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LEADERSHIP

MEDIATING EFFECT OF GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE OF CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSIONS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the mediating effect of governance practices on the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya.

Methodology: The study used a pragmatic explanatory sequential mixed methods design. A census of 117 senior officers yielded 103 responses (88%). Data were collected through questionnaires, 11 interviews, and document review. SPSS 28 and Hayes' PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples were used for quantitative analysis, while qualitative data were analysed thematically.

Findings: Responsible leadership was positively associated with performance ($r = 0.685$, $p < 0.001$) and governance practices ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.001$), while governance practices were positively associated with performance ($r = 0.455$, $p < 0.001$). The total effect of responsible leadership on performance was significant ($B = 0.468$, $\beta = 0.685$, $p < 0.001$). Responsible leadership significantly predicted governance practices ($B = 0.314$, $\beta = 0.366$, $p < 0.001$), and governance practices remained significant when responsible leadership was controlled ($B = 0.188$, $\beta = 0.236$, $p = 0.002$). The joint model explained 51.7% of performance variance. Most importantly, the bootstrapped indirect effect was 0.059 with a 95% confidence interval of [0.018, 0.119], which excluded zero. Governance practices therefore transmitted approximately 12.6% of the total responsible leadership-performance association, confirming statistically significant partial mediation and leading to rejection of H_{02}.

Conclusion: Governance practices significantly and partially mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya. Responsible leadership operates through both an institutional pathway, in which leadership strengthens governance mechanisms that subsequently support performance, and direct non-governance pathways involving organizational culture, employee motivation, and stakeholder relationships.

Recommendation: Constitutional commissions should strengthen governance practices as active performance mechanisms rather than formal compliance structures. Leadership development should be accompanied by stronger fiduciary oversight, participatory decision-making, risk management, constitutional and statutory compliance monitoring, and performance management so that responsible leadership values are embedded in institutional routines and sustained beyond individual office holders.

Keywords: *Governance Practices, Responsible Leadership, Organizational Performance, Mediation, Constitutional Commissions, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Governance institutions play a pivotal role globally in promoting sustainable development through strong institutional frameworks, transparent accountability mechanisms, and visionary leadership that align organizational practices with national development objectives (Bevir, 2012). Effective governance structures serve as cornerstones of democratic systems by establishing rules, norms, and procedures that guide collective action, mediate competing interests, and ensure public resources are utilized for societal benefit (Kaufmann et al., 2010). These structures bridge the gap between constitutional aspirations and practical realities by translating broad policy objectives into operational programs, monitoring implementation effectiveness, and holding decision-makers accountable to citizens (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008). Governance practices in constitutional commissions refer to systematic frameworks, processes, structures, and mechanisms through which institutions direct operations, ensure accountability, manage risks, allocate resources, and fulfill constitutional mandates (Githu & Minja, 2025). Studies demonstrate that strong governance frameworks amplify positive leadership influences and enhance organizational effectiveness by translating leadership vision into systematic practices, ensuring leadership decisions are implemented consistently, providing accountability mechanisms constraining arbitrary leadership actions, and creating institutional capacity enabling sustained performance beyond individual leaders (Azegele et al., 2021; Owuori, 2021). Organizations with strong governance practices achieve more consistent and sustainable outcomes because governance institutionalizes effective practices making performance less dependent on individual personalities (Asiedu & Mensah, 2023).

Global evidence demonstrates that governance practices mediate relationships between leadership and organizational performance across diverse institutional contexts. In Kenya, Owuori (2021) established that governance practices significantly mediate the relationship between leadership style and organizational performance in county government contexts. Azegele et al. (2021) reported that governance frameworks strengthen the impact of leadership on organizational effectiveness in Kenyan insurance companies. Asiedu and Mensah (2023) demonstrated in Ghanaian institutions that governance practices improve explanatory power in leadership-performance models by institutionalizing accountability and control mechanisms. In the United States, Szekendi et al. (2014) found that high-performing academic medical centers demonstrated greater adoption of governance best practices, confirming governance as a critical performance driver. Across East Africa, Temba et al. (2023) established that corporate governance positively influences financial performance of Tanzanian commercial banks.

In Kenya, constitutional commissions form part of the governance architecture created or strengthened by the Constitution of Kenya 2010 to protect sovereignty of the people, promote constitutionalism, secure observance of democratic values, and perform specialized public mandates (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Performance evidence shows progressive improvement rather than continuous deterioration: overall evaluation scores increased from 40.6% in 2019/2020 to 43.2% in 2020/2021, 45.1% in 2021/2022, 53.62% in 2022/2023, and 57.4% in 2023/2024. The upward trend is important, but the latest level still reflects moderate rather than optimal institutional performance, while substantial variation remains across performance dimensions. The persistence of these gaps despite formal leadership and governance structures raises a more specific question about whether governance practices constitute the institutional pathway through which responsible leadership is translated into performance (Public Service Commission, 2023).

Existing studies have established that leadership quality and governance practices are individually associated with organizational performance, but they provide limited evidence on the mechanism connecting the two within constitutionally independent public institutions. Owuori (2021) reported governance mediation in county government settings, Azegele et al. (2021) examined governance and leadership relationships in insurance firms, and Githu and Minja (2025) established governance-performance associations among constitutional commissions. These studies do not directly establish whether responsible leadership strengthens constitutional commission performance through governance practices, nor do they provide bootstrapped indirect-effect evidence for this institutional pathway. The study therefore examined governance practices as a mediator of the responsible leadership-performance relationship in Kenya's constitutional commissions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Constitutional commissions in Kenya have recorded a clear upward performance trajectory, yet performance remains moderate and uneven relative to their constitutional responsibilities. Overall scores increased from 40.6% in 2019/2020 to 57.4% in 2023/2024, but important gaps persisted in mandate fulfilment, constitutional compliance, public participation, and other institutional outcomes (Public Service Commission, 2023). The practical problem is therefore not continuous deterioration, but incomplete translation of constitutional design, leadership structures, and governance arrangements into consistently strong institutional performance. This creates a need to identify the organizational mechanisms through which responsible leadership is converted into sustained performance rather than assuming that leadership affects outcomes only through a direct pathway.

Empirically, studies of Kenyan state corporations, insurance firms, and county governments have linked leadership and governance to performance, but their institutional settings differ from constitutional commissions, which combine constitutional independence with extensive public accountability obligations (Abang'a et al., 2022; Azegele et al., 2021; Owuori, 2021). Githu and Minja (2025) established that governance practices matter for constitutional commission performance, but did not test responsible leadership as the antecedent of governance practices or estimate the indirect leadership-performance effect through governance. Methodologically, much of the earlier mediation literature relied on sequential significance procedures rather than directly testing the indirect effect using bootstrapped confidence intervals. The unresolved contextual, conceptual, and methodological gap was therefore whether governance practices significantly transmit the association between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya. This study addressed that gap using Hayes' PROCESS Model 4 and bootstrapped indirect-effect estimation.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the mediating effect of governance practices on the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H_{02}: Governance practices have no statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the theoretical followed by an empirical examination of governance practices and their mediating role in the relationship between responsible leadership and performance. The conceptual framework concluding the section illustrates the hypothesized mediation relationship among the study variables.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The primary theoretical anchor for this study is Stakeholder Engagement Theory, advanced by Freeman (1984), which proposes that organizations create sustainable value by recognizing and engaging groups that can affect or are affected by organizational actions. The theory is particularly relevant to constitutional commissions because their effectiveness depends on legitimate relationships with citizens, Parliament, the Judiciary, other public institutions, civil society, employees, and other stakeholders whose cooperation supports mandate execution. Responsible leadership reflects this relational orientation through consistency, strategic direction, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability, while governance practices provide formal structures through which stakeholder-oriented leadership can be translated into institutional routines (Clarkson, 1995; Parmar et al., 2010).

Stakeholder Engagement Theory therefore explains why responsible leadership should influence governance implementation: leaders who value accountability and stakeholder inclusion are more likely to activate fiduciary oversight, participatory decision-making, risk management, compliance monitoring, and performance management. Once institutionalized, these governance mechanisms can support performance even beyond particular leadership interactions because they embed expectations in procedures, reporting systems, controls, and organizational routines (Ferreira & Otley, 2009). The mediation proposition is consequently that governance practices transmit part, but not necessarily all, of responsible leadership's association with performance.

Institutional Theory provides a complementary explanation for the mediating mechanism. Scott (2014) argues that organizational behaviour is shaped by regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive structures that make expectations durable beyond individual actors. In constitutional commissions, governance systems transform leadership values into formal rules, monitoring routines, accountability arrangements, and performance controls. Institutional Theory therefore explains why governance practices can carry part of responsible leadership's performance association while also allowing a residual direct leadership effect through culture, motivation, and stakeholder relationships. The combination of Stakeholder Engagement Theory and Institutional

Theory provides a stronger explanation of the leadership-governance-performance pathway than either perspective alone.

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

Governance practices are operationalized in this study through five empirically grounded dimensions derived from Denison (1990), Kaplan and Norton (1996), and Ferreira and Otley (2009): fiduciary oversight, decision-making, risk management, compliance monitoring, and performance management. Fiduciary oversight captures the extent to which board actions are guided by strategic plans and the board takes overall responsibility for resource use. Tricker (2015) demonstrated that governance structures provide the strategic direction and control necessary for achieving organizational objectives, with fiduciary oversight ensuring that institutional resources are allocated consistent with mandate priorities. Hermalin and Weisbach (2003) found that board composition and oversight effectiveness significantly influence organizational outcomes, with strong boards providing accountability pressures that motivate improved performance.

Decision-making reflects the degree to which employee views are considered in institutional decisions and open dialogue channels facilitate exchange of ideas. Ferreira and Otley (2009) demonstrated that governance provides frameworks translating strategy into action through participatory decision-making processes that generate organizational commitment and implementation effectiveness. Owusu and Weir (2016) established a positive and significant relationship between governance quality including decision-making processes and organizational performance in Ghanaian institutions. Risk management encompasses the commission's capacity to deploy risk champions who conduct regular assessments and maintain a risk management framework. Halim et al. (2020) found that risk management committees significantly influence organizational performance and mediate the relationship between corporate governance and performance in manufacturing firms, demonstrating risk management's critical role as a governance mechanism. Chege et al. (2023) established that organizations implementing integrated risk management systems encompassing governance structures and systematic risk assessment processes demonstrated positive relationships with business performance across Kenyan sectors.

Compliance monitoring reflects the extent to which commissions monitor adherence to constitutional requirements and regularly assess statutory compliance. Mansour et al. (2022) found that higher compliance with governance guidelines significantly improves organizational performance in developing economies, concluding that governance compliance is a critical performance determinant. In constitutional commission contexts, compliance monitoring ensures that constitutional mandates are operationalized consistently, translating leadership commitment to constitutional values into systematic institutional practice (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

Performance management measures whether commissions have systematic performance management systems and set performance targets annually. Kaplan and Norton (1996) demonstrated that performance management systems linking strategic objectives to operational targets significantly enhance organizational effectiveness. Armstrong (2014) established that transactional leadership frameworks for implementing performance contracts, target setting, and evaluation systems create accountability structures that directly improve institutional performance outcomes.

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE PRACTICES, AND PERFORMANCE

The relationship between responsible leadership, governance practices, and performance has been examined across several organizational contexts, although the evidence remains fragmented. Azegele et al. (2021) showed that governance arrangements interact with leadership and human-resource systems in Kenyan insurance companies, while Owuori (2021) reported a governance mediation mechanism in Kenyan county government. Asiedu and Mensah (2023) similarly demonstrated that governance mechanisms can improve explanatory power in performance models by institutionalizing accountability and control. These findings support the proposition that governance is not simply an independent performance determinant but may constitute a transmission mechanism through which leadership is converted into organizational outcomes.

Ferreira and Otley (2009) explained that integrated performance and governance systems translate strategic intentions into operational action, while Denison (1990) emphasized that organizational effectiveness reflects interaction between cultural and structural mechanisms. In the Kenyan constitutional commission context, Githu and Minja (2025) established positive governance-performance relationships involving fiduciary oversight, decision-making, and compliance monitoring. However, demonstrating a governance-performance association does not establish mediation. Mediation requires evidence that responsible leadership is associated with governance practices and that the resulting indirect effect on performance differs significantly from zero.

Contrasting findings further justify direct testing of the mediation mechanism. Daily et al. (2003) and Dalton et al. (1998) reported that formal governance structures do not automatically produce superior performance, while Gupta and Sharma (2014) found limited governance effects in some corporate contexts. Such evidence suggests that governance quality may depend on leadership activation and institutional context rather than the mere presence of structures. The present study therefore moves beyond asking whether governance practices exist or correlate with performance by testing whether responsible leadership is associated with performance partly through governance practices using a bootstrapped indirect-effect procedure.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study positions responsible leadership (X) [illegible] v[illegible] [illegible]rough c[illegible] [illegible]tion, stakeh[illegible] [illegible], transparency, and accountability. Governance practices (M) serve as the mediating variable, operationalized through fiduciary oversight, decision-making, risk management, compliance monitoring, and performance management. Performance of constitutional commissions (Y) is the dependent variable, operationalized through employee motivation, financial performance, adaptability, service delivery, and mandate fulfilment. The framework tests the hypothesis that governance practices significantly and partially mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and performance, meaning responsible leadership influences performance both directly and indirectly through governance mechanisms.

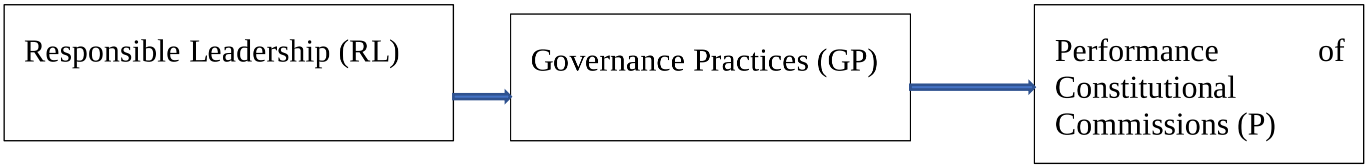

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy and an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Quantitative data were collected first to test the hypothesized relationships, followed by qualitative inquiry to explain the mechanisms underlying the statistical results. The quantitative census frame comprised 117 strategically relevant senior office holders across the thirteen constitutional commissions: chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, chief executive officers, and directors. All eligible office holders were approached, and 103 usable questionnaires were returned, representing an 88.0% response rate. Qualitative follow-up comprised 11 purposively selected key informants with sufficient institutional experience to interpret leadership-governance-performance relationships. Secondary evidence was drawn from Public Service Commission evaluation reports, Auditor General reports, commission annual reports, and budget documents covering 2019/2020 to 2023/2024.

Primary quantitative data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Responsible leadership was measured through ten items covering consistency, strategic direction, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability. Governance practices were measured through ten items covering fiduciary oversight, decision-making, risk management, compliance monitoring, and performance management. Performance was measured through ten items covering employee motivation, financial performance, adaptability, service delivery, and mandate fulfilment. Reliability was acceptable in the final instrument, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.842 for responsible leadership, 0.900 for governance practices, and 0.804 for performance. The mixed-methods design enabled quantitative relationship testing to be integrated with qualitative explanations and secondary performance evidence.

Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation were used to summarize the variables and examine bivariate associations. The mediating effect of governance practices was tested using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. PROCESS directly estimates the indirect effect ($a \times b$), where path a represents the association between responsible leadership and governance practices and path b represents the association between governance practices and performance while controlling for responsible leadership. Mediation was considered statistically significant when the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect excluded zero. The traditional four-step regression progression was retained only as an interpretive description of the paths, not as the definitive significance test for mediation. Qualitative interview data were analysed thematically and used to explain why governance practices did or did not transmit leadership effects. Given the cross-sectional quantitative design, the findings were interpreted as associations rather than definitive causal effects (Hayes, 2013).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study achieved an 88.0% response rate, yielding 103 usable responses. Among respondents, the majority were male (66.0%), with females constituting 34.0%. Most respondents were aged 41 to 50 years (55.3%), followed by those aged 51 years and above (29.1%), and those aged 31 to 40 years (15.5%). Regarding educational qualifications, 59.2% held a bachelor's degree, 27.2% a master's degree, and 13.6% a doctorate. Directors constituted 69.9% of respondents, followed by vice-chairpersons (11.7%), chairpersons (9.7%), and chief executive officers (8.7%). The majority (85.4%) had served four or more years, indicating substantial organizational experience enabling reliable assessment of leadership, governance, and performance dynamics across constitutional commissions.

Descriptive Statistics for Governance Practices

Governance practices were measured through five sub-constructs on a five-point Likert scale. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Governance Practices

Statements on Governance Practices	M	SD
Fiduciary Oversight	3.60	1.12
Board actions are guided by the strategic plan	3.71	1.11
The board takes overall responsibility for resource use	3.49	1.13
Decision Making	3.54	1.12
Employee views are considered in decision-making	3.40	1.17
Open dialogue channels facilitate exchange of ideas	3.67	1.07
Risk Management	3.51	1.17
The commission has risk champions who conduct regular assessments	3.44	1.24
The commission has a risk management framework	3.58	1.09
Compliance Monitoring	3.57	1.27
The commission monitors compliance with constitutional requirements	3.39	1.30
Compliance with statutory requirements is regularly assessed	3.75	1.23
Performance Management	3.86	1.29
The commission has a performance management system	3.80	1.32
Performance targets are set annually	3.92	1.25
Overall Average	3.62	1.19

As shown in Table 1, governance practices recorded an overall mean of M = 3.62 (SD = 1.19), indicating moderate levels of governance practice implementation across constitutional commissions. Performance management recorded the highest sub-construct mean (M = 3.86, SD = 1.29), followed by fiduciary oversight (M = 3.60, SD = 1.12), compliance monitoring (M = 3.57, SD = 1.27), decision-making (M = 3.54, SD = 1.12), and risk management (M = 3.51, SD = 1.17). Within performance management, performance targets are set annually achieved the highest individual mean across all governance practices items (M = 3.92, SD = 1.25), suggesting that target-setting is the most consistently implemented governance practice. The commission has a performance management system also recorded a high mean (M = 3.80, SD = 1.32), though the high standard deviation indicates substantial variation across commissions, with some demonstrating well-established performance management systems while others lack structured approaches. For fiduciary oversight, board actions being guided by the strategic plan recorded a higher mean (M = 3.71, SD = 1.11) than the board taking overall responsibility for resource use (M = 3.49, SD = 1.13), indicating that strategic plan alignment is perceived as stronger than actual board resource responsibility.

Risk management recorded the lowest sub-construct mean (M = 3.51, SD = 1.17), with risk champions conducting regular assessments recording the lowest individual mean in this dimension (M = 3.44, SD = 1.24) and the highest standard deviation, indicating considerable disagreement about whether designated individuals effectively conduct regular risk assessments. Compliance monitoring showed a notable gap between statutory compliance assessment (M = 3.75, SD = 1.23) and constitutional compliance monitoring (M = 3.39, SD = 1.30), with the latter recording the highest standard deviation across all governance practices items, suggesting that monitoring of constitutional compliance requirements remains particularly inconsistent across commissions. These findings are consistent with Mulili and Wong (2010), who documented that governance practices in developing countries are shaped by contextual factors including political, cultural, and institutional environments, and with Otieno (2017), who identified governance deficits including weak accountability systems and limited transparency as persistent challenges in Kenyan public institutions. The pattern of moderate means with high standard deviations reflects the heterogeneity in governance implementation across the thirteen constitutional commissions, indicating that while some commissions have established robust governance systems, others continue to face significant implementation challenges.

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine bivariate relationships among responsible leadership, governance practices, and performance. Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	Performance	Responsible Leadership	Governance Practices
Performance	1.000		
Responsible Leadership	.685**	1.000	
Governance Practices	.455**	.366**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N	103	103	103

As presented in Table 2, responsible leadership demonstrated a statistically significant strong positive association with performance ($r = 0.685$, $p < 0.01$), while governance practices demonstrated a statistically significant moderate positive association with performance ($r = 0.455$, $p < 0.01$). Responsible leadership was also positively associated with governance practices ($r = 0.366$, $p < 0.01$), providing preliminary evidence that the proposed mediator varies systematically with the independent variable. All inter-variable correlations remained below 0.8, supporting the distinctiveness of the constructs and the suitability of the data for the subsequent regression-based mediation analysis. These bivariate results therefore provided an empirical basis for formally testing the indirect effect using Hayes PROCESS Model 4.

MEDIATION ANALYSIS: HAYES PROCESS MODEL 4

Mediation was tested using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples. For transparency and comparability with earlier mediation literature, the regression progression is first presented to show the total effect, path a, the governance-performance association, and the direct effect after introducing the mediator. The definitive evidence of mediation is then provided by the bootstrapped indirect effect and its 95% confidence interval.

Table 3: Model Fitness for the Four Mediation Steps

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
Step 1: RL → P	.685	0.469	0.464	0.22546
Step 2: RL → GP	.366	0.134	0.126	0.36092
Step 3: GP → P	.455	0.207	0.199	0.27545
Step 4: RL + GP → P	.719	0.517	0.507	0.21607

Source: Field Data (2026)

The regression progression shows that responsible leadership alone explained 46.9% of performance variance, while responsible leadership explained 13.4% of variance in governance practices. Governance practices alone explained 20.7% of performance variance, and the joint model containing responsible leadership and governance practices explained 51.7%. The increase from 46.9% to 51.7% indicates that governance practices contribute performance information beyond the already substantial responsible leadership association. All four regression models were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. These model-fitness results illustrate the mediation pattern, but the significance of mediation is determined by the bootstrapped indirect effect rather than by the increase in R^2 alone.

Table 4: ANOVA for the Four Mediation Steps

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Step 1	Regression	4.531	1	4.531	89.134	.000
	Residual	5.134	101	0.051		
Step 2	Regression	2.041	1	2.041	15.668	.000
	Residual	13.157	101	0.130		
Step 3	Regression	2.001	1	2.001	26.380	.000
	Residual	7.663	101	0.076		
Step 4	Regression	4.996	2	2.498	53.508	.000
	Residual	4.669	100	0.047		

Source: Field Data (2026)

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for the Four Mediation Steps

Steps		B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Step 1	(Constant)	1.772	0.178		9.963	.000
	Responsible Leadership	0.468	0.050	0.685	9.441	.000
Step 2	(Constant)	2.433	0.285		8.544	.000
	Responsible Leadership	0.314	0.079	0.366	3.958	.000
Step 3	(Constant)	2.150	0.252		8.518	.000
	Governance Practices	0.363	0.071	0.455	5.136	.000
Step 4	(Constant)	1.315	0.224		5.876	.000
	Responsible Leadership	0.409	0.051	0.598	8.009	.000
	Governance Practices	0.188	0.060	0.236	3.157	.002

Dependent Variable: Performance of Constitutional Commissions. Source: Field Data (2026)

The regression coefficients clarify the leadership-governance-performance pathway. The total association between responsible leadership and performance was positive and significant (B = 0.468, β = 0.685, $p < 0.001$). Path a was also significant: responsible leadership was positively associated with governance practices (B = 0.314, β = 0.366, $p < 0.001$). Governance practices were positively associated with performance when examined independently (B = 0.363, β = 0.455, $p < 0.001$). In the joint model, responsible leadership remained significant (B = 0.409, β = 0.598, $p < 0.001$), while governance practices also remained significant after controlling for responsible leadership (B = 0.188, β = 0.236, $p = 0.002$). The reduction in the responsible leadership coefficient after governance practices entered the model is consistent with partial rather than full mediation.

Table 6: Bootstrapped Indirect Effect of Responsible Leadership on Performance through Governance Practices

Indirect Effect	BootLLCI	BootULCI
0.059	0.018	0.119

Source: Field Data (2026)

Hayes PROCESS Model 4 provided the definitive mediation test. The indirect effect was 0.059, derived from the estimated path from responsible leadership to governance practices and the governance-practices path to performance. The 95% bootstrap confidence interval ranged from 0.018 to 0.119 and therefore excluded zero, confirming a statistically significant indirect effect. Governance practices transmitted approximately 12.6% of responsible leadership's total performance association (0.059/0.468), while most of the association remained direct or operated through mechanisms outside the governance construct. H_{02} was consequently rejected: governance practices have a statistically significant partial mediating effect on the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya (Hayes, 2013).

Leaders who emphasize consistency, strategic direction, stakeholder engagement, transparency, and accountability can activate fiduciary oversight, participatory decision-making, risk controls, compliance monitoring, and performance management. Institutional Theory complements this explanation by showing how these governance arrangements convert leadership values into durable rules and routines that continue to shape organizational behaviour beyond individual leadership encounters (Scott, 2014). Governance practices therefore constitute an institutional pathway through which part of responsible leadership's performance association is operationalized.

The partial mediation result is broadly consistent with Owuori (2021), who reported governance mediation in Kenyan county government, and with Azegele et al. (2021), who demonstrated interdependence between governance structures and leadership-related organizational processes. It extends Githu and Minja (2025), who established that governance practices are associated with performance in constitutional commissions, by showing that governance practices are also associated with responsible leadership and carry a statistically significant portion of its performance association. The bootstrapped indirect-effect estimate provides stronger evidence of this mechanism than relying only on sequential significance tests because it directly evaluates whether the product of the mediation paths differs from zero (Hayes, 2013).

Qualitative findings provided mechanistic depth to the statistical mediation result. Respondents consistently distinguished between the existence of formal governance structures and their effective implementation. One key informant observed that structures were "strong on paper" but that implementation delays and resource limitations reduced their effectiveness, while another explained that "leadership sets the tone" and that governance systems function better when leaders insist on compliance and professionalism. These accounts support path a of the mediation model by showing how responsible leadership activates governance structures. They also explain the partial nature of mediation: governance mechanisms contribute to performance, but their effectiveness depends on leadership commitment, implementation capacity, and other institutional conditions. The convergence of quantitative, qualitative, and secondary evidence strengthens the interpretation that governance practices are a genuine but incomplete institutional transmission mechanism.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that governance practices significantly and partially mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and performance of constitutional commissions in Kenya. Hayes PROCESS Model 4 produced a bootstrapped indirect effect of 0.059 with a 95% confidence interval of [0.018, 0.119], which excluded zero. Governance practices therefore transmit a statistically significant portion of the responsible leadership-performance association, while responsible leadership retains a substantial direct association after governance practices are controlled. The finding demonstrates two complementary performance pathways. The institutional pathway operates through fiduciary oversight, decision-making, risk management, compliance monitoring, and performance management, which transform leadership values into organizational routines and accountability systems. A second pathway operates outside the measured governance construct through organizational culture, employee motivation, direct leader-follower relationships, and stakeholder trust. The mediated share of approximately 12.6% further indicates that the existence of formal governance systems is insufficient unless those systems are actively implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, constitutional commissions should strengthen organizational performance by integrating responsible leadership with effective governance implementation. Senior leaders should be held accountable for fiduciary oversight, stakeholder participation, compliance, performance management, and especially risk management, which requires greater attention. Oversight bodies should also focus on whether governance mechanisms are effectively implemented rather than merely established, while commissions continue investing in transparent, accountable, and stakeholder-responsive leadership.

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