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# Effect of Strategic Financial Controls on Project Implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The study analyzed the effect of strategic financial controls on project implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya.
**Methodology/Approach:** A correlation research design was achieved. There are a total of 72 workers here, including managers, freelancers, and other employees. A pilot study was performed at the Busia County Government to test and verify the efficacy of the research instruments. If the coefficient of the research instruments was greater than 0.7, they were considered suitable for usage. Predetermined questions were used to collect data. The research data was analyzed employing a mix of descriptive and inferential (simple linear regression and correlation) statistics. The data was displayed using tables.
**Findings:** The research benefited county government administration, informed academics in adjacent subjects, added to the existing literature on strategic controls, and sparked more investigation into strategic planning and performance at the county level in Kenya. Specifically, a positive linear relationship was discovered between financial controls and project implementation ($R = 0.897$).
**Implications:** The research urged that since the importance of fiscal management was highlighted in the study, it was suggested that county governments make funds available to improve county performance.



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## Introduction

It is highly recommended that a project should reach at its optimal point that is the implemenetation level. In achieving this organizations embrase strategic finacial control systems. Financial control refers to moderating or managing the monitary desires of an organization by balancing the income and expenditure to ensure there is maximum output while using the minimum costs. Financial Controls was measured by budgetary controls and financial audit. A study conducted by Harold (2020) in Canada examined project management best practices that optimize the implementation of financial and operational controls within government entities. The study highlighted the importance of involving key stakeholders in construction projects to enhance accountability and transparency, with a particular focus on effective implementation.

Burke (2013) conducted research in the United States on the rate of project implementation and found that management effectiveness, financial controls, and a behavioral approach were all developed and used as tools for analyzing the impact of project partners on construction project outcomes. The research found that getting stakeholders involved at different points in the construction project life cycle increased their commitment to the project's implementation activities because they felt their interests, aims, and expectations were being taken seriously. Researchers concluded that existing studies mostly focused on examining the responsibilities of managers in private sector projects.

Many construction projects in Zambia have either not been completed or have taken far longer than anticipated, as reported by Zulu and Chileshe (2018). Many local contractors' lackluster work has a major impact on the projects' competitiveness and overall performance. According to Tan's (2017) research on what influences the timely completion of construction projects; mismanagement of financial resources is the primary cause of project delays in Malaysia. The second major reason for sluggish progress on a project is disagreements over how to track its progress between the involved stakeholders. The timely delivery of building materials is also crucial for minimizing disruptions in construction operations.

The formulation and implementation of effective management practices that take into account the ongoing institutional pressures for projects from the various stakeholders is one of the biggest challenges encountered by businesses in the fast-changing environment (Baker & Schaltegger, 2015). For a company to be given a competitive advantage, strategic management in an organization is a continual process that seeks to ensure that there is a fit between the organization and the always changing environment.

Bungoma County, like many others in Kenya, struggles to maintain its relevance in the communities where it operates. Companies today use a wide range of competitive strategies to stay ahead of the competition, survive in a volatile market, and provide quality services to their local communities. Companies can better communicate with their employees and the outside world when they have a clear sense of purpose and direction thanks to the guidance provided by strategic controls (Johnson & Scholes, 2002). This paper examined the effect of strategic financial controls on project implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya.

## Statement of the Problem

Kenya plans to become fully industrialized by the year 2030, and as a result, the country has spent considerably in infrastructure projects. It has been determined that devolved monies are not always used in a transparent manner that ensures the successful completion of developmental initiatives. The failure to implement the Kenyan government's big four flagship program throughout the 2018–2022 plan period is a major problem. According to research (Ogwueleka, 2011), developing nations have a greater project failure rate than wealthy nations. According to the National Taxpayers Association (NTA, 2014), a large number of projects run into difficulties or are scrapped before they are finished. The cost to society and the economy as a whole from a failed project is incalculable. County government-sponsored projects frequently experience delays and are not implemented despite an initial cost plan. Urban infrastructure sponsored by the county government in western Kenya has not been immune to delays and non-implementation of projects from initial cost plan. Bungoma County government had launched different projects for instance construction of small roads which are in different phases of implementation yet with low incompletion rate (Bungoma County Project Implementation, 2021). The majority of initiatives typically fall short of their goals due to inadequate financial and operational controls, even when considerable amounts of labor and money are invested in them. A number of studies related to competitive strategies have been done in Kenya where they post contradicting results. Ochako (2017) found financial control and operational systems to be of significant relationship with project implementation while Muthangya (2017) found the relationship negative as Olunga (2015) found no relationship. This research also analyzed the moderating effect of organizational culture on the impact of strategic control statements on project implementation, as suggested by China, Chen and Lin (2017). The purpose of this research was to examine the effect of strategic financial controls on project implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya.

**Objectives of the Study**

To determine the effect of strategic financial controls on project implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya.

**Research Hypothesis**

$H_{01}$: Strategic financial controls have no statistically significant effect on project implementation in Selected County Government in Western Kenya.

**Literature Review**

**Agency Cost Theory**

The organizational performance is contingent upon the internal resources, specifically financial controls, as posited by Wernfelt and subsequently expanded upon by Barney (2002). The underlying assumption of the model posits that organizations consist of diverse assemblages of both tangible and intangible assets and capabilities. These collections are important in ensuring that the organization performs its duties effectively and efficiently, which establishes the groundwork for financial controls that will lead to project implementation. Therefore, this idea aids in determining how well the organization's capabilities are matched to opportunities during strategic planning. These resources play a significant role in implementing a plan by utilizing their skills, particularly when they are uncommon, unique, priceless, and non-replaceable (Boyd, Bergh, & Ketchen, 2010). They thereby assist it in gaining a competitive edge and enhancing its efficiency.

This research uses a resource-based perspective on the company to guide its strategic planning and implementation. County governments can carry out its mandate using a variety of resources. These resources could be material, financial, or human. The technical institutions' ability to recognize, prepare for, develop, and use these resources effectively is crucial to ensuring they meet their strategic objectives and stand out from the competition when it comes to providing services and luring investment (Boyd *et a*l. 2010).

In terms of this study, the theory is pertinent since it aids in accounting for the opinions and interests of the stakeholders and analyzing how the firm makes use of this information to accomplish its goals. Considering that a company should consult with all stakeholders on its philanthropic agenda was another benefit of the idea for the researcher (Newbert, 2007). Financial controls were established through the right structuring of resource-based operational controls, which in turn led to behavior centered on resource management. Additionally, resources are made available by a strong organizational culture. As a result, it serves as the study's principal guiding theory. The corporation operates in a society where shareholders and other stakeholders' interests are often muddled.

## Empirical Review

Mpoke and Njeru (2015) aimed to analyze the financial control's impact on the processes of strategic control systems. The study found a favorable and statistically significant correlation between the actions of managers and the quality of their company's finances. This investigation focused on Bungoma County.

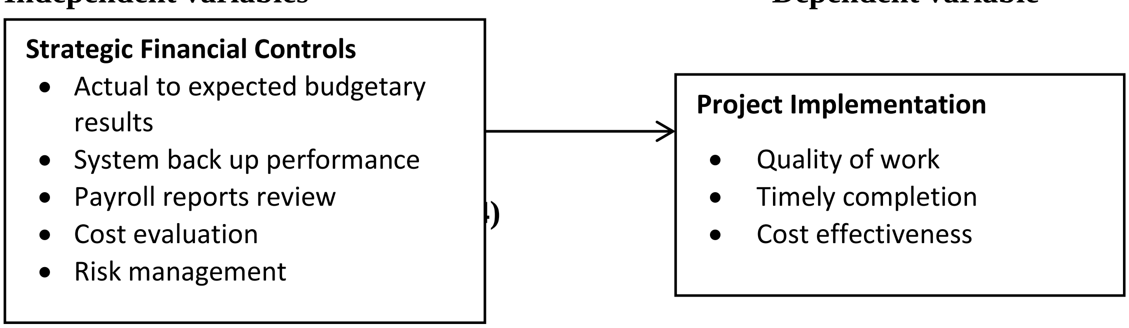
Bassas (2015) research sought to examine strategic systems controls and the implementation of strategy in Ethiopia's public universities. Questionnaires were distributed to faculty, staff, and students at three randomly selected public universities, and interviews were conducted with the management teams (Vice Presidents and Directors). Management methods in the areas of behavioral control, financial control, and operational control were found to have a beneficial and statistically significant effect on Ethiopia's public universities. The focus of this investigation was on Bungoma County, not Ethiopian public colleges.

Gold and Campbell (2017) demonstrated that only a small fraction of British organizations employing the strategic control management style have successfully defined and implemented specific strategic milestone measures. Only 11% of enterprises in a mail survey of leading British companies reported using a strategic control system similar to the one described. In-depth interviews with consultants and researchers in the United States and Europe have revealed that only a small number of businesses have experience managing a comprehensive strategic control system. Finding out if the same regulations apply in the County Government of Bungoma, Kenya, which is a non-profit organization, is essential.

Njagi and Kombo (2014) investigated the effect of management team strategy implementation on the financial standing of commercial banks in Kenya. The purpose of this research was to examine the results of establishing strategic control mechanisms and the results of institutionalizing strategy's effect on bank performance. According to the data, commercial banks in Kenya thrive when their finances are well managed. This research focused on Bungoma County, Kenya, rather than financial institutions.

## Conceptual Framework

**Independent variables** **Dependent variable**




The conceptual framework shows how the independent variables (strategic financial controls) relate to the dependent variables (project implementation). Independent variable is conceptualized to have the following constructs; actual to expected budgetary results, system back up performance, payroll reports review, cost evaluation and risk management. Project implementation executed through quality of work, timely completion and cost effectiveness

## Methodology

**Study design:** Correlational survey methodology was used for this investigation.

**Target population:** A researcher can determine a sample size by conducting a census, looking at the sizes of similar studies, or using calculations.

**Table 1 Target population and Sampling**

| Sub County | Project Managers | Contractors | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bungoma County | 10 | 11 | 21 |
| Kakamega County | 20 | 13 | 33 |
| Trans Nzoia County | 8 | 10 | 28 |
| **Total** | **38** | **34** | **72** |

Source; Selected County Governments Data, (2023)

Sampling is a method employed to pick some aspects from a community in order to serve as a representative sample of the complete group. Kothari (2012) suggests that this approach is often utilized in census surveys, when the entire population is used as the sample. The researchers employed purposive sampling to target and choose specific contractors and project managers for inclusion in the study.

## Instrumentation

Data was collected through primary data collection. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires on 38 project managers and 34 project contractors.

## Data Analysis

The descriptive data analysis techniques employed means and standard deviation to evaluate central tendencies and dispersion as required.

The realm of inferential statistics made use of regression and correlation approaches. The collected data underwent quantitative analysis to achieve the study's aims.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2: Response Rate**

| Questionnaire | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Administered | 72 | 100.00 |
| Received from respondents | 50 | 69.4 |
| Not received | 22 | 30.6 |

Source: Authors Compilation (2024)

In this study, questionnaires were used as a data gathering tool. Only 50 out of the 72 surveys were returned. This resulted in a 69.4 percent response rate, which was strong as compared to the suggested response rate for ensuring the accuracy of measures needed (Nachimias & Nachimias, 2005).

**Table 3: Financial Controls and Project implementation in Selected County Governments**

| Financial Controls | Strongly Agree | Agree | Not sure | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Mean | Std Dev. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My county has a system back up performance program to control funds | (35) 70% | (14) 28% | (1) 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.51 | .480 |
| My county analyzes the actual to expected budgetary results | (39) 78% | (10) 20% | (1) 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.72 | .483 |
| My county reviews the payroll reports periodically | (40) 80% | (9) 18% | 1 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.97 | .472 |
| My county evaluates all costs associated with projects | (41) 82% | (8) 16% | (1) 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.97 | .446 |
| My county has a risk | (10) | (27) | (9) | (4) | (0) | 3.93 | .734 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| management program | 20% | 58% | 18% | 4% | 0% | | |
| **Average** | | | | | | **4.26** | **.593** |

Source: Authors Compilation (2024)

Respondents were prompted to share their thoughts on whether or not they have a system back up performance program in place to manage finances. Table 3 shows the results of their investigation. Only 0% were adamantly opposed, 0% were neutral, 2% were on the fence, 28% agreed, and 70% strongly agreed. Seventy percent of respondents so agreed that the control funds resulted from the system back up performance program.

The research also aimed to find out if the county compares its budgetary outcomes to its projections. There were no strong disapprovals, no strong approvals, two percent ambivalence, twenty percent agreement, and seventy-eight percent total agreement. Most respondents thought that a positive difference between actual and projected budgetary performance was evidence of sound financial management.

The third consideration is whether or whether the county regularly inspects the payroll reports. Table 4.6 displays the percentages of people that strongly disagreed, disagreed, were unsure, agreed, or strongly agreed, with the statement being made. The vast majority of respondents assumed that payroll reports were periodically reviewed.

Assessing whether or not the county considers all project expenses was the fourth main focus area. A total of 0% strongly disagreed, 0% agreed, 2% were undecided, 18% agreed, and 80% strongly agreed, as shown in Table 4.3. In general, the county was seen to carefully consider all project expenses.

A risk management strategy in the county was investigated in this study. Table 4.3 displays the results obtained by polling employees. 0% were adamantly opposed, 4% were neutral, 20% were unsure, 58% concurred, and 18% were completely in agreement. Thus, the county instituted a system to mitigate such threats. In their study on the impact of strategic control systems on organizational performance, Emeka, Ejim, and Amaka (2015) discovered that Innoson Manufacturing Company Ltd in Nigeria's project implementation was significantly impacted by financial controls. Contrary to what Bassa (2015) discovered, the influence of financial control practice systems control on project performance is not negligible.

**Table 4*:* Project Implementation in Selected County Governments**

| Statement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Mean | St.Dev |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My county check quality of work for workers | (38) 76% | (10) 20% | (2) 4% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.71 | .602 |
| My county timely implementation of projects | (46) 92% | (3) 6% | (1) 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.89 | .433 |
| My county adheres to cost effectiveness | (47) 94% | (2) 4% | (1) 2% | 0.0% | (0) 0% | 4.95 | .308 |
| My county ensures there is adequate resources for projects | (43) 86% | (6) 12% | (1) 2% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.89 | .330 |
| My county provides enough facilities for project work | (47) 94% | (3) 6% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | (0) 0% | 4.94 | .280 |
| **Average** | | | | | | 4.88 | .3906 |

Source: Authors Compilation (2024)

The purpose of the research was to find out if the county actually did perform worker quality checks. Table 4 shows that 0% were severely opposed, 2% were opposed, 4% were unsure, 20% agreed, and 76% agreed enthusiastically. A higher percentage of respondents who agreed that the county checked worker quality of work.

The second part of this overarching topic was to learn if county projects were completed on schedule. Table 4.7 displays the percentages of those who severely disagreed (0.0%), who disagreed (0.0%), who were unsure (2.0%), who agreed (6.0%), and who highly agreed (92.2%). Results show that respondents are in agreement that county projects were completed on time.

The third aspect examined in this study was whether the county emphasized efficiency in its expenditure. Table 4.7 illustrates that 0% (zero) strongly disagreed, 0% (zero) disagreed, 2% (two) were uncertain, 4% (41) agreed, and 94% (115) strongly agreed. These results clearly indicate that the county consistently prioritized cost-effectiveness.

The primary objective of this research was to ascertain whether the county ensured adequate funding for its projects. The data from the staff surveys, presented in Table 4.7, reveal that no respondents strongly disagreed, none somewhat disagreed, none were uncertain, twelve percent concurred, and eighty-eight percent unequivocally agreed. The majority of participants expressed confidence in the county's provision of adequate funding for all projects.

Respondents were also invited to express their opinions regarding whether the county possessed sufficient resources for the project. As indicated in the results displayed in Table 4.7, all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Consequently, a significant majority of respondents believed that the county possessed ample resources for the project. These findings align with those of Maroa and Muturi (2015), who conducted a study on the impact of various strategic management techniques on the success of horticulture businesses in Kiambu County. Their research identified that strategic control measures had a positive and statistically significant influence on the floriculture businesses in Kenya.

**Table 5 Pearson Correlation Analysis**

| | | $X_{FC}$ | $Y_{PI}$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| $X_{FC}$ | Pearson Correlation | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| $Y_{PI}$ | Pearson Correlation | .896** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |

$X_{FC}$, Financial Controls, $Y_{PI}$ Project implementation

Source: Authors Compilation (2024)

The correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of co-variation, or the relationship between two variables, that shows both the magnitude and direction of the linear relationship (Coopers & Schindler, 2014). A correlation coefficient of less than 0.3 indicates a weak correlation, 0.3–0.5 indicates a moderate correlation, and greater than 0.5 indicates a strong correlation. By using correlation coefficients, r 0.9 indicates the existence of multicollinearity in the data set (Henson & Roberts, 2006).

The statistics show that strategic financial controls strongly correlates with project implementation ($r = 0.896$, $p< 0.05$). The study agrees with Maroa and Muturi (2015) studied the influence of strategic management practices on the performance of Floriculture Firms in Kiambu County. The study found that financial control had positive and significant relationship on Floriculture Firms in Kenya.

**Table 6: Regression results for Financial Controls and Project implementation in Selected County Governments**

**Model Summary**

| | | | | | Change Statistics | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .896[a] | .805 | .804 | .292 | .805 | 491.810 | 1 | 49 | .000 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), $X_{FC}$

**ANOVA**[a]

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 41.936 | 1 | 41.936 | 491.810 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 10.147 | 49 | .085 | | |
| | Total | 52.083 | 50 | | | |

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation
b. Predictors: (Constant), $X_{FC}$

**Coefficients**[a]

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients B | Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | T | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B Lower Bound | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B Upper Bound | Correlations Zero-order | Correlations Partial | Correlations Part |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.228 | .152 | | 8.105 | .000 | .928 | 1.528 | | | |
| | $X_{FC}$ | .743 | .033 | .896 | 22.177 | .000 | .676 | .809 | .896 | .896 | .896 |

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation
Source: Authors Compilation (2024)

The correlation value (R) of 0.896 indicates a strong positive linear association between financial controls and project implementation in Selected County Governments. As a result, in Selected County Governments, strict financial controls were directly linked to successful project delivery.
The R-squared value for the relationship between financial controls and successful project delivery is 0.80. Since the model's significance value is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05, we may confidently assume that it accurately predicts the impact of financial controls on project delivery.
A robust positive linear correlation was observed between financial controls and project implementation within Selected County Governments. This relationship was characterized by an unstandardized regression coefficient () of 0.743, a correlation coefficient () of 0.896, a t-test statistic of 22.177, and a significance level ($p = 0.000$). These statistical findings indicate a noteworthy association between financial controls and the extent of project implementation in Selected County Governments. This relationship is statistically significant at the 5 percent and 95 percent confidence intervals.
For Selected County Governments, the regression equation approximating the connection between financial controls and project delivery was as follows:
SD = 1.228 + 0.743XFC
The results of the regression equation show that for every 0.743-point change in financial controls, there is a 1.228 point change in project delivery. As a result, we can conclude that the two variables are positively related. Financial controls had a substantial impact on the project implementation of Innoson Manufacturing Company Ltd in Nigeria, as found by Emeka, Ejim, and Amaka's (2015) research into the impact of strategic control systems on organizational performance. Contrary to what Bassa (2015) discovered, the influence of financial control practice systems control on project performance is not negligible.

## Conclusion

The null hypothesis of this study found that financial control did not have an appreciable impact on the success of projects in the administrations of a few Western counties. Therefore, the model was significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected, because financial control was found to have a sizeable and reasonably strong positive linear relationship with project implementation in Selected County Governments in the Western region. The research found that in Selected County Governments in the Western area, financial control influenced project implementation.

## Recommendations

The study recommended that since financial control was significant, county government should avail budgets for county performance. County governments recommend that since operational control was significant, county government should evaluate day to day activities for county performance,

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