STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AT THE KENYA SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, EMBU CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between strategic leadership practices and operational efficiency at the Kenya School of Government (KSG), Embu Campus. It focused on employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement and technology integration. A quantitative approach and descriptive cross-sectional survey design were adopted. The target population comprised 95 management, faculty and non-faculty employees associated with Embu Campus and KSG headquarters. A census approach was used and structured self-administered questionnaires generated 85 usable responses (89.5%). The instrument was pilot tested, and internal consistency assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The study was conducted under a research licence issued by NACOSTI with voluntary participation and confidentiality safeguards. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression. The results showed positive, statistically significant associations between all four dimensions and operational efficiency. Technology integration had the largest correlation ($r = 0.793$) and standardised regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.389$). The study concludes that the four practices are positively associated with operational efficiency. It recommends strengthening employee participation, aligning resources with service priorities, institutionalising stakeholder feedback and improving the reliability and effective use of digital systems.

Keywords: Strategic leadership; operational efficiency; employee empowerment; resource allocation; stakeholder engagement; technology integration.

INTRODUCTION

Public institutions are expected to deliver services efficiently within established budgetary, regulatory and accountability frameworks. Their performance depends not only on availability of resources but also how those resources are prioritised, coordinated and organised to achieve institutional objectives. Strategic leadership is important in public sector management as it provides direction, supports organisational decision making, mobilises institutional capabilities and aligns operations with service delivery priorities (Northouse, 2022).

Operational efficiency is an organisation's ability to convert available resources into outputs while minimising delays, waste, errors and unnecessary costs (Wu et al., 2022). In public institutions, efficiency is important as resources are entrusted to organisations to deliver services and achieve public objectives. For government training institutions, operational efficiency is reflected in effective registration of trainees, scheduling and delivery of training programmes, utilisation of facilities, processing of administrative requirements and timely provision of services to government and county clients.

Strategic leadership supports operational efficiency through several organisational practices. Employee empowerment enables staffs participate in decisions and resolve routine operational challenges. Effective resource allocation ensures that financial, human, physical and technological resources are directed towards institutional priorities. Stakeholder engagement improves coordination between institutions and the individuals or organisations depending on their services. Technology integration can strengthen administrative processes through automation, accurate information management and timely access to operational data. These practices are relevant to public institutions as they must balance efficiency with accountability, responsiveness and responsible resource utilisation.

Although previous studies have examined relationships between leadership practices and organisational performance, there remains need for institution-specific evidence on how particular strategic leadership practices relate to operational efficiency in Kenyan government training institutions (M'Mugambi, 2024; Orito, 2021). Existing research has addressed broader organisational performance, governance and service delivery outcomes; however these outcomes do not explain operational processes through which public training institutions use resources and deliver services. This study addresses this gap by examining employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement and technology integration in relation to operational efficiency at Kenya School of Government (KSG), Embu Campus.

The study is relevant to public management since government training institutions are responsible for developing the capacity of public officers while managing public resources and responding to the requirements of their institutional clients. Understanding how strategic leadership practices

relate to operational efficiency can provide evidence to inform management decisions on staff participation, resource deployment, stakeholder coordination and technology use. The study was guided by the following objectives

i. To determine the influence of employee empowerment on operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.
ii. To establish the effect of resource allocation on operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.
iii. To investigate the relationship between stakeholder engagement and operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.
iv. To examine the influence of technology integration on operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Related Literature and Studies

Strategic leadership is the capacity of organisational leaders to establish direction, make decisions, mobilise resources and guide the implementation of long-term institutional priorities (Northouse, 2022). It requires leaders to align organisational capabilities with institutional objectives, respond to changes in the operating environment and establish mechanisms for monitoring performance (Carton, 2022; Fischer & Sitkin, 2023). In public sector organisations, strategic leadership operates within institutional environments characterised by regulatory requirements, public accountability, budgetary controls and competing service delivery priorities. Public managers must ensure that organisational decisions support institutional mandates while promoting responsible use of public resources. Strategic leadership is relevant in this context as it can strengthen the coordination of employees, resources, stakeholders and organisational systems towards agreed performance objectives (Bryson & George, 2024; Osborne et al., 2016).

Operational efficiency is the ability of an organisation to use available inputs effectively in producing its intended outputs. It involves improving process throughput, maximising capacity utilisation, reducing waste and errors, and ensuring that services are delivered within reasonable timeframes (Wu et al., 2022). In government training institutions, these outcomes may be reflected in the coordination of training programmes, utilisation of facilities, processing of trainee records, administrative support and timely delivery of training services.

Strategic leadership may be associated with operational efficiency through the way institutional priorities are translated into operational decisions. Leaders who provide clear direction and promote employee participation may strengthen accountability and enable staff resolve routine operational challenges. Alignment of financial, human and physical resources with institutional priorities may reduce inefficiencies arising from resource shortages or inappropriate allocation. Engagement with institutional stakeholders can improve coordination and ensure that services respond to client requirements, while effective technology integration can support accurate information processing and more efficient administrative procedures.

Empirical research in Kenya shows evidence of relationships between strategic leadership and institutional performance. M'Mugambi (2024) reported significant positive relationship between strategic leadership practices and good governance in Kenyan county governments, emphasising vision, implementation, evaluation and ethical leadership. Orito (2021) examined leadership practices, including decision-making, resource allocation and strategic intent, in relation to performance in Kenyan state corporations and government departments. Although these studies provide relevant evidence, governance and general institutional performance are broader outcomes than operational efficiency. This study thus focuses on the relationship between specific strategic leadership practices and operational efficiency within a government training institution.

This distinction is important as an institution may have sound governance structures and favourable overall performance indicators while still experiencing delays, underutilisation of facilities, administrative errors or inefficient processes. Examining operational efficiency provides a basis in understanding how leadership practices relate to management of institutional activities and use of available resources.

Employee Empowerment

Employee empowerment are leadership practices providing employees with decision-making authority, autonomy, participation, access to relevant information and opportunities for professional development (Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024). It enables employees take greater responsibility for their duties, respond to operational challenges and contribute to decisions affecting their work. Transformational Leadership provides a theoretical basis in understanding the relationship between employee empowerment and organisational performance. The theory emphasises the role of leaders in communicating institutional direction, encouraging employee participation, supporting individual development and motivating staff to contribute towards shared objectives. In a public institution, these practices may help employees understand institutional priorities and take appropriate initiative within established procedures and accountability requirements.

Empowerment is relevant to operational efficiency because routine administrative decisions do not always require escalation to senior management. Employees who have appropriate authority, information and skills may resolve operational problems more promptly, reduce unnecessary delays and improve coordination. However, empowerment in public institutions must operate within delegated authority, financial regulations and established accountability structures. Empirical evidence supports a positive relationship between empowerment and employee or organisational performance. Alshemmari (2023) found that delegation, trust, communication and motivation were associated with employee performance in Kuwait's State Audit Bureau. Sahoo and Das (2021) reported that structural and psychological empowerment improved productivity and innovation among employees in Indian information technology firms. In Kenya, Araigua

(2020) found that participatory decision-making, access to resources and recognition improved institutional performance at the Technical University of Kenya. Komen (2024) also reported that empowerment improved productivity and reduced absenteeism in Kenyan public institutions.

Although these studies provide evidence from different organisational settings, their findings suggest that employee participation, delegated authority and access to resources may support improved work performance. In a public training institution, these practices may contribute to the timely resolution of administrative issues, coordination of training activities and responsiveness to the needs of trainees and institutional clients.

H_1: Employee empowerment has a positive and significant relationship with operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Resource Allocation

The Resource Based View (RBV) explains organisational performance in terms of resources and capabilities available to an organisation and how effectively these are deployed. The framework identifies the strategic importance of resources valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and difficult to substitute (Barney, 1991; D'Oria et al., 2021). Strategic leadership contributes to organisational performance by ensuring that available resources support institutional priorities and operational requirements.

Resource allocation is the distribution and deployment of financial, human, physical and technological resources to support organisational activities. In public institutions, allocation decisions are influenced by approved budgets, procurement procedures, staffing structures and accountability requirements. Managers must prioritise competing institutional needs while ensuring that resources are used for their intended purposes. Effective resource allocation may support operational efficiency by ensuring that employees, facilities, equipment and funds are available when required. Appropriate allocation can improve capacity utilisation, reduce unnecessary expenditure and minimise delays arising from shortages of essential inputs (Gupta and Bedi, 2021; Sule and Salim, 2020). Poor allocation may result in underutilised facilities, staff workload imbalances, delays in service delivery and avoidable operational costs. Wang (2024) found that rational allocation of human and technological resources improved collaboration, employee performance and administrative efficiency in Chinese universities. Nayak (2025) reported that predictive analytics could improve resource planning by reducing overstaffing and inventory inefficiencies.

Kenyan studies provide further evidence of the importance of resource allocation in public institutions. Muriuki and Wambua (2023) found that aligning budgets with service delivery priorities improved turnaround times and service outcomes. Mutambuki and Kabui (2022) reported a positive and statistically significant relationship between resource allocation and service delivery

among Water Works Development Agencies in Kenya. Shigali and Shitseswa (2023) found a significant relationship between physical resource allocation strategies and public service delivery in Vihiga County. In a government training institution, resources include trainers, administrative personnel, training facilities, learning materials, digital systems and support services. Their availability and effective deployment may influence the institution's ability to schedule programmes, deliver training, support participants and complete administrative processes within the required timeframes.

H_2: Resource allocation has a positive and significant relationship with operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Theory explains the importance of managing relationships with individuals and groups that affect, or affected by an organisation's activities (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022). The theory recognises that organisational performance is influenced not only by internal management decisions but also by the quality of relationships maintained with relevant stakeholders. In public institutions, stakeholder engagement involves communication, consultation, coordination and feedback between the institution and the individuals or organisations connected to its mandate. For a government training institution, relevant stakeholders include government ministries, county governments, public servants, training participants, suppliers, regulators, development partners and communities.

Effective stakeholder engagement may improve operational efficiency by enabling institutions identify client requirements, communicate operational expectations and address implementation challenges early. Regular feedback can help management identify weaknesses in service delivery, while effective coordination can reduce misunderstandings, conflicting expectations and delays. Stakeholder engagement may also strengthen institutional accountability by providing channels through which service users and other interested parties communicate their experiences and concerns.

Miller and Roberts (2023) found that codesign and participatory consultation reduced approval delays and improved implementation speed in public sector innovation. Iwuanyanwu and Ekpe (2021) similarly reported that stakeholder involvement reduced project delays in the Nigerian construction sector. In Kenya, Njoroge (2022) found that community engagement improved implementation efficiency by reducing resistance and strengthening cooperation. Miano et al. (2026) reported positive and statistically significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and procurement performance among Kenyan state corporations. Although procurement performance is not equivalent to overall operational efficiency, findings indicate the potential importance of stakeholder coordination in public sector processes.

At KSG Embu Campus, engagement with government institutions, training participants and other institutional stakeholders may support the alignment of training programmes with client needs. It may also improve communication on programme schedules, participant requirements, logistics and feedback on service quality.

H_3: Stakeholder engagement has a positive and significant relationship with operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Technology Integration

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains technology adoption through users' perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Malatji et al., 2020). The model provides a basis for understanding why employees accept and use technological systems in performing organisational tasks. In institutional settings, technology adoption is more likely to support operational performance when users consider the systems useful and can operate them effectively. Technology integration refers to the adoption and effective use of digital systems, information and communication technology tools and online platforms to support organisational processes and service delivery (Atieh et al., 2023; Nwabekee et al., 2025). In public institutions, such systems may support registration, records management, communication, scheduling, reporting and administrative decision-making.

Technology integration may improve operational efficiency by automating routine processes, reducing manual errors, improving record accuracy and accelerating information processing. Digital systems can also support access to operational information and facilitate evidence-based decision-making (Liu et al., 2024; Sule and Salim, 2020). However, the availability of technology does not automatically result in improved efficiency. Benefits depend on system reliability, employee competence, user acceptance, leadership support, data quality and the integration of systems into everyday work processes (Malatji et al., 2020; Nwabekee et al., 2025).

In Kenya, Muriuki and Wambua (2023) found that e-procurement and digital systems improved efficiency where leadership commitment, employee training and reliable infrastructure were present. Kosi et al. (2025) reported that digitisation supported structured, evidence-based decision-making and improved organisational performance in Marsabit County Government. Their findings also identified cybersecurity concerns, limited managerial use of data and traditional decision-making practices as barriers to effective technology use. At KSG Embu Campus, technology integration may support the registration of trainees, scheduling of programmes, learning management processes, communication, record keeping and reporting. The relevance of TAM lies in explaining the importance of employee acceptance and effective use of these systems. Technology integration is therefore examined in relation to operational efficiency, rather than treating the mere availability of digital systems as evidence of improved performance.

H_4: Technology integration has a positive and significant relationship with operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualises strategic leadership as a multidimensional construct comprising employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement and technology integration. These dimensions constitute the independent variables. Operational efficiency is the dependent variable and is measured through process throughput, capacity utilisation, waste reduction and first-pass yield. The framework proposes that the four strategic leadership dimensions are positively associated with operational efficiency. It does not assume that any single dimension operates independently of the others; rather, each is examined as a distinct explanatory variable in relation to the dependent variable.

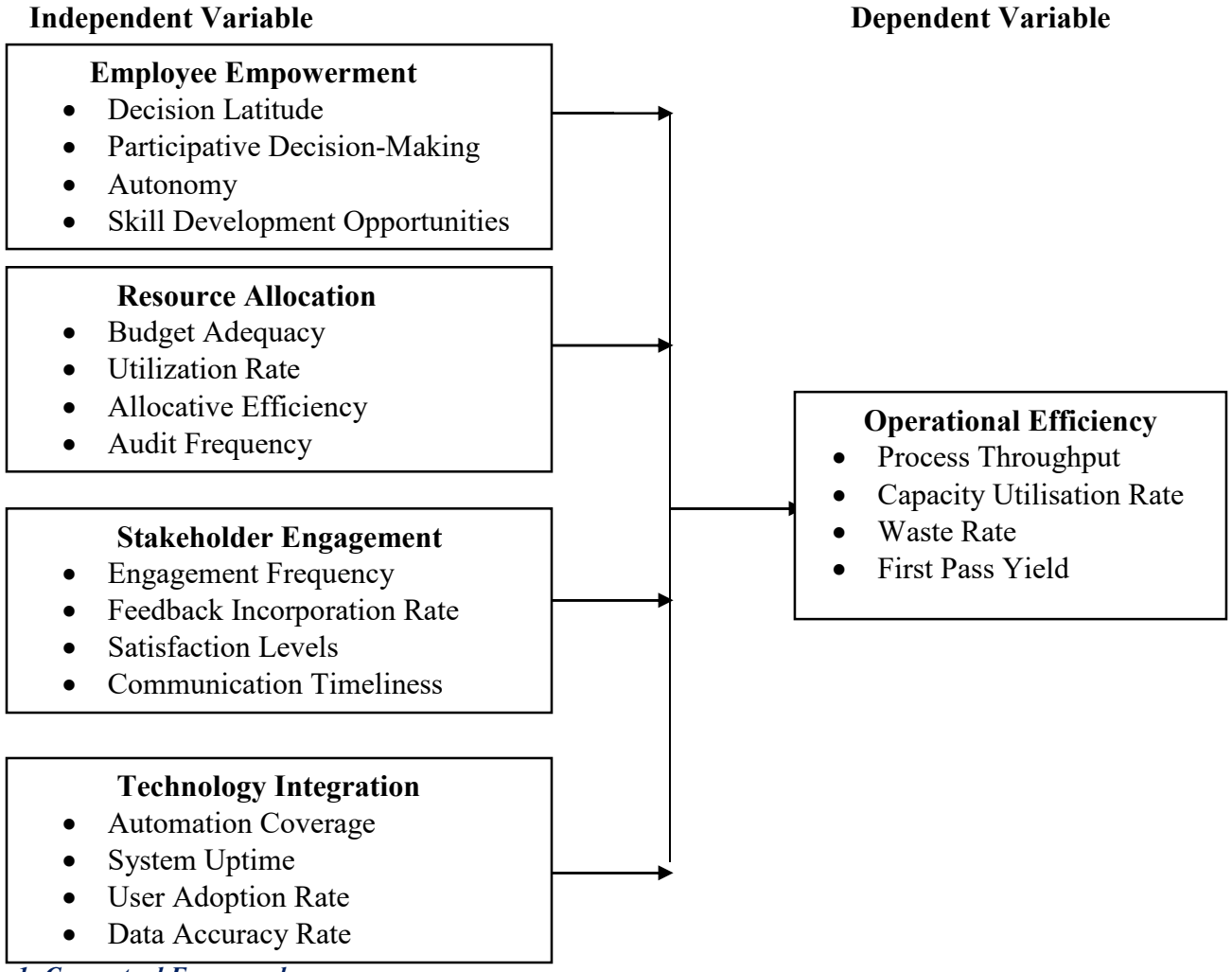

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Author

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design and a quantitative research approach. The cross-sectional design enabled collection of data at a single point in time to examine the relationships between strategic leadership practices and operational efficiency. A quantitative approach was appropriate since the study sought to measure respondents' perceptions of the four strategic leadership dimensions and operational efficiency, and examine the relationships between the variables statistically (Clark et al., 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The study focused on the Kenya School of Government (KSG) Embu Campus. Three senior management officials based at the KSG headquarters were included because of their institution-wide strategic leadership responsibilities. The institution was the unit of analysis, while the participating management, faculty and non-faculty employees provided unit level observations.

Target Population, Census and Data Collection

The target population comprised 95 employees and senior management officials associated with KSG Embu Campus and the institution's headquarters. The population consisted of three top management officials, 30 faculty members and 62 non-faculty employees. The three top management officials comprised the Director General and two Senior Deputy Directors. A census approach was adopted because the target population was small and the study sought to obtain responses from all members of the identified population. Questionnaires were distributed to all 95 members of the target population. A total of 85 completed questionnaires were returned and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 89.5 per cent.

Primary data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire. The instrument contained sections covering respondents' demographic characteristics, employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, technology integration and operational efficiency. The questionnaire was designed to obtain respondents' assessments of strategic leadership practices and operational processes within the institution. Before the main data collection, a pilot study involving 10 respondents was conducted to assess the clarity and reliability of the research instrument. The pilot respondents were excluded from the main study.

Validity and Reliability

The research instrument was subjected to pilot testing before main data collection. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients to determine the internal consistency of the measurement items for each study variable.

Table 1: Pilot Study

Study Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee empowerment	0.812
Resource allocation	0.784
Stakeholder engagement	0.836
Technology integration	0.861
Operational efficiency	0.803

Source: Pilot Study

All five coefficients exceeded the commonly applied threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency of the respective measurement scales. Content validity was addressed through the development of questionnaire items around the study objectives and the identified indicators for each variable.

Measurement of Study Variables

The study examined employee empowerment measured using decision latitude, participative decision-making, autonomy and skills development opportunities. Resource allocation assessed through budget adequacy, resource utilisation, allocative efficiency and audit frequency. Stakeholder engagement measured using engagement frequency, feedback incorporation, satisfaction levels and communication timeliness. Technology integration assessed through automation coverage, system uptime, user adoption and data accuracy. Operational efficiency measured using process throughput, capacity utilisation, waste rate and first-pass yield. These indicators assessed respondents' perceptions of the institution's leadership practices and operational performance.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondents' assessments of the study variables. Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the direction and strength of the relationships between each strategic leadership dimension and operational efficiency. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the combined and relative associations between the four independent variables and operational efficiency.

The multiple regression model was specified as

$$Y = \beta_0+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\varepsilon$$

Where

Y represents operational efficiency

B_0 is the intercept

$B_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ are the regression coefficients for the independent variables

ε is the error term.

The statistical significance of the relationships and regression coefficients was assessed using a 5 per cent significance level.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted under a research licence issued by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the reporting of the findings. Data were presented in aggregate form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate and Respondent Characteristics

Ninety-five questionnaires were distributed to the target population, comprising top management, faculty and non-faculty employees. 85 completed questionnaires were returned and found suitable for analysis, giving a response rate of 89.5 per cent. Respondents represented different organisational levels within KSG. This provided perspectives from employees involved in institutional management, academic and training functions, and administrative and support operations. These perspectives were relevant to examining strategic leadership practices and operational efficiency within the institution.

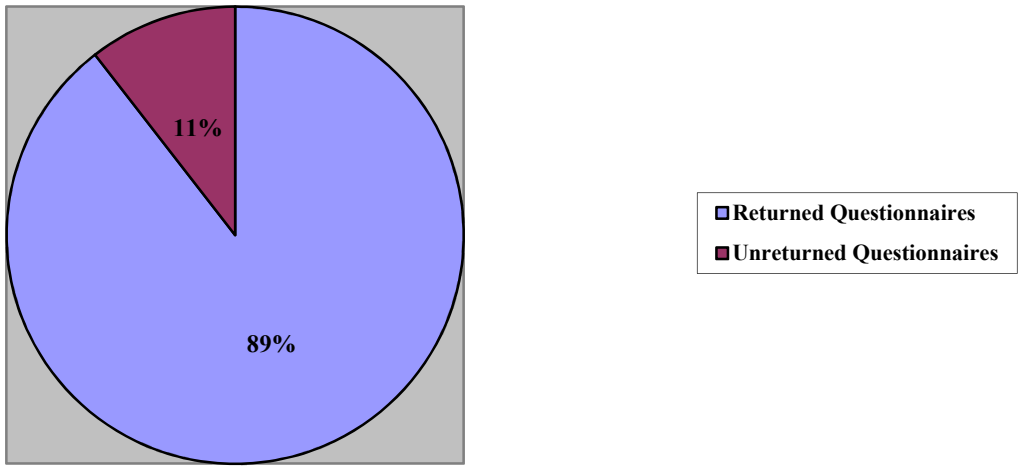

Figure 2: Response Rate
Source: Study data

Descriptive Results

The study examined respondents' assessments of employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement and technology integration. Composite mean scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Composite Mean Scores

Study Variable	Mean Score
Employee empowerment	4.15
Resource allocation	4.03
Stakeholder engagement	4.16
Technology integration	4.22

Source: Study data

Technology integration recorded the highest mean score of 4.22, followed by stakeholder engagement at 4.16 and employee empowerment at 4.15. Resource allocation recorded the lowest mean score at 4.03. Results indicate generally positive respondent assessments across the four strategic leadership dimensions.

The relatively high mean for technology integration suggests that respondents viewed the use of digital systems positively within the institution. However, a favourable perception of technology integration does not, on its own, establish that all systems are reliable or that their use has eliminated operational inefficiencies. The Technology Acceptance Model provides a relevant basis for interpreting this finding because perceived usefulness and ease of use are important considerations in technology adoption (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Malatji et al., 2020).

Resource allocation recorded the lowest mean, although its score was also positive. This indicates that resource allocation received comparatively less favourable assessments than the other dimensions. The result may warrant managerial attention to the adequacy, distribution and utilisation of institutional resources.

Correlation Results

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the four strategic leadership dimensions and operational efficiency. The results indicate positive and statistically significant relationships across all four dimensions.

Table 3: Correlation between strategic leadership dimensions and operational efficiency

Strategic leadership dimension	Pearson correlation (r)	Significance
Employee empowerment	0.702	$p < 0.001$
Resource allocation	0.741	$p < 0.001$
Stakeholder engagement	0.683	$p < 0.001$
Technology integration	0.793	$p < 0.001$

Source: Study data

The findings indicate positive associations between each strategic leadership dimension and operational efficiency. Resource allocation recorded a correlation coefficient of 0.741, followed by employee empowerment at 0.702 and stakeholder engagement at 0.683. Technology integration

recorded the strongest correlation, subject to verification of the conflicting value. The positive correlation for employee empowerment suggests that higher respondent assessments of employee empowerment were associated with higher assessments of operational efficiency. This is consistent with the argument that employee participation, autonomy and delegated responsibility can support more responsive organisational processes.

The relationship between resource allocation and operational efficiency indicates that more favourable assessments of resource allocation were associated with higher operational efficiency assessments. This supports the relevance of the Resource-Based View, which emphasises the importance of deploying organisational resources effectively (Barney, 1991; D'Oria et al., 2021).

Stakeholder engagement also recorded a positive relationship with operational efficiency. This finding is consistent with the proposition that communication, feedback and coordination with stakeholders may support institutional responsiveness and the implementation of organisational activities.

Technology integration recorded the strongest correlation. This suggests that respondents who assessed technology integration more favourably also tended to assess operational efficiency more favourably. The result is consistent with the potential contribution of digital systems to process automation, information accuracy and administrative coordination. These correlations establish the direction and strength of the observed relationships, but they do not demonstrate causation.

Regression Results

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the combined and relative associations between employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, technology integration and operational efficiency. The regression model was

$$Y = 0.486+0.214X_1+0.257X_2+0.176X_3+0.341X_4+\varepsilon$$

Where

Y = Operational Efficiency
X_1 = Employee Empowerment
X_2 = Resource Allocation
X_3 = Stakeholder Engagement
X_4 = Technology Integration
ε = Error term

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	Unstandardised coefficient (B)	Standardised coefficient (Beta)	t-statistic	p-value
Constant	0.486	-	2.141	.035
Employee empowerment	0.214	0.228	3.452	.001
Resource allocation	0.257	0.274	3.779	.001
Stakeholder engagement	0.176	0.189	3.034	.003
Technology integration	0.341	0.389	5.590	.000

Source: Study data

Employee empowerment recorded an unstandardised coefficient of 0.214 and a standardised beta coefficient of 0.228. The t-statistic was 3.452, with $p < 0.001$. Holding the other predictors constant, a one-unit increase in the employee empowerment score was associated with an estimated 0.214-unit increase in the operational efficiency score. The positive coefficient indicates a positive association between the two variables. Resource allocation recorded an unstandardised coefficient of 0.257 and a standardised beta coefficient of 0.274. The t-statistic was 3.779, with $p < 0.001$. This indicates a positive association between resource allocation and operational efficiency, controlling for the other variables included in the model.

Stakeholder engagement recorded an unstandardised coefficient of 0.176 and a standardised beta coefficient of 0.189. Its t-statistic was 3.034, with a p-value of 0.003. The result indicates a positive and statistically significant association between stakeholder engagement and operational efficiency, holding the other predictors constant.

Technology integration recorded an unstandardised coefficient of 0.341 and a standardised beta coefficient of 0.389. Among the four predictors, it had the largest standardised coefficient. This suggests that technology integration had the strongest relative association with operational efficiency within the estimated model. The coefficients indicate that all four predictors had positive associations with operational efficiency.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The correlation and regression results indicate positive associations between employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, technology integration and operational efficiency. The relative strength of the regression coefficients suggests that the four dimensions do not have identical statistical associations with the dependent variable.

Technology integration recorded the largest standardised beta coefficient of 0.389. This suggests that among the four variables examined, technology integration had the strongest relative association with operational efficiency in the regression model. The finding highlights the relevance of digital systems to administrative and training processes. It reinforces the importance of user acceptance, system reliability and effective integration into institutional workflows. This is consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model and previous research on technology adoption and organisational processes (Malatji et al., 2020; Nwabekee et al., 2025).

Resource allocation recorded the second largest standardised beta coefficient at 0.274. This indicates a positive association between resource allocation and operational efficiency when the other study variables are held constant. The finding is relevant to public institutions, where financial, human, physical and technological resources must be deployed within established budgetary and accountability requirements. At KSG Embu Campus, the availability and effective utilisation of trainers, facilities, learning materials and digital systems may be relevant to the timely delivery of institutional activities. The result is consistent with the Resource-Based View, which emphasises the importance of effective resource deployment in organisational performance (Barney, 1991; D'Oria et al., 2021).

Employee empowerment recorded a standardised beta coefficient of 0.228. The positive coefficient indicates that higher employee empowerment scores were associated with higher operational efficiency scores, controlling for the other predictors. This finding supports the relevance of employee participation, delegated authority, autonomy and skills development to institutional processes. In a public training institution, appropriate delegation may enable staff to resolve routine operational matters without unnecessary escalation, while remaining within established accountability procedures. The result is consistent with the employee empowerment literature (Alshemmari, 2023; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2024).

Stakeholder engagement recorded a standardised beta coefficient of 0.189, the smallest among the four coefficients. Its positive and statistically significant coefficient suggests that stakeholder engagement also has an independent association with operational efficiency within the estimated model. The result highlights the relevance of communication, consultation, feedback and coordination in public institutional operations. For KSG Embu Campus, engagement with government institutions, training participants and other stakeholders may support the alignment of training activities with service-user requirements. This is consistent with Stakeholder Theory and studies on stakeholder participation and public sector performance (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022; Miano et al., 2026; Tor & Gambo, 2024).

Findings suggest that operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus is associated with a combination of internal management practices and the institution's ability to coordinate resources, employees, stakeholders and technology. The results have practical relevance to public

management as they point to the importance of resource stewardship, staff participation, stakeholder responsiveness and the effective use of digital systems in public service delivery.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The study found positive and statistically significant relationships between employee empowerment, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, technology integration and operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus.

Technology integration recorded the largest standardised regression coefficient, followed by resource allocation, employee empowerment and stakeholder engagement. This suggests that technology integration had the strongest relative association with operational efficiency among the four variables examined. Resource allocation also demonstrated a positive association with operational efficiency, underlining the importance of aligning institutional resources with operational requirements and service delivery priorities. Employee empowerment and stakeholder engagement were similarly associated with operational efficiency, suggesting that staff participation, delegated responsibility, communication and stakeholder coordination are relevant considerations in institutional management. Findings indicate that operational efficiency at KSG Embu Campus is associated with a combination of leadership practices involving employees, resources, stakeholders and technology.

Recommendations

KSG should promote appropriate delegation of decision-making authority, staff participation in operational planning and continuous professional development. Delegated responsibilities should be supported by clear accountability arrangements.

Resource allocation decisions should be aligned with training demand, institutional priorities and operational performance information. Management should pay attention to the utilisation of budgets, staffing, facilities and technological resources.

The institution should maintain structured consultation and feedback mechanisms. Feedback should be documented and considered in institutional planning and service improvement.

Investment in digital infrastructure should be accompanied by attention to system reliability, cybersecurity, user training and data governance. Management should assess whether available systems are being effectively used in registration, scheduling, records management, communication and reporting. Regular review of these indicators can help identify operational bottlenecks and inform improvement measures.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was conducted at KSG Embu Campus and included top management officials based at the institution's headquarters because of their strategic oversight responsibilities. Although this

approach provided both campus level and institution-wide perspectives, the findings are specific to the setting examined and may not be generalisable to other government training institutions.

The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between strategic leadership practices and operational efficiency. The study relied on self-reported questionnaire responses which may introduce common method bias, while respondents' perceptions may not fully correspond with independently recorded operational performance.

Further research could also examine the role of organisational culture, employee motivation, strategic communication, innovation capability, change management and organisational structure. Comparative studies involving other KSG campuses, public universities and government training institutions in Kenya and East Africa could provide a broader understanding of strategic leadership and operational efficiency in the public sector.

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