, Chege and Gakobu (2023) assessed on influence of leadership styles on performance of telecommunication industry and Gachingiri (2025) in Kenya researched on effect of leadership practices on organizational performance. However, none of these studies focused on authoritarian leadership, participative leadership, delegative leadership and transformational leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to determine the influence of leadership practices (authoritarian leadership, participative leadership, delegative leadership and transformational leadership) on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the influence of leadership practices on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi city county, Kenya

Specific Objectives

- i. To determine the influence of participative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya
- ii. To examine the influence of delegative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Theoretical Review

The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, developed by Robert House (1971), proposes that a leader's primary role is to help followers achieve their goals by removing obstacles, providing

direction, and supporting their efforts. The theory is grounded in the idea that leaders should adapt their style based on the needs of their team and the work environment (Friedrich, 2020). Leaders using this approach work to clarify the path to achieving objectives, providing necessary resources and guidance. The leader's behavior is dynamic and adjusts to the circumstances, as they select one of four leadership styles: directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented, depending on the situation (Emmanuel & Onesmo, 2025).

In this theory, the leader's behavior directly influences the satisfaction, motivation, and performance of subordinates (Ochieng, Koshal & Bellows, 2023). The path-goal theory emphasizes that leaders should tailor their approach to match the needs of their team and the work environment. For example, a directive style may be needed in high-uncertainty or high-risk situations, while a participative style might be more effective when team members require greater input in decision-making. By adjusting their style, leaders help employees navigate challenges and achieve their individual and collective goals (Juma, Ayub & Ali, 2023).

The Path-Goal Theory highlights the importance of leader adaptability in promoting a productive and motivated workforce. This flexibility enables leaders to remove obstacles and provide the necessary support for employees to succeed (Mwaisaka, K'Aol & Ouma, 2020). By understanding and addressing the needs and preferences of their subordinates, leaders can enhance job satisfaction, encourage high performance, and foster a collaborative work environment. The theory is particularly effective in environments where goals are complex, and the work requires the collaboration and input of diverse team members (Friedrich, 2020). The theory was used to determine the influence of participative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

The Leadership Continuum Theory

The Leadership Continuum Theory, developed by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren Schmidt (1958), posits that leadership behavior falls on a spectrum, ranging from autocratic to democratic leadership (Eysendeyk, & Senka, 2021). The theory emphasizes that leaders can move along this continuum based on various factors such as the team's skills, the task at hand, the level of trust between the leader and the team, and the urgency of the decision-making process. The theory highlights that leadership is not a fixed trait; rather, it is fluid and dependent on contextual factors, which means that leaders can shift their approach depending on the situation (Alharbi, 2021).

Tannenbaum and Schmidt identified seven different leadership styles along this continuum, ranging from highly directive (autocratic) to highly participative (democratic) (Kiwauka & Mwanzia, 2020). At one end of the spectrum, the leader makes decisions with little input from subordinates, while at the other end, the leader facilitates decision-making and encourages active participation from team members. This theory recognizes that no one leadership style is appropriate for all situations, and effective leaders must be flexible in their approach, adapting to the specific demands of the task, the capabilities of their team, and the external environment (Wakere, 2020).

The Leadership Continuum Theory is particularly useful for understanding the fluidity of leadership in organizations (Atuti & Nyang'au, 2023). It underscores the importance of situational leadership, suggesting that the most effective leaders are those who can assess the needs of their team and the context of the task at hand and adjust their leadership style accordingly. This theory allows leaders to be more strategic in their decision-making, helping them foster a work environment where employees feel empowered when necessary, while still maintaining clarity and structure when needed (Eysendeyk & Senka, 2021). The theory was used to examine the influence of delegative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework refers to a diagrammatic set of interrelated ideas on a particular phenomenon and it's characterized by cause, and effect relationships which help interpret more and hence make it easily understandable (Svinicki, 2019). It is a diagram that explains the relationship between dependent and independent variables. In this study the independent variables are participative leadership and delegative leadership while the dependent variable is performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

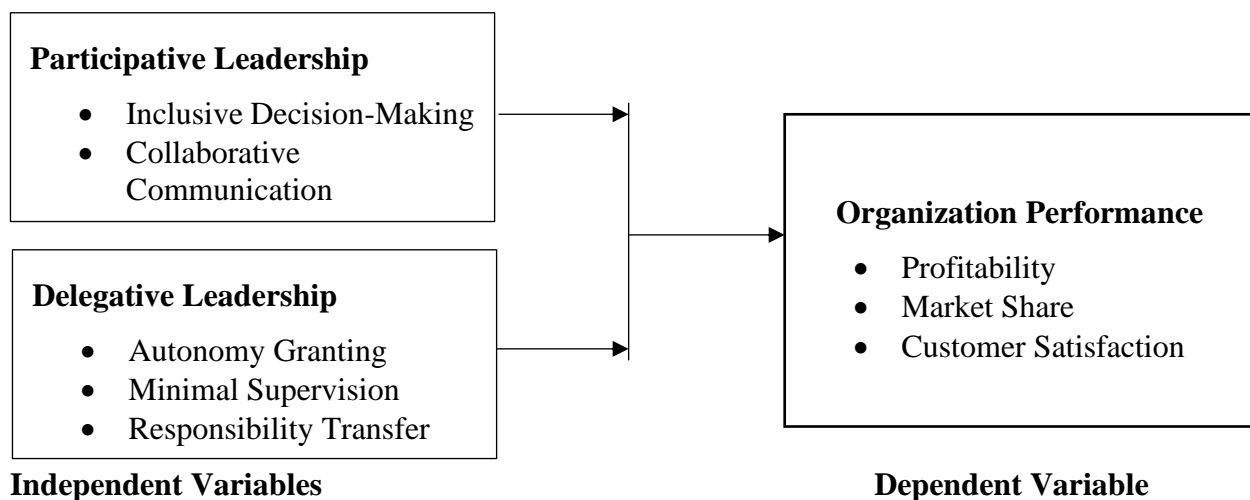


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

Participative Leadership

Participative leadership, also known as democratic leadership, is a style where the leader actively seeks input and involvement from team members in the decision-making process (Friedrich, 2020). In this approach, the leader fosters a collaborative environment, encouraging open communication and shared responsibility. The leader values the ideas, opinions, and feedback of their team, which helps to create a sense of ownership and commitment among the members. This style can lead to higher job satisfaction, increased morale, and a stronger sense of teamwork, as individuals feel more respected and empowered (Emmanuel & Onesmo, 2025). However, while participative leadership can result in better decision-making and innovation due to the diversity of perspectives, it may also slow down the decision-making process. This is because it requires time to gather input and reach consensus, which may not be ideal in fast-paced or crisis situations where quick decisions are necessary. Despite this, participative leadership tends to be highly effective in environments that prioritize collaboration, creativity, and employee engagement (Ochieng, Koshal & Bellows, 2023).

In participative leadership, inclusive decision-making is a core element that emphasizes involving all team members in the process of making important decisions (Juma, Ayub & Ali, 2023). The leader actively seeks diverse perspectives, ensuring that everyone has a chance to voice their opinions and contribute to the direction of the group. This inclusivity not only helps to generate a wider range of ideas but also fosters a sense of ownership among team members, as they feel their input is valued and considered. While this process can lead to better, more informed decisions and higher buy-in from the team, it can also be time-consuming, as it requires gathering and synthesizing multiple viewpoints before reaching a consensus. Nonetheless, inclusive decision-making often results in decisions that are better-rounded and supported by the entire team (Mwaisaka, K'Aol & Ouma, 2020).

Collaborative communication is a key feature of participative leadership, where open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas are encouraged between the leader and the team (Friedrich, 2020). This communication style promotes transparency and trust, as team members feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and concerns without fear of retribution. It also ensures that everyone is aligned and informed, which leads to more effective problem-solving and decision-making. By fostering a culture of collaboration, the leader creates an environment where team members are more likely to work together, share knowledge, and support one another in achieving common goals. However, the challenge of collaborative communication is that it requires time and effort to maintain consistent, effective interaction, particularly in larger teams or organizations (Emmanuel & Onesmo, 2025).

Empowerment in participative leadership refers to the leader's effort to give team members the autonomy and responsibility to make decisions and take initiative (Ochieng, Koshal & Bellows, 2023). By entrusting employees with more control over their work and recognizing their capabilities, leaders inspire confidence and promote a sense of ownership and accountability. This empowerment leads to higher levels of motivation and engagement, as individuals are more likely to take pride in their contributions when they feel trusted and valued. Moreover, it can result in improved job satisfaction and performance, as employees are encouraged to develop their skills and make meaningful contributions. However, effective empowerment requires the leader to balance autonomy with guidance and support, ensuring that team members have the resources and direction they need to succeed while still maintaining the freedom to make decisions (Juma, Ayub & Ali, 2023).

Delegative Leadership

Delegative leadership, also known as laissez-faire leadership, is a leadership style where the leader gives team members a high degree of autonomy in making decisions and carrying out tasks (Eysendeyk, & Senka, 2021). In this approach, the leader provides minimal guidance, offering support only when necessary, and trusts the team to handle responsibilities on their own. This leadership style can be highly effective in environments where employees are highly skilled, experienced, and motivated, as it allows for greater creativity, innovation, and personal growth. However, it can also lead to a lack of direction or accountability if team members are not self-disciplined or if the leader fails to provide adequate oversight (Alharbi, 2021). While delegative leadership encourages independence and fosters a sense of empowerment, it requires a strong, capable team that can thrive without constant supervision. When managed well, it can lead to increased job satisfaction and productivity, but it may result in confusion or inefficiency if the leader does not set clear expectations or remain involved in key aspects of the project (Kiwanuka & Mwanzia, 2020).

Autonomy granting is a central feature of delegative leadership, where the leader provides team members with the freedom to make decisions and manage their own work (Wakere, 2020). By giving employees the power to decide how to approach tasks, the leader fosters an environment of trust and empowerment. This autonomy allows team members to use their skills and expertise to innovate and problem-solve, which can lead to increased motivation and job satisfaction. It is particularly effective when dealing with skilled professionals or highly experienced individuals who thrive on independence. However, the leader must ensure that team members have the necessary resources and a clear understanding of their roles, as too much freedom without proper guidance can lead to confusion or misalignment with organizational goals (Atuti & Nyang'au, 2023).

Delegative leadership is characterized by minimal supervision, where the leader steps back and allows team members to carry out their duties with limited oversight (Eysendeyk & Senka, 2021). The leader trusts that their team will take responsibility for their tasks and follow through without constant intervention. This approach can lead to greater innovation and

creativity, as team members have the flexibility to explore different methods of accomplishing their objectives. However, minimal supervision also requires that the leader maintain a level of trust in their team's competence and reliability. If the team lacks the necessary skills or motivation, this lack of supervision can lead to inefficiencies, missed deadlines, or subpar results. Therefore, while minimal supervision can be empowering, it's crucial that the leader ensures there's an appropriate balance between freedom and accountability (Alharbi, 2021).

Responsibility transfer is a key aspect of delegative leadership, where the leader hands over decision-making authority and task management to team members (Kiwanuka & Mwanzia, 2020). By transferring responsibility, the leader empowers individuals or teams to take ownership of their work and outcomes. This transfer fosters a sense of accountability and encourages team members to develop their skills and leadership qualities. It also allows the leader to focus on higher-level strategic decisions while the team handles day-to-day operations. However, the success of this responsibility transfer depends on the team's ability to manage tasks effectively and make informed decisions. Without clear expectations and proper resources, transferring too much responsibility without adequate support can lead to confusion or errors. Therefore, while it can build trust and confidence, responsibility transfer must be carefully managed to ensure that the team has the capacity to succeed independently (Wakere, 2020).

Empirical Review

Participative Leadership and organization performance

Friedrich (2020) conducted a study on the effect of cultural differences, participative leadership and communication style in Germany. The first article explores employee expectations and preferences towards participative leadership (PL), and the second article looks at differences in communication style, focusing on openness and directness. The findings exposed several divergences in expectations between nationalities towards the level of participative leadership, but indicated that preferences are much more similar across the countries. The conclusions of this paper show that among the countries studied, there are significant differences concerning employees' expectations towards participative leadership.

Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025) conducted a study on the influence of participative leadership practices in promoting teacher's job commitment in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. The study focuses on the influence of participative leadership practices in promoting teacher job commitment in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania. The findings are reveals the significant positive relationship between teachers' job dedication and participative leadership methods. Higher job commitment was demonstrated by teachers who felt included in decision-making processes. The study conclusion discovered a significant positive relationship between teachers' job dedication and participative leadership methods.

Ochieng, Koshal and Bellows (2023) conducted a study on the effect of participative leadership style and performance of manufacturing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study sought to determine the influence of participative leadership style on organizational performance of manufacturing Small and Medium Enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population consisted of managers/owners from 425 SMEs listed members of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers Nairobi Region. These study findings are significant to the owners/managers of SMEs, Policy makers/Industry regulators and Academic Researchers as they provide a new dimension on the effect of participative leadership on organizational performance. The study concluded that participative leadership style significantly influenced organizational performance in manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County

Juma, Ayub and Ali (2023) conducted a study on the effect of influence of participative leadership style on public health service delivery in county governments in the Western Kenya Region. This research aimed at establishing the influence of participative leadership style on public health service delivery by county governments in the Western Kenya region. From the results, the beta value for participative leadership from the regression model. The conclusions indicated that participative leadership had greatest influence on public health service delivery in County Governments in Western Kenya Region.

Mwaisaka, K'Aol and Ouma (2020) conducted a study on the influence of participative and achievement oriented leadership styles on employee job satisfaction in commercial banks in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of participative and achievement-oriented leadership styles on employee job satisfaction in commercial banks in Kenya. The study adopted positivism research philosophy to guide the study and limited itself to descriptive correlational research design to analyze and provide responses to the research questions. The study findings of multiple linear regression analysis also revealed that achievement-oriented leadership style positively and significantly predicted employee job satisfaction. The conclusion from multiple linear regression analysis revealed that participative leadership style positively and significantly predicted employee job satisfaction among employees reporting to middle level managers at commercial banks in Kenya.

Delegative Leadership and organization performance

Eysendeyk and Senka (2021) conducted a case study on delegative leadership impacts on cross-cultural organizational change in Sweden. The approach adopted in this paper is based on the critical review and discussion of extant literature, secondary data from GLOBE research. The study found that delegative leadership affects organizational working environment. The study concluded that delegative leadership impacts organizational working environment.

Alharbi (2021) conducted a study on delegative leadership: a literature review paper in Saudi Arabia. The study used cross examination of past researches. The study found that delegative leadership is crucial for all organizations that intend to remain competitive. The study concluded that organizations need thus to adopt new methods and ways of running things to stay and remain competitive.

Kiwanuka and Mwanzia (2020) conducted a study on the effect of delegative leadership strategies and performance of Nairobi city county government, Kenya. The study was conducted in Nairobi county government Kenya. The unit of analysis was the Nairobi county government while the unit of observation was the 85 elected and 38 nominated Members of the County Assembly (MCA's), the governor and the deputy governor. This was used to establish the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The study concludes that delegative leadership has a performance of Nairobi city county government, Kenya.

Wakere (2020) conducted a study on the influence of strategic leadership on innovation among mobile service providers in Kenya. The main objective for this study was to investigate the influence of strategic leadership on innovation among mobile service providers in Kenya. The study results indicated that transformational leadership, transactional leadership and distributed leadership were positively and highly correlated with innovation. The study concludes that transformational leadership influenced innovation among mobile service providers in Kenya

Atuti and Nyang'au (2023) conducted a study on the effect of participatory leadership style and performance of Kenyatta national hospital, Kenya. This study sought to analyze the influence of participatory leadership style and performance of Kenyatta National Hospital and thus recommend remedial measures. The study findings was guided by the following specific objectives; to establish the influence of consultative participation on performance of Kenyatta

National Hospital, Kenya; and to determine the influence of information sharing on performance of Kenyatta National Hospital. The study concludes that consultative participation has a positive and significant effect on performance of Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya. The study also concludes that information sharing has a positive and significant effect on performance of Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used descriptive research design. Descriptive survey design is useful in describing the features of the population that has been earmarked for study and providing answers to the research questions as noted by Shields and Rangarajan (2019). The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate the connection between the significant study variables. According to Teddlie and Tashkkori, (2019) the two methods help in getting comparative data of the same kind. This study used to compute the hypothetical relationship amongst the dependent and independent variables because it requires the data to be transposed into numbers in a formal objective systematic process and obtain information describe variables and their relationships (Mark, Philip & Adrian, 2019, Nicholas, 2017, and William, 2019).

Target Population

The target population for this study was medium Food and beverage manufacturing companies in Nairobi County. The choice of food manufacturing is informed by the fact that despite their importance in Kenya, it has been experiencing a lot of turbulence in the recent past including a drop in the GDP, an increasing imbalance of trade and the exiting of large multinationals (World Bank economic update, 2020).

According to Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM, 2023), there are 91 Food and beverage manufacturing companies in Nairobi County. These manufacturing firms were the unit of analysis while the management employees were the unit of observation. The object from which information is obtained is referred to as a unit of observation (Cooper & Schindler, 2019). Therefore, 546 managers in the 91 manufacturing companies were targeted.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample is a small group obtained from accessible population (Mugenda & Mugenda 2019). The Yamane formula was adopted to calculate the study sample size as follows;

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where n is the sample size, and N is the population size, e- acceptable sampling error (0.05)

$$\begin{aligned} &= \frac{546}{1+546(0.05^2)} \\ &= \frac{546}{2.365} = 230.86 \end{aligned}$$

$$n \approx 231$$

Therefore, the study sample size was 231 respondents.

The stratified random sampling method was adopted to select the study sample size. Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata. In stratified random sampling or stratification, the strata are formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics such as income or educational attainment (Creswell, 2019).

Data Collection Instruments

The study relied on primary data which was collected from the management employees in the firms using a semi structured questionnaire. A questionnaire is defined as a document that consists of a number of questions printed in a definite order or a form or a set of forms (Kothari, 2019). This study employed quantitative data collection method whereby data was gathered by use of close ended questionnaires this is because they work best with standardized questions that are interpreted the same way by all respondents (Coopers &Schindler, 2019).

Pilot Study

A pilot test was conducted to determine validity and reliability of the data collection instrument. A pilot study is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior regarding a larger study, in order to improve the latter quality and efficiency. A pilot study can reveal deficiencies in the design of proposed experiment and procedure and these can be addressed before time and resources are expended on large scale studies. The responses from respondents were used to adjust and refine questionnaire accordingly. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) the pretest sample should be between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size. Therefore, 23 (10% of study sample) questionnaires were tested on manufacturing firms selected randomly.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained from the field was coded, cleaned, and entered into the computer for analysis using the SPSS version 25. The data was summarized in order to see emerging trends and issues around specific themes, which are dependent on the variables and objectives. Presentation of data was done in form of quantitative and qualitative reports which were presented in forms of tables and essay. For the quantitative reports, the tables consisted of mean and standard deviation values that were used to make interpretation of the analysis. Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to show the frequency of responses. Tables were used to display the rate of responses and to facilitate comparison.

Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical analysis comprised of multiple regression and correlation analysis. The significant of each independent variable was tested at a confidence level of 95%. The multiple regression model that was utilized as shown below:

$$Y = \beta + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where:

Y represents dependent Variable (performance of food and beverages manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.),

β represents a constant or Intercept

β₁, β₂, β₃, β₄ represents the estimated regression coefficients

X₁ represents Participative leadership

X_2 represents Delegative leadership

ϵ represents error term (represents the effect of the variables that were not covered by the equation)

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics

Participative Leadership and Firm Performance

The second specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of participative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to participative leadership and performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as shown in Table 4.1

From the results, the respondents agreed that decisions are often made through group discussions and consensus ($M=3.879$, $SD=0.515$). In addition, the respondents agreed that they feel that their opinions are valued when decisions are being made ($M=3.736$, $SD=0.849$). Further, the respondents agreed that the leader involves employees in setting goals and solving problems ($M=3.744$, $SD=0.868$).

From the results, the respondents agreed that there is open and two-way communication between the leader and the team ($M=3.660$, $SD=0.721$). In addition the respondents agreed that team members are empowered to take initiative and make decisions in their roles ($M=3.642$, $SD=0.594$). Further, the respondents agreed that the leader fosters a sense of collaboration and mutual respect within the team ($M=3.635$, $SD=0.859$).

Table 4. 1: Participative Leadership and Firm Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Decisions are often made through group discussions and consensus.	3.879	0.515
I feel that my opinions are valued when decisions are being made.	3.736	0.849
The leader involves employees in setting goals and solving problems.	3.744	0.868
There is open and two-way communication between the leader and the team.	3.660	0.721
Team members are empowered to take initiative and make decisions in their roles.	3.642	0.594
The leader fosters a sense of collaboration and mutual respect within the team.	3.635	0.859
Aggregate	3.716	0.734

Delegative Leadership and Firm Performance

The third specific objective of the study was to examine the influence of delegative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to delegative leadership and performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 4.2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the leader provides minimal supervision and expects employees to manage their own tasks ($M=3.830$, $SD=0.537$). In addition, the respondents agreed that they are given the freedom to determine how to approach their work ($M=3.827$, $SD=0.798$). Further, the respondents agreed that the leader trusts the team to solve problems independently ($M=3.806$, $SD=0.609$).

From the results, the respondents agreed that clear guidelines or direction from the leader are often lacking ($M=3.763$, $SD=0.790$). In addition, the respondents agreed that the leader rarely intervenes unless absolutely necessary ($M=3.729$, $SD=0.853$). Further, the respondents agreed that team members are expected to take full responsibility for their performance and outcomes ($M=3.715$, $SD=0.855$).

Table 4. 2: Delegative Leadership and Firm Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leader provides minimal supervision and expects employees to manage their own tasks.	3.830	0.537
I am given the freedom to determine how to approach my work.	3.827	0.798
The leader trusts the team to solve problems independently.	3.806	0.609
Clear guidelines or direction from the leader are often lacking.	3.763	0.790
The leader rarely intervenes unless absolutely necessary.	3.729	0.853
Team members are expected to take full responsibility for their performance and outcomes	3.715	0.855
Aggregate	3.778	0.740

Firm Performance

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 4.3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that they maintain high levels of product quality and safety in their manufacturing processes ($M=3.918$, $SD=0.833$). In addition, the respondents agreed that customer satisfaction with their products has improved over the last 12 months ($M=3.881$, $SD=0.733$). Further, the respondents agreed that their firm effectively controls production costs while maintaining product standards ($M=3.782$, $SD=0.673$).

From the results, the respondents agreed that they successfully introduced new products in response to changing consumer preferences ($M=3.755$, $SD=0.912$). In addition, the respondents agreed that their manufacturing operations are efficient and minimize waste and downtime ($M=3.739$, $SD=0.693$). Further, the respondents agreed that the firm experiences steady revenue and profitability growth in the past fiscal year ($M=3.699$, $SD=0.687$).

Table 4. 4: Firm Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
We maintain high levels of product quality and safety in our manufacturing processes.	3.918	0.833
Customer satisfaction with our products has improved over the last 12 months.	3.881	0.733
Our firm effectively controls production costs while maintaining product standards.	3.782	0.673
We successfully introduced new products in response to changing consumer preferences.	3.755	0.912
Our manufacturing operations are efficient and minimize waste and downtime.	3.739	0.693
The firm experiences steady revenue and profitability growth in the past fiscal year.	3.699	0.687
Aggregate	3.796	0.755

Correlation Analysis

The present study used Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength of association between independent variables (participative leadership and delegative leadership) and the dependent variable (performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya). Pearson correlation coefficient range between zero and one, where by the strength of association increase with increase in the value of the correlation coefficients.

Table 4. 5: Correlation

		Firm Performance	Participative Leadership	Delegative Leadership
Firm Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	207		
Participative Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.854**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002		
	N	207	207	
Delegative Leadership	Pearson Correlation	.882**	.267	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.013	
	N	207	207	207

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

The results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between participative leadership and performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($r = 0.824$, p value $= 0.003$). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings conform to the findings of Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025) that there is a very strong relationship between participative leadership and firm performance.

Further, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between delegative leadership and performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($r = 0.885$, p value $= 0.000$). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Kiwanuka and Mwanzia (2020) that there is a very strong relationship between delegative leadership and firm performance.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (participative leadership and delegative leadership and transformational leadership) and the dependent variable (performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya)

Table 4. 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.874	.764	.763	.10428

a. Predictors: (Constant), participative leadership and delegative leadership

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The r-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.764. This implied that 76.4% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (participative leadership and delegative leadership).

Table 4. 7: Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	109.867	2	54.93	686.675	.000 ^b
Residual	8.123	204	.040		
Total	117.99	206			

a. Dependent Variable: performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

b. Predictors: (Constant), participative leadership and delegative leadership

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 686.675 while the F critical was 2.416. The p value was 0.000. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05, the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of participative leadership and delegative leadership on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Table 4. 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.243	0.063		3.857	0.000
	participative leadership	0.383	0.099	0.384	3.869	0.000
	delegative leadership	0.371	0.096	0.370	3.865	0.001

a Dependent Variable: performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.243 + 0.383X_1 + 0.371X_2 + \varepsilon$$

The results revealed that participative leadership has significant effect on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, $\beta_1=0.383$, p value= 0.000). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.000 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings conform to the findings of Friedrich (2020) that there is a very strong relationship between participative leadership and firm performance.

Furthermore, the results revealed that delegative leadership has significant effect on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, $\beta_1=0.371$, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Eysendeyk and Senka (2021) that there is a very strong relationship between delegative leadership and firm performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concludes that participative leadership has a positive and significant influence on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that inclusive decision-making, collaborative communication and empowerment influence performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Further, the study concludes that delegative leadership has a positive and significant influence on performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that autonomy Granting, minimal Supervision and responsibility transfer influence performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the management of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya should actively involve employees in decision-making processes. By fostering a culture of inclusion and valuing employee input, firms can tap into the collective knowledge and experience of their workforce, leading to improved problem-solving, greater employee commitment, and enhanced overall performance.

Further, the study recommends that the management of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Kenya should empower qualified employees by assigning them responsibility and autonomy over specific tasks or projects. This approach not only fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among staff but also encourages creativity and innovation.

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