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**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF STATE  
CORPORATIONS IN KENYA. A CASE STUDY OF KENYA PLANT HEALTH  
INSPECTORATE SERVICES**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study explored the effect of strategic management practices and performance of state corporations in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to find out the effect of strategic goal setting on performance at KEPHIS, to determine the effect of resource allocation on performance at KEPHIS, to find out the effect of technology adoption on performance at KEPHIS, and to assess the effect of monitoring and evaluation on performance at KEPHIS. The study focused on the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), a state corporation mandated to regulate the quality of agricultural inputs and produce in Kenya, and sought to address challenges in service delivery, operational efficiency, and financial stability through strategic management practices. The main objective of the study was to analyze the role of strategic management practices in improving organizational performance at KEPHIS, while the specific objectives were to assess the effect of strategic goal-setting, resource allocation, technological adoption, and monitoring and evaluation frameworks on performance. The study was limited to KEPHIS employees, targeting a population of 160 and a sample size of 114 respondents. It adopted a descriptive research design and was anchored on the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory, and Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Theory. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, with results presented in tables. The findings revealed that well-defined strategic goals, transparent resource allocation, effective technological integration, and strong monitoring and evaluation systems significantly enhanced organizational efficiency, accountability, and service delivery. The study recommends that state corporations strengthen strategic goal-setting processes, promote transparent resource utilization, invest in modern technology and employee capacity building, and establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks to foster accountability and continuous improvement. In addition, the study recommends that future research should explore the relationship between strategic management practices and organizational culture, as well as the role of leadership and innovation in enhancing performance within state corporations.

**Keywords:** *Strategic management practices, performance, state corporations, Kenya*

## INTRODUCTION

The planning methods of strategic management improve the operational results of state corporations throughout Kenya. Strategic alignment between organizational goals and effective strategies allows state corporations to maximize their resource management and operational performance. Proper planning approaches enable these corporations to see new development possibilities while handling difficulties, which results in greater accountability, thus improving both operational results and customer service quality. When properly executed, strategic management practices guide state corporations to successfully embrace market changes, which improves their competitive position and ensures their long-term existence in public as well as private domains (Muiruri, 2024). The study conducted by Sheikh & Alom (2021) demonstrated that state-owned entities within Bangladesh that implemented detailed strategic planning frameworks demonstrated better financial as well as non-financial operational outcomes. Systematic strategic planning adoption by organizations helped them formulate precise objectives and distribute resources better, and establish quantifiable targets. The analysis established strategic management practices, including SWOT analysis and performance monitoring and vision-setting as fundamental factors responsible for better overall organizational performance. In Norway, a study conducted by Johnsen (2022), found that strategic planning practices significantly impacted the efficiency and effectiveness of public organizations. Organizations implementing strategic planning frameworks within state corporations demonstrated enhanced financial control, together with greater transparency and stronger worker output.

Research by Phina (2020) demonstrated how strategic management approaches involving long-term strategic visioning essentially enhanced the operational and financial results of Nigerian state corporations. Strategic foresight practices, together with long-term planning, allowed organizations to adapt more effectively to marketplace changes such as recessions and regulatory transformations. The companies revealed preparedness for unexpected situations because they adapted their goals and objectives to maintain their path. The research identified strategic management methods of scenario planning, together with risk management and stakeholder engagement as crucial strategies to handle uncertainty. In Zimbabwe, a study by Tapera (2022), found that state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that utilized strategic management techniques such as balanced scorecards and strategic goal alignment outperformed their counterparts in key areas like customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and operational efficiency.

In Kenya, a study conducted by Ombati & Maithya (2021), found that state corporations that implemented strategic management practices such as environmental scanning, stakeholder analysis, and continuous strategy review were more responsive to changes. Through strategic planning, corporations gained the ability to predict market trends and foresee risks, which allowed them to respond faster to uncertain market conditions compared to organizations with basic planning systems. The independent variable of the study is the Strategic management practices, while the

dependent variable is the performance of state corporations in KEPHIS. Strategic management practices are made possible through efficient resource allocation, through technological adoption that makes executing tasks easy due to automation, and also routine monitoring and evaluation that makes sure that the performance of state corporations is optimal. The strategic management practices allow businesses to create controlled systems that develop strategies toward long-term goal achievement (Bryson & George, 2020). The strategic practices include environmental scanning for internal and external factor assessment, as well as objective setting and competitive strategy development for performance enhancement. Organizations implement SWOT analysis and Porter's Five Forces along with the Balanced Scorecard to direct resources toward their strategic objectives.

The performance of State Corporations in Kenya has been a matter of national concern due to their crucial role in implementing government policies, delivering essential public services, and contributing to socio-economic development. Despite the significant resources allocated to these institutions, many have consistently underperformed, facing issues such as financial inefficiency, bureaucratic rigidity, and limited accountability. Strategic goals are essential for fostering productivity and performance within an organization as they provide a coherent direction as well as a purpose for all employees. An organization grows and gains a competitive advantage when its resources and efforts are prioritized toward high-impact activities that are aligned with the firm's vision and mission statements.

The complete foundation of organizations, including state corporations, depends on strategic management practices because they bring forth a systematic method to set goals while allocating resources and assessing performance. Organizations that implement effective strategic planning models attain environmental adaptability and operational efficiency while pursuing sustainable business success. State corporations throughout Kenya must fulfill their dual responsibility of advancing economic growth and offering basic public services and national development services. Numerous performance improvement initiatives have been implemented in state corporations, but many of these entities still face operational inefficiencies in addition to financial mismanagement and governance complexity. However, the studies reviewed failed to address the long-term sustainability of strategic planning frameworks and their adaptability to dynamic economic and political environments. This study sought to bridge these gaps.

The general objective of the study was to determine the strategic management practices and performance of state corporations in Kenya. The specific objectives entailed: To find out the effect of strategic goal setting on performance at KEPHIS. To determine the effect of resource allocation on performance at KEPHIS. To find out the effect of technology adoption on performance at KEPHIS and to assess the effect of monitoring and evaluation on performance at KEPHIS. The study answered the

questions of what extent to which strategic goal setting, resource allocation, technology adoption, and monitoring and evaluation affect performance at KEPHIS.

The research would benefit KEPHIS' management team through its analysis of strategic management practices for organizational performance enhancement. KEPHIS functions as a state corporation devoted to agricultural input and produce quality oversight, but needs strategic plans to boost efficiency and financial performance. The investigation would detect essential roadblocks in strategic planning execution while proposing optimal practices that enable KEPHIS to combine strategies with national development objectives, while improving resource management and expanding its agricultural market position.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The study majored on three theories, namely, the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Theory. Jay Barney developed the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory in 1991. Barney (1991) argues that organizations achieve survival and competitive advantages through the RBV by utilizing specific resources and capabilities (Lubis, 2022). The theory suggests that organizational success is contingent upon resources that possess value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability (VRIN). Financial resources work alongside human, technological, and cultural resources to form a complete set of assets. Before any organization can accomplish its long-term goals, it must allocate its resources properly, as this determines how well it can serve customers with high-quality products and operate efficiently. This theory primarily encompasses internal capabilities of an organization, enabling it to achieve great success (Miller, 2019).

Fred Davis established the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in 1989. The TAM developed by Davis (1989) targets organizational technology usage acceptance and behavioral processes. New technology adoption depends on how useful people perceive it to be (PU) and how easy it is to use (PEOU). Workers are likely to adopt new technologies in the workplace to the extent that they believe the technology will enhance their productivity and is user-friendly. Further, the model argues that acceptance of technology is also determined by supportive external factors such as an organization's administrative backing, training, and the user's prior experience, which in turn affect service delivery quality and institutional performance (Davis, Granić & Marangunić, 2024).

During 1992, Robert Kaplan and David Norton developed the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Theory. Kaplan and Norton established the BSC as an evaluation system that used non-financial performance indicators. The main components of the BSC model include the financial perspective, customer perspective, business process, and organizational learning and innovation perspectives. Performance management systems need to target strategic goals and deliver predicted results across these four perspectives. A service

organization achieves enhanced performance improvement through financial and non-financial indicators integrated as an ongoing system to improve service delivery (Tawse & Tabesh, 2023). The BSC model's most notable asset, according to Aryani and Setiawan (2020), is its all-encompassing nature in performance evaluation, which enables organizations to measure progress across different segments simultaneously. It allows institutions to offset the short-term focus on revenue generation with a long-term sustainability focus rooted in employee training, innovation, and customer service by measuring a wider range of performance indicators. However, one major pitfall of the BSC is the difficulty many organizations face in implementing and quantifying all four perspectives. Moreover, some critics contend that its application does not allow for the integration of certain important variables that affect organizational performance (Frederico et al., 2021).

The empirical literature review comprised the relationship between the independent and dependent variables—in this case, the relation between strategic goal setting and performance of KEPHIS, resource allocation and performance of KEPHIS, technology adoption and performance, and monitoring and evaluation and performance of KEPHIS. Mwangi (2020) noted that setting strategic goals distinctly clarifies organizational directions and milestones, enhancing performance. The study found that performance in public agencies improves with the integration of goal frameworks aligned with national policy objectives, as this fosters meaningfulness and responsibility among employees. The study reported enhanced focus, reduced operational gray areas, and alignment of departmental activities to strategic objectives resulting from setting specific and deadline-driven goals. Findings indicated that a lack of clear public sector goals leads to fragmented efforts and underperformance. Lastly, the study concluded that state corporations outperform others when they set transparent, feasible goals involving all stakeholders, compared to those lacking structured strategic goals.

Hantiro and Maina (2020) showed that resource allocation serves as a principal performance driver for state corporations because it enables optimal use of financial, personnel, and technological resources to achieve organizational goals. Better operational efficiency and superior service delivery result from structured and budgeted organizations that use strategic resource allocation. Research evidence supports that organizations investing in human capital development achieve improved productivity from employees trained to perform at higher competence levels. State corporations often fail to deliver satisfactory performance due to misuse of funds through improper procurement and project funding decisions. The research also revealed that unnecessary bureaucratic processes and regulations hindered equitable resource distribution. The study recommended that state corporations use data-driven resource allocation to ensure proper distribution of public funds through enhanced transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency.

According to Koech, Naibei, and Cheruiyot (2021), technology adoption enhances efficiency, productivity, and service delivery in state corporations by automating processes and improving decision-making. The study observed that entities that computerized their operations using digital technologies such as ERPs and cloud computing had lower operational costs and greater workflow productivity. Further, automation of administrative functions like payroll, procurement, and customer service led to accuracy, decreased delays, and reduced human error. The study also noted that corporations adopting big data and artificial intelligence (AI) were better at analyzing patterns, predicting needs, and distributing resources. However, the study acknowledged challenges to technology uptake, including cybersecurity threats and data privacy concerns requiring sophisticated security infrastructure. The research suggested that for state corporations to fully benefit from technology adoption, there is a need to invest in digital infrastructure, workforce training, and cybersecurity.

Waweru (2021) argues that proper monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems enhance organizational performance by ensuring that all intended actions are completed timely and in alignment with organizational strategies. The author noted that state corporations with regular monitoring exercises manage performance gaps in real time. The research further revealed that stronger M&E frameworks improve transparency, resource accountability, and stakeholder engagement, subsequently enhancing performance results. The findings highlighted the necessity of incorporating M&E throughout all stages of a project's life cycle—from planning to execution—to ensure compliance and adaptive learning. The study concluded that M&E is not simply a control mechanism but a strategy for continual improvement in public service delivery.

Seje, Ombati, and Maithya (2021) conducted research on how strategic management practices influence state corporation performance in Kenya. The results indicated that corporations more responsive to changing markets and regulations were those with strategic planning components such as environmental scanning, stakeholder evaluation, and constant strategy evaluation. Strategic planning fostered innovation, operational efficiency, and improved profitability. Implementing strategic management at the corporate cultural level provided immediate performance improvements and long-term stability, developing economic resilience. However, while noting the drawbacks of state corporate strategic management, the study did not thoroughly analyze the challenges these corporations face, such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, resource limitations, and resistance to change. Additionally, it failed to evaluate the connection between strategic planning and external factors such as politics, technological change, and policy shifts that influence corporate performance.

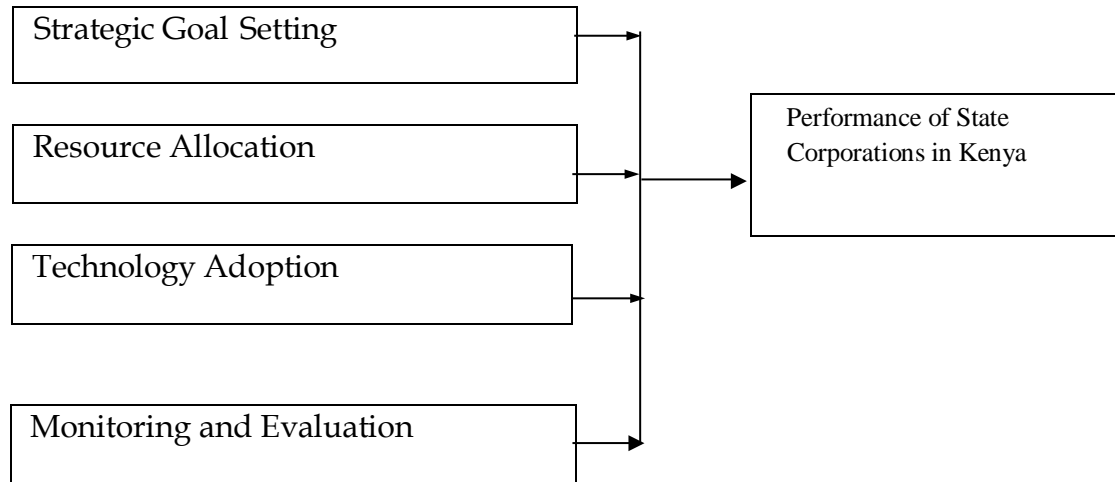
## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework expounds on how the independent variables relate to the dependent variable. In this case, it explained how strategic goal setting, resource

allocation, technology adoption, and monitoring and evaluation influence the performance of state corporations in Kenya, with emphasis on KEPHIS.

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent Variable**



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

**METHODOLOGY**

The overall objective of the study was to ascertain how strategic management practices influence the performance of state corporations in Kenya, with a keen emphasis on KEPHIS. The study ascertained how strategic goal setting improves performance, how resource allocation, when done effectively, improves the performance of organizations technology adoption impacts the performance of KEPHIS when all functions and systems of the organization are automated and finally how monitoring and evaluation improve the performance of state corporations, in this case KEPHIS. The research methodology outlined the target population, the research design and even the mode of collecting data for research purposes. A descriptive research design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was deemed appropriate to collect valid and reliable data on the subject of strategic management practices and performance of state corporations in KEPHIS, and the data was analyzed using SPSS version 29.

The target population defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) consists of individuals, groups together with objects that supply data for study sampling. The research study analyzes KEPHIS' 160 staff who appear in Table 3. According to Kumar (2019) target population ensures representative sampling from the greater population, which contains the target population members.

**Table 3:** Target Population

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Top Management	2	1
Middle Management	10	6
Low Management	148	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>100</b>

A sample of 114 respondents was established using the Yamane formula. The researcher used sample-based analysis to create inferences about their research population according to Sekaran (2003). The research adopted a normal distribution, so the Yamane technique determined the sample size. The strategy lets researchers choose appropriate samples that adequately capture the population by enabling the determination of confidence levels and accepted risks. This is the Yamane formula:

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

**Table 4:** Sample Size

Department	Sample Size	Percentage
Top Management	1	1
Middle Management	7	6
Low Management	106	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>

The main data collection method for this study involves questionnaire surveys. The research procedure allows easy compilation of received answers that enable analysis by the researcher. This approach is supported by Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2019) who claim that effective and clearly structured questionnaires result in higher response rates and quality data. Moreover, Bryman (2019) indicates that bias and breach of confidentiality can be mitigated with a well-defined format to the survey hence increasing the accuracy of the survey results. A pilot test was done using 10 % of the total population. A validity test was conducted to ascertain the accuracy and the importance of the data, and reliability tests were also conducted to test consistency, accuracy, and stability of the data collected. Participants obtained consent through an introductory letter with NACOSTI permission attached to verify their ethical data collection

behavior. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize and assess the sample data. Field (2021), inferential statistics included correlation analysis to examine associations between variables and multiple linear regression to determine the nature and strength of relationships among the study variables. These methods helped uncover patterns and draw conclusions relevant to the research objectives.

### Model specification

The basic regression model is  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + e$

Where,

Y - is the dependent variable (performance of state corporations in Kenya)

X1- Strategic Goal Setting

X2- Resource Allocation

X3- Technology

Development X4-

Monitoring and Evaluation

$\beta_0$  - Is the constant,  $e$  is the error of prediction.

$\beta_1$ -n = The regression coefficient or change included in Y by

each  $X_i$ ,  $e$  = Error term

Data was held in high confidentiality so as not to put the jobs of the respondents at risk, the questionnaires were under lock and key, and the respondents were assured that the study was purely for academic purposes and no data would be leaked to competitors. The respondents were purely volunteers willing to take part in the research process for their personal experience, in matters relating to strategic management practices and performance of state corporations in Kenya.

## FINDINGS

### Response Rate

The response rate of the respondents who took part in the research. In a total sample population of 114 prospective respondents, 110 questionnaires were filled in and brought back, exhibiting a high response rate of 96%. The survey was not answered by only 4 respondents, amounting to 4 percent. Such a degree of participation suggests a close involvement of the target population and promotes the trustworthiness of the study results. It is said that a response rate of over 70 percent is sufficient in most of the studies and since this is 96 percent, it is therefore an indication that the data collection process was effective and justified the representativeness of the sample.

### Demographic Information

The demographics of the respondents who were surveyed as per their gender are tabulated below (Table 6). The sample consisted of 60 males, or 54.5 percent of the total sample size of 110, and 49 women, or 44.5 percent of the total sample size. Of the sample, 0.9 percent (i.e. one respondent) failed to mention gender. The sample is representative

of both genders, which is relatively balanced, thus indicating the inclusivity and gender diversity of the sample and leading to the appropriate applicability of the study findings to various perspectives on gender. The highest proportion of the respondents is 39.1%, or 43 respondents who were aged between 31 to 40 years; the next highest number is 28.2 percent, which accounted in 31 respondents between 41 and 50 years. Yet again, 22 respondents (20.0%) were between the age of 21 years and 30 years, 14 respondents (12.7%) were aged 51 years and above. These results are inline with some conclusions of the work by Ngang and Mwaura (2020), who asserted that employees belonging to this age group are more prone to become experienced and flexible workers that could significantly contribute to the organizational performance.

The distribution of the respondents by the highest level of education. Most respondents 39 (35.5%), were in possession of a Bachelor Degree, 21 (19.1%) Higher Diploma and 14 (12.7) having a Master's Degree. Respondents holding a Diploma and Certificate were 12 (10.9) and 11 (10.0) respectively whereas 12 respondents (10.9) had received a Ph.D. profile distribution of respondents based on their experience in work. The highest number of respondents 51 people (46.4%) was between the ages of 6-9 years under work experience meaning the workforce had been subjected to a considerable amount of exposure to their professions. This was preceded by 30 respondents (27.3 percent) who had between 3 to 5 years of experience and 16 respondents (14.5 percent) who had more than ten years' experience. The other smaller percentage, 13 respondents (11.8), had experience below 2 years.

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis of study variable showed that the average mean was above 4 and the descriptive statistics on strategic goal setting and its influence on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. The findings indicate that respondents strongly agreed that their organizations set clear and measurable strategic goals that guide all departments (mean = 4.62, SD = 0.593). The descriptive statistics on resource allocation and its influence on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. The results reveal a strong consensus among respondents that proper time management in resource allocation significantly enhances productivity and service delivery (mean = 4.75, SD = 0.438), making it the highest-rated factor.

The highest-rated item was the implementation of strong cybersecurity measures to protect data and systems, with a mean score of 4.80 and a low standard deviation of 0.424, indicating strong agreement among respondents. The descriptive statistics on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and its influence on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. The highest-rated item was the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework for tracking performance, with a mean score of 4.76 and a low standard deviation of 0.427, suggesting strong consensus among respondents on the importance of formalized M&E systems. This aligns with the findings of Njeru and Arasa (2020), who

concluded that performance-based management practices, including M&E frameworks, significantly enhance accountability and service delivery in public sector organizations.

The descriptive statistics on organizational performance in relation to service delivery, financial management, and revenue generation in state corporations in Kenya. The highest-rated item was the implementation of effective strategies to increase revenue, with a mean of 4.73 and a low standard deviation of 0.467, indicating strong agreement among respondents. This supports the findings of Wanjiru and Gikonyo (2018), who emphasized that the performance of public institutions improves significantly when service delivery is tied to robust financial planning. Similarly, Mwangi (2021) found that financial sustainability and effective revenue enhancement strategies are central to long-term performance and institutional resilience in Kenya's public sector.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter details the findings of the study, the conclusion and the recommendations, even further areas identified for study in future. The findings on the effect of strategic goal setting on performance at KEPHIS indicate that clear and measurable strategic goals significantly contribute to enhancing organizational performance. Respondents strongly agreed that the organization establishes well-defined objectives that guide operations across all departments and align with its mission and long-term goals. The results on the impact of resource allocation on organizational performance at KEPHIS indicate that effective, transparent, and strategic management of resources significantly enhances organizational outcomes. Respondents strongly agreed that proper time management in resource allocation improves productivity and service delivery. The analysis on the impact of technology adoption on KEPHIS performance demonstrates that the implementation of modern technological solutions substantially enhances operational efficiency, service delivery, and overall organizational productivity. Respondents strongly agreed that robust cybersecurity measures were critical for protecting data and maintaining system integrity.

The study concludes that strategic goal setting significantly influences the performance of state corporations in Kenya. Full participation in the goal setting process promotes ownership and the feeling of accountability by the employee and frequent reviews instill a sense of tracking progress being made and making any necessary changes. The study concludes that resource allocation plays a pivotal role in enhancing the performance of state corporations in Kenya. Effective management of budgets, proper allocation of resources according to the emphasis of the strategic focus and openness in the allocative process also play a major role towards effective service provision and efficiency in the operations. The study concludes that technology adoption significantly enhances the performance of state corporations in Kenya. Modernization of IT infrastructure, automation of business processes, integration of digital systems, and high levels of cybersecurity, in general, ensure the growth in operational efficiency, a decrease in manual tasks, better service delivery, and organizational resilience. The findings will be

very instrumental to the policy makers in matters pertaining to strategic management and performance of state corporations. Future studies should explore the influence of strategic management practices on performance in specific sectors of state corporations, such as agriculture, transport, or energy, to determine sector-specific dynamics.

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