
**Strategic Planning and Performance of Food Manufacturing Firms in Nairobi City
County, Kenya**

^{1*}Patricia Chizi Mbui and ²Dr. Anthony Mwendwa

^{1*}Scholar, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

²Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

Accepted: 26 June 2026

Abstract

Food manufacturing firms play a vital role in Kenya's economy, contributing significantly to food security, employment creation, and industrial growth. However, these firms face a range of challenges that hinder their optimal performance. The general objective of the study is to evaluate the relationship between strategic planning on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine how strategic initiation and strategic control influence the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. This study was guided by Resource-Based View and Agency Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The unit of analysis was 139 food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, listed in the Kenya Association of Manufacturers directory as of 2024. In each firm, the study targeted the top manager, the middle-level manager and the lower-level managers; hence, the total target population was 417 management employees. The study used the Yemane formula to arrive at the sample size of 204. This study used primary data, which was collected through the use of questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the quantitative data. The results were presented in tables. The study concludes that both strategic initiation and strategic control have a positive and significant effect on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Based on the findings, the study recommends that food manufacturing firms in Kenya should strengthen strategic control by establishing robust performance monitoring and evaluation systems that track key performance indicators aligned with their strategic objectives. This involves regular review of financial and operational metrics, timely feedback mechanisms, and the use of data analytics to identify deviations and implement corrective actions promptly.

Keywords: *Strategic Planning, Strategic Initiation, Strategic Control, Food Manufacturing Firms*

INTRODUCTION

The manufacturing sector is a critical component of any economy, involving the transformation of raw materials into finished goods through the use of labor, machinery, and technology. It contributes significantly to economic development by creating jobs, generating income, supporting exports, and fostering innovation across various industries such as textiles, automotive, electronics, and food processing (Tajuddin & Musa, 2024). Food manufacturing refers to the industrial-scale production and processing of food and beverages. This includes

activities such as transforming raw agricultural products like grains, fruits, vegetables, and animal products into packaged foods, beverages, and other consumables that are safe, palatable, and ready for consumer use (Abdulrahman & Qais, 2020). Food manufacturing plays a vital role in driving economic growth by contributing significantly to a country's GDP and providing employment opportunities across various skill levels (Abujraiban & Assaf, 2022). It supports agricultural productivity by creating a ready market for farm produce, thereby promoting rural development and reducing post-harvest losses. In many developing economies, food manufacturing is a key industry that stimulates other sectors such as packaging, logistics, and retail, creating a ripple effect that boosts national economic performance (Glaister et al, 2020). In addition, food manufacturing enhances food security by ensuring a consistent supply of diverse and nutritious food products. Through preservation techniques such as canning, drying, freezing, and pasteurization, it helps extend the shelf life of perishable goods, making food available year-round regardless of seasonality (Song et al, 2021). Food processing also allows for the fortification of products with essential nutrients, addressing dietary deficiencies and improving public health outcomes. The sector fosters innovation by encouraging the development of new products, packaging solutions, and food technologies (Akunne et al, 2023). This not only caters to changing consumer preferences and dietary needs but also leads to value addition, where raw agricultural inputs are transformed into high-value products. For example, turning raw milk into cheese, yogurt, and butter increases its economic value and market appeal, thereby enhancing profitability for manufacturers (Nyetweka & Dushimimana, 2024). Moreover, food manufacturing contributes significantly to international trade by producing goods that meet global standards and consumer demands. Processed and packaged foods often form a substantial portion of export revenues for countries with well-established food industries (Tukundane & Yang, 2024). This helps diversify a country's export base, earn foreign exchange, and strengthen its balance of payments position, making it a key player in global commerce. Modern food manufacturing also promotes sustainability by adopting eco-friendly practices such as waste recycling, energy-efficient production processes, and sustainable sourcing of raw materials (Mpanju, 2024). By minimizing waste and reducing the environmental footprint, the sector contributes to responsible consumption and production, in line with global sustainable development goals (Tetteh et al, 2024).

Strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organization defines its long-term goals, determines the best courses of action to achieve those goals, and allocates resources accordingly. It involves analyzing internal strengths and weaknesses, assessing external opportunities and threats, setting clear objectives, and formulating strategies to guide decision-making and operations (Tajuddin & Musa, 2024). The purpose of strategic planning is to ensure that the organization remains focused, adaptable, and aligned with its mission and vision in a changing environment (Abdulrahman & Qais, 2020). Strategic initiation refers to the process of identifying and launching new strategic directions or initiatives that align with an organization's long-term goals. It involves environmental scanning, opportunity recognition, and the formulation of innovative strategies that can create competitive advantage (Njue & Njoroge, 2023).

Strategic initiation sets the foundation for future growth by encouraging proactive decision-making, innovation, and the exploration of untapped markets. It is often driven by leadership vision and requires a deep understanding of both internal capabilities and external dynamics to ensure that new strategies are relevant and achievable (Maina, 2024). Strategic control focuses on monitoring the execution of strategic plans to ensure they stay aligned with set objectives,

enabling corrective actions when deviations occur (Tajuddin & Musa, 2024). This study sought to evaluate the relationship between strategic planning on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County play a vital role in Kenya's industrial sector by transforming agricultural raw materials into value-added products for local consumption and export. Nairobi serves as the country's main commercial and industrial hub, hosting numerous food processing companies that produce beverages, dairy products, cereals, sauces, spices, confectionery, and packaged foods (Njue & Njoroge, 2023). The concentration of manufacturing facilities in areas such as the Industrial Area, Baba Dogo, and Kariobangi has enabled firms to benefit from developed transport networks, access to labor, and proximity to major markets. Large manufacturers such as Nestlé Kenya Limited and Premier Food Industries Limited have established strong market positions by producing a wide range of food products that meet both domestic and regional demand (Ole-Kisirkoi, 2022).

The county is also home to several medium-sized and emerging food processing firms that contribute to innovation, employment creation, and food security. Companies such as Trufoods Limited manufacture jams, sauces, tomato products, beverages, and baking ingredients using locally sourced agricultural produce, while Spice World Limited specializes in processing nutritious grains and related food products under established consumer brands (Njue & Njoroge, 2023). Similarly, Executive Food Company produces sauces, porridge flour, and bread spreads, whereas Simply Foods Limited focuses on traditional grain products such as millet-based foods. These firms strengthen linkages between urban industries and rural farmers by sourcing raw materials locally, thereby supporting agricultural value chains and rural livelihoods (Maina, 2024).

Despite their economic importance, food manufacturing firms in Nairobi face challenges such as high production costs, fluctuating raw material supplies, energy expenses, and increasing competition from imported products. Nevertheless, the sector continues to expand through technological adoption, quality certification, and product diversification (Ole-Kisirkoi, 2022). Some firms have invested in modern processing facilities and supply chain systems to enhance efficiency and meet international food safety standards. Companies such as Sereni Fries Limited demonstrate how food processors are creating value through specialized products while supporting thousands of farmers through contract farming arrangements. As Nairobi's population grows and consumer preferences shift toward convenient and packaged foods, food manufacturing firms are expected to remain central to economic growth, employment generation, and the development of Kenya's agro-industrial sector (Njue & Njoroge, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Food manufacturing firms play a vital role in Kenya's economy, contributing significantly to food security, employment creation, and industrial growth. These firms process agricultural produce into finished products, thereby adding value and supporting the country's agricultural sector (Njue & Njoroge, 2023). According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2024), the food manufacturing sub-sector accounts for approximately 40% of the total manufacturing output and employs thousands directly and indirectly across the supply chain. Moreover, food manufacturing supports smallholder farmers, fosters rural development, and contributes to export earnings, making it a critical driver of economic development and poverty reduction in Kenya.

Food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, play a vital role in the national economy by contributing to employment, food security, and industrial growth. However, these firms face a range of challenges that hinder their optimal performance (Njue & Njoroge, 2023).

One key challenge is profitability. Many food manufacturers struggle with high operational costs, including fluctuating prices of raw materials, energy costs, and logistics (Maina, 2024). According to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) 2023 report, the cost of production in Kenya is among the highest in East Africa, making local food products less competitive. Additionally, taxes and regulatory compliance expenses further reduce profit margins (Ole-Kisirkoi, 2022). A study by the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) noted that only about 35% of food processing firms report sustained profitability over a five-year period, with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) being the most affected (Njue & Njoroge, 2023).

Customer satisfaction is another significant challenge. Consumers increasingly demand high-quality, safe, and affordable food products. However, inconsistencies in product quality, food safety concerns, and delays in delivery negatively impact customer experiences (Ole-Kisirkoi, 2022). A 2022 survey by the Consumer Federation of Kenya (COFEK) found that 41% of respondents were dissatisfied with the quality and freshness of locally manufactured food products, citing issues such as contamination, poor packaging, and lack of variety. Additionally, customer complaints often go unaddressed due to weak feedback mechanisms and lack of investment in customer relationship management systems (Njue & Njoroge, 2023).

Market share also remains a critical hurdle for food manufacturing firms in Kenya. Local manufacturers face stiff competition from imported goods, which are sometimes perceived to be of higher quality or cheaper due to economies of scale (Maina, 2024). The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) Economic Survey 2023 revealed that between 2019 and 2022, the market share of locally manufactured food products declined by 12% as imports increased, particularly from countries such as South Africa, Egypt, and China. The entry of multinational corporations with strong brands and distribution networks, further squeezes local producers, making it difficult for them to grow or even retain their market positions (Ole-Kisirkoi, 2022).

Strategic Planning is essential for enhancing the performance of food manufacturing firms as it provides a clear direction, aligns resources with objectives, and prepares organizations for market uncertainties. A well-formulated strategy enables firms to set achievable goals, optimize operations, and respond proactively to competition and consumer demands (Njue & Njoroge, 2023). Various studies have been conducted in different parts of the world on strategic planning and organization performance. For instance, Njue and Njoroge (2023) conducted an analysis of strategic planning influence on competitiveness of Equity Bank Limited. Maina (2024) conducted a study on the influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness and Ole-Kisirkoi (2022) examined strategic factors influencing competitiveness of commercial banks. However, none of these studies focused on strategic initiation and strategic control on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to evaluate the relationship between strategic planning (strategic initiation and strategic control) on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to evaluate the relationship between strategic planning on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Specific objectives of the study were;

- i. To determine how strategic initiation influence the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya
- ii. To assess the influence of strategic control on the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Theoretical Framework

Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory founded by Barney (1991) is a strategic management framework that focuses on the internal resources and capabilities of a firm as sources of competitive advantage. At its core, RBV posits that a firm's unique bundle of resources and capabilities can enable it to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and superior performance in the marketplace (Gagné & Veenstra, 2020). Unlike traditional strategic management approaches that primarily focus on external factors such as market dynamics and industry structure, RBV emphasizes the importance of internal factors in determining a firm's success (Muvunyi, Bigirimana & Tuyishime, 2023). RBV theory entails identifying and leveraging a firm's distinctive resources and capabilities to create value and achieve strategic objectives. Resources can include tangible assets such as physical infrastructure, financial capital, and technology, as well as intangible assets such as human capital, intellectual property, organizational culture, and reputation (Chimkono & Deya, 2020). These resources are considered valuable if they enable the firm to exploit opportunities or neutralize threats in the external environment. Capabilities, on the other hand, refer to the firm's ability to effectively deploy and utilize its resources to perform specific activities and achieve desired outcomes (Ngutu, 2020). This theory was used to determine how strategic initiation influence the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Agency Theory

Agency Theory founded by Jensen and Meckling (1976) is a foundational concept in economics and organizational management that explores the relationship between principals and agents. Principals are individuals or entities that delegate authority, such as shareholders or owners of a company, while agents are those who are hired to act on behalf of the principals, such as managers or executives (Abdolghader, Memarzadeh & Najafbeigi, 2021). The theory addresses the challenges that arise from this principal-agent relationship, particularly issues related to information asymmetry, where agents typically possess more information about the day-to-day operations and decision-making processes than the principals do. This imbalance can lead to conflicts of interest, as agents may prioritize their personal goals over those of the principals, potentially resulting in agency costs (Aduloju & Akindipe, 2022).

One of the central tenets of Agency Theory is the notion of aligning interests between principals and agents. To mitigate the risks associated with divergent goals, principals often implement various mechanisms, such as performance-based incentives, contracts, and monitoring systems (Murunga & Deya, 2022). For example, performance bonuses or stock options can motivate managers to act in the best interests of shareholders by tying their compensation to the company's financial performance (Ndigwa & Odollo, 2024). Additionally, regular audits and oversight can help ensure that agents are held accountable for their actions, thus reducing the likelihood of opportunistic behavior (Muchira & Mwanzia, 2025). These strategies aim to minimize agency costs, which are the costs incurred from the potential misalignment of interests. Agency Theory also highlights the importance of governance structures in organizations. Effective governance can facilitate better alignment between principals and agents, enhancing overall organizational performance (Abdolghader, Memarzadeh & Najafbeigi, 2021). This includes the establishment of a board of directors that acts on behalf of shareholders to oversee management activities and ensure that agents are acting in the best interests of the organization. Strong governance practices can help build trust and transparency, reducing the likelihood of agency-related conflicts and fostering a more cohesive working environment (Aduloju & Akindipe, 2022). This theory was

used to assess how strategic control influences the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework shows the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable below. The independent variables of the study are strategic initiation and strategic control. The dependent variable of the study is performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. A conceptualization of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is illustrated in figure 1.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

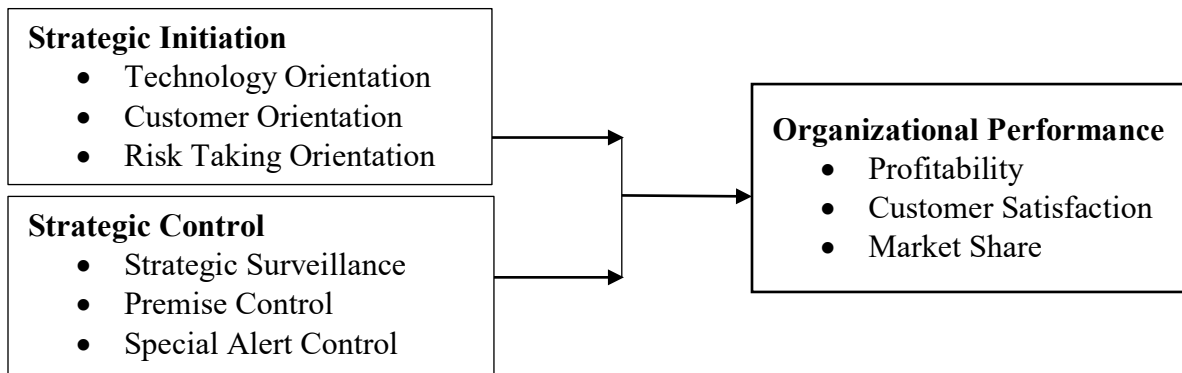


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Strategic Initiation

Strategic initiation refers to the early phase of the strategic planning process where new strategic directions, goals, or projects are conceived and introduced to guide an organization toward improved performance. It involves identifying opportunities, analyzing emerging trends, and setting clear priorities that align with the organization's mission and long-term vision (Chemiat & Kiptum, 2020). Strategic initiation plays a critical role in determining how effectively the firm responds to market demands, technological advancements, and competitive pressures by launching innovative products, expanding to new markets, or improving production systems (Gagné & Veenstra, 2020). This stage lays the foundation for subsequent planning and execution activities. Technology Orientation refers to the extent to which an organization embraces and invests in technological innovations to improve its operations, products, and services (Muvunyi, Bigirimana & Tuyishime, 2023). Technology orientation involves adopting advanced production equipment, automation systems, and digital tools to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and improve product quality (Chimkono & Deya, 2020). Organizations with a strong technology orientation are more likely to gain competitive advantage by responding quickly to changing market demands and enhancing their innovation capabilities. For instance, the use of data analytics and artificial intelligence can help firms optimize supply chains, monitor quality control, and forecast consumer trends (Ngutu, 2020).

Customer Orientation focuses on understanding and meeting the needs, preferences, and expectations of customers as a central aspect of business strategy. This orientation requires firms to conduct market research, gather customer feedback, and deliver high-quality products that satisfy consumer demands (Chemiat & Kiptum, 2020). Customer orientation may involve tailoring products to health-conscious consumers, improving packaging for convenience, or ensuring food safety standards are met. Firms that prioritize customer satisfaction often experience higher brand loyalty, repeat purchases, and stronger market positioning, ultimately

contributing to improved performance (Gagné & Veenstra, 2020). Risk-Taking Orientation refers to an organization's willingness to pursue bold decisions and innovations despite uncertainty or potential failure. This trait is critical in dynamic and competitive industries, where firms must constantly adapt to changing regulations, consumer preferences, and economic conditions (Muvunyi, Bigirimana & Tuyishime, 2023). A risk-taking orientation enables companies to explore new markets, invest in research and development, or introduce unconventional products that can differentiate them from competitors. While risky ventures may involve potential losses, they can also lead to significant rewards if managed strategically and supported by data-driven planning (Chimkono & Deya, 2020).

Strategic Control

Strategic control is the process of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of an organization's strategic plans to ensure that goals and objectives are being met effectively and efficiently. It involves setting performance standards, measuring actual results, comparing them with expected outcomes, and taking corrective actions where necessary (Murunga & Deya, 2022). Strategic control ensures that production targets, quality standards, cost efficiencies, and market expansion efforts are aligned with the overall strategic direction of the company. This type of control helps managers detect deviations early, respond to changes in the environment, and maintain focus on long-term success (Ndigwa & Odollo, 2024). Strategic Surveillance is a broad-based monitoring system that continuously scans the internal and external environment to detect potential threats or opportunities that may not be captured through routine controls (Muchira & Mwanzia, 2025). Unlike specific performance measures, strategic surveillance focuses on general observations and data collection from diverse sources, such as market trends, competitor actions, regulatory changes, and technological advancements. Strategic surveillance helps managers stay informed about shifts in consumer preferences, food safety regulations, or supply chain risks, enabling timely adjustments to strategies before issues escalate (Abdolghader, Memarzadeh & Najafbeigi, 2021).

Premise Control focuses on monitoring the underlying assumptions or conditions upon which a strategic plan is based. These assumptions could include economic forecasts, consumer behavior, resource availability, or competitive dynamics (Aduloju & Akindipe, 2022). If any of these premises change significantly, the strategy may become outdated or ineffective. A firm might assume stable raw material prices or a growing demand for organic products, if these assumptions shift, premise control triggers a re-evaluation of the strategic plan to ensure continued relevance and feasibility (Murunga & Deya, 2022). Special Alert Control is a reactive form of control that is activated in response to unexpected or sudden events that could disrupt strategy implementation. These events may include crises such as natural disasters, political instability, major supplier failures, or product recalls (Ndigwa & Odollo, 2024). Special alert control enables organizations to respond quickly by mobilizing resources, adjusting operations, or revising strategies to minimize damage and restore stability. Such control is crucial in managing emergencies like contamination incidents or regulatory shutdowns, where rapid response is essential to protect public safety and the company's reputation (Muchira & Mwanzia, 2025).

Empirical Literature

Strategic Initiation and Organization Performance

Gagné and Veenstra (2020) conducted a study on the effect of trends in smoking initiation in Canada: Does non-inclusion of young adults in tobacco control strategies represent a missed opportunity? examined rates of initiation to first cigarette and daily smoking during youth (5–17 years) and young adulthood (18–25 years) using nationally representative data from the cycles of

the Canadian Community Health Survey. The study found that initiation rates decreased during youth but not during young adulthood. The study concluded that tobacco control has failed to address smoking initiation during young adulthood. Given the considerable amount of initiation that occurs during this period, practitioners and policy-makers should direct more of their planning toward young adults.

Muvunyi, Bigirimana and Tuyishime (2023) conducted a study on the effect of initiatives and strategies to strengthen the national, regional, and international global health security: a case study of Rwanda biomedical center. Here we deployed mixed tools and methods including participatory methods through technical consultations, surveys, and assessment exercises to implement an institutional assessment, situational and risk analysis to identify and document institutional capacity, practices, and initiatives that were implemented to strengthen GHS at the national, regional, and global levels. The study found that have identified several initiatives and practices that were pioneered and led from Rwanda with focus on leveraging cost-effective strategic planning, implementation of activities and evidence-based interventions to continuously improve the GHS in the country, the region, and globally. In conclusion, these ongoing initiatives and others in the pipeline underscore RBC's commitment and dedication to improving GHS at the national, regional, and international levels.

Chimkono and Deya (2020) conducted a study on the effect of determinants of implementation of national government strategic initiatives in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population of the study was 300 employees of the Ministries of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs as well as Labour and Social Protection in Kenya who were directly involved in coordinating the implementation of two of Kenya's strategic initiatives - the Huduma Kenya and the cash transfer programs. The study established that the management employees were in agreement that the leadership set the goals and policies required for the implementation of the strategic initiatives, communication was critical to the successful implementation of national government strategic initiatives, a positive and constructive culture was necessary for successful implementation of government strategic initiatives and that the organization structure served as a mechanism for coordination and unification of efforts of persons involved in the implementation of the government strategic initiatives. The study concluded that leadership, communication, organization culture and organizational structure in Government Ministries were core determinants of implementation of National Government strategic initiatives in Kenya.

Ngutu (2020) conducted a study on the effect of rapid results initiative: a strategy implementation tool by the national social security fund – Kenya. To achieve these objectives, the study was carried out through interviews using an interview guide in which senior managers at the Operations Department in NSSF were targeted. Secondary data was also obtained from relevant materials from the department like reports and strategic plan. The data was analyzed through content analysis. The findings generally indicate that strategy implementation in the public sector is slow, characterized by long processes, ineffective and inefficient. The study concluded that rigid government structures, poor planning and coordination, long implementation processes are some of the challenges faced by government corporations in strategy implementation.

Chemiat and Kiptum (2020) conducted a study on the effect of relationship between employee performance appraisal initiative and strategy implementation at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya. The project employed descriptive research design, a target population for 2657 research participants out of which a sample of 96 research participants were selected. The results of the study were as follows: In relation to performance and development agreement, the highest number of participants agreed that the hospital makes performance and development

agreement by specifying staff quality management; Based on performance reviewing, departmental performance was reviewed internally; Concerning performance resourcing, the hospital's staffing process focused on using quality staff in professional staffing. The study concluded that based on performance reviewing, the main results showed that departmental performance was reviewed internally.

Strategic Control and Organization Performance

Abdolghader, Memarzadeh and Najafbeigi (2021) conducted a study on the effect of designing strategic control model in order to realize purposes of 20-year landscape document in Islamic Republic of Iran. Delphi method would be applied. Required data would be also collected using library studies and alternative questionnaire. Obtained results from the study indicate that human-oriented strategic control would be significant in order to control strategic purposes of 20-year landscape document in Islamic Republic. The study concluded that In order to answer research questions; different models of strategic control were investigated. Components of the models were also identified.

Aduloju and Akindipe (2022) conducted a study on the effect of strategic control techniques on organizational performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State. The study employed a survey research design and adopted a convenience sampling method of selection and multi clustered method was used in selection. A survey monkey was used to administer the questionnaire to the sample respondent. The findings of the study hypotheses test revealed that: Hypothesis one, which examined the significant effect of physical strategic control techniques on organizational performance, revealed that physical strategic control techniques have a significant effect on the organizational performance of selected SMEs.

Murunga and Deya (2022) conducted a study on the influence of strategic controls on performance of commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya. The target population composed of the 1226 management staffs employed at the 42 commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya. A sample of 10% was selected from within each group in proportions. The study found that the banks have adopted premise controls to a very great extent. In addition, the commercial banks in Nairobi County have adopted strategic surveillance controls and special alert controls in their operations to great extents while they adopted implementation controls to a moderate extent. The study concludes that organizational aspects, industrial elements and environmental factors influence the performance of the banks.

Ndigwa and Odollo (2024) conducted a study on the influence of strategy control on the performance of airlines in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design. The target was 12 airlines in Kenya which formed the study's unity of analysis. The unit of observation was hence 24 in operations, 24 finance, 24 marketing, 24 customer service, and 24 safety management staff. Findings show that the Pearson correlation coefficient for premise control, and firm performance was correlation between special alert control and firm performance. The study concluded that premise control involves checking out the environment in which a firm operates in. The companies conduct assessment of the routes they operate in to forecast the demand as well as competition in the industry.

Muchira and Mwanzia (2025) conducted a study on the effect of strategic control techniques and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. This study therefore targeted the management employees in these companies. The total target population was therefore 594 respondents. The study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula to arrive at the sample size of 170 respondents. The researcher used questionnaires. Findings revealed that technology; demographic changes and competitors influence performance of tea processing

companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study concludes that premise control has a positive and significant influence on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Bagiyani (2021), a research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection and analysis. The researchers' beliefs and understanding of the world influence the research design. The study adopted descriptive research design. The survey may be qualitative or quantitative. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), the advantages of this design are: First, it is an efficient way to collect information about a large group of people. Secondly, it is a flexible medium that is standardized, so less susceptible to error, easy to administer and finally it can be tailored exactly to the phenomena the researcher wishes to study.

Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) describe population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study also Creswell (2019) defines a population as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. Population is therefore the entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic. The food manufacturing companies that were included in this study consisted of those that were listed in the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) directory as at 2024 and are strictly food processors or manufacturers. Thus of the 181 registered companies only 139 companies were food manufacturers or processors and these made the target population. The unit of analysis was therefore 139 food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya while the unit of observation was management employees working with these firms. The study targeted management employees since they are involved in formulation and implementation of strategies hence they are in better position to provide the needed information. In each firm the study targeted 3 management employees, top manager, middle level manager and lower level managers hence the total target population was 417 management employees.

Sampling Frame

It is a list or other device used to define a researcher's population of interest. It is defined as a set of elements from which a researcher selects a sample of the target population (Greening, 2019), while Hitt, Ireland and Hoskisson (2019) says that the actual set of units from which a sample has been drawn: in the case of a stratified random sampling method all units from the sampling frame has an equal chance to be drawn and to occur in the sample.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling as described by Grant (2021) is the process of choosing the units of the target population which are to be included in the study in such a way that the sample of selected elements represent the population. The study used the Yemane formula to arrive at the sample size. The selection formula was as follows:

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

Where n= the required sample size

N = is the Target Population (417)

e = accuracy level required. Standard error = 5%

Sample calculation

$$n = \frac{417}{1 + (417)0.05^2}$$

$$n = 204$$

n=204 respondents

Data Collection Instruments

This study used primary data which was collected through use of questionnaires. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used. Likert scale is an interval scale that specifically uses five anchors of strongly agrees, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. Likert measures the level of agreement or disagreement. Likert scales are good in measuring perception, attitude, values and behavior. The Likert scale has scales that assist in converting the qualitative responses into quantitative values (Flick, 2019).

Pilot Testing Study

A pilot study is a research study conducted before the intended study. They are usually executed as planned for the intended study but on a smaller scale. Although it cannot eliminate all systematic errors or unexpected problems, it reduces the likelihood of making a type 1 or type 2 (Cronbach, 2019). The questionnaire was presented to a lecturer in the course for proofreading, guidance, and necessary corrections. Following the incorporation of the recommended revisions, a final version of the questionnaire was prepared and used for the actual study. Prior to the main data collection exercise, a pilot study involving 10% of the target respondents was conducted to test the instrument's suitability and identify any areas requiring further refinement.

Data Analysis and Presentation

In analysis of data, the researcher used both descriptive and inferential analysis since information gathered is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The analysis on competitive challenges was involved breaking down the complex information in small units of manageable information and also synthesizing small pieces of related information into a piece of information. For the best practices that address the competitive challenges. The research findings were presented by the use of tables for easier interpretation.

Model

Analysis of data used multiple regressions to test the research questions

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where,

Y = performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

X₁: Strategic initiation

X₂: Strategic control

β_0 is the constant or intercept, while β_1 and β_2 are the corresponding coefficients for the respective independent variables. ε is the error term, which represents residual or disturbance factors or values that are not captured within the regression model. The interpretation of X , β and ε is the same for the subsequent equations for testing the other study objectives. Interpretations are as stated above.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The researcher sampled 204 respondents who were each administered the questionnaires. From the 204 questionnaires, 165 were filled and returned, hence a response rate of 80.1%. The response rate was considered as suitable for making inferences from the data collected. As indicated by Metsamuuronen (2019), a response rate that is above fifty percent is considered adequate for data analysis and reporting, while a response rate that is above 70% is classified as excellent. Hence, the response rate of this study was within the acceptable limits for drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Descriptive Statistics Analysis

Strategic Initiation and Organization Performance

The first specific objective of the study was to determine how strategic initiation influence the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on statements relating to strategic initiation and performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the company actively invests in modern technologies to improve production processes ($M=3.842$, $SD= 0.665$). In addition, the respondents agreed that they regularly upgrade their systems and equipment to keep up with industry trends ($M=3.820$, $SD=0.903$). Further, the respondents agreed that their company prioritizes understanding and meeting customer needs ($M=3.801$, $SD= 0.715$).

From the results, the respondents agreed that feedback from customers is used to improve products and services ($M=3.796$, $SD=0.659$). In addition, the respondents agreed that management supports innovative projects even when outcomes are uncertain ($M=3.774$, $SD=0.694$). Further, the respondents agreed that they are encouraged to take calculated risks to improve performance and growth ($M=3.758$, $SD= 0.706$).

Table 1: Strategic Initiation and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company actively invests in modern technologies to improve production processes.	3.842	0.665
We regularly upgrade our systems and equipment to keep up with industry trends.	3.820	0.903
Our company prioritizes understanding and meeting customer needs.	3.801	0.715
Feedback from customers is used to improve products and services.	3.796	0.659
Management supports innovative projects even when outcomes are uncertain.	3.774	0.694
We are encouraged to take calculated risks to improve performance and growth.	3.758	0.706
Aggregate	3.799	0.724

Strategic Control and Organization Performance

The second specific objective of the study was to assess how strategic control influences the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to strategic control and performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that the company continuously monitors both internal and external environments for emerging trends ($M=3.860$, $SD= 0.898$). In addition, the respondents agreed that they regularly gather data beyond routine reporting to detect potential strategic threats ($M=3.845$, $SD=0.665$). Further, the respondents agreed that the assumptions behind their strategic plans are regularly reviewed for accuracy ($M=3.822$, $SD= 0.761$).

From the results, the respondents agreed that strategic decisions are adjusted when core assumptions are found to be outdated or invalid ($M=3.808$, $SD=0.889$). In addition, the

respondents agreed that they have contingency plans in place to deal with emergencies that could impact their strategy (M=3.794, SD=0.781). Further, the respondents agreed that key decision-makers are immediately informed when special or urgent issues arise (M=3.771, SD= 0.899).

Table 2: Strategic Control and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company continuously monitors both internal and external environments for emerging trends.	3.860	0.898
We regularly gather data beyond routine reporting to detect potential strategic threats.	3.845	0.665
The assumptions behind our strategic plans are regularly reviewed for accuracy.	3.822	0.761
Strategic decisions are adjusted when core assumptions are found to be outdated or invalid.	3.808	0.889
We have contingency plans in place to deal with emergencies that could impact our strategy.	3.794	0.781
Key decision-makers are immediately informed when special or urgent issues arise.	3.771	0.899
Aggregate	3.817	0.816

Organization Performance

Secondary data was collected to assess the performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, over a five-year period from 2021 to 2025. The data focused on two key performance indicators, namely profitability and market share, which are widely recognized measures of organizational performance. Profitability reflects the firm's ability to generate earnings from its operations, while market share indicates the extent of the firm's competitive position within the industry. The data were obtained from annual reports, industry publications, and other relevant organizational records.

The analysis of secondary data was intended to establish performance trends over time and provide empirical evidence for evaluating the relationship between strategic planning and firm performance. By examining changes in profitability and market share across the five-year period, the study sought to determine whether improvements in strategic planning practices were associated with enhanced organizational outcomes. The findings are presented separately for profitability and market share to provide a clearer understanding of the performance patterns exhibited by food manufacturing firms during the study period.

Table 3: Profitability of Food Manufacturing Firms

Year	Profitability (%)
2021	8.5
2022	10.2
2023	9.1
2024	11.8
2025	13.4

The profitability of food manufacturing firms generally improved over the study period. Profitability increased from 8.5% in 2021 to 10.2% in 2022, indicating improved financial performance. However, it declined slightly to 9.1% in 2023, possibly due to increased operational costs, inflationary pressures, or market uncertainties. Thereafter, profitability rose significantly to

11.8% in 2024 and 13.4% in 2025, suggesting that firms were able to implement effective strategic plans that enhanced operational efficiency and financial returns.

Table 4: Market share

Year	Market Share (%)
2021	12.0
2022	13.5
2023	12.8
2024	14.6
2025	16.2

Market share exhibited a fluctuating but generally increasing trend during the period under review. The market share increased from 12.0% in 2021 to 13.5% in 2022, indicating growth in customer base and competitive position. A slight decline to 12.8% in 2023 may have resulted from intensified competition or changing consumer preferences. Nevertheless, market share improved considerably to 14.6% in 2024 and 16.2% in 2025, demonstrating successful market penetration and customer retention strategies.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics in the current study focused on correlation and regression analysis. Correlation analysis was used to determine the strength of the relationship while regression analysis was used to determine the relationship between dependent variable (performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya) and independent variables (strategic initiation and strategic control).

Correlation Analysis

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

Table 5: Correlation Coefficients

		Organization Performance	Strategic Initiation	Strategic Control
Organization Performance	Pearson	1		
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Strategic Initiation	N	165		
	Pearson	.835**	1	
	Correlation			
Strategic Control	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		
	N	165	165	
	Pearson	.857**	.283	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.027	
	N	165	165	165

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

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between strategic initiation and performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($r = 0.835$, p value $=0.001$). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.001 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Gagné and Veenstra (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between strategic initiation and organization performance.

Moreover, the results revealed that there is a very strong relationship between strategic control and performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($r = 0.857$, p value $=0.000$). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Murunga and Deya (2022) that there is a very strong relationship between strategic control and organization performance.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (strategic initiation and strategic control) and the dependent variable (performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya).

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.806	.650	.649	.10129

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic initiation and strategic control

The model summary was used to explain the variation in the dependent variable that could be explained by the independent variables. The R-squared for the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable was 0.650 . This implied that 65% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (strategic initiation and strategic control).

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.386	2	32.193	159.371	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.691	162	.202		
	Total	97.077	164			

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

b. Predictors: (Constant), strategic initiation and strategic control

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 159.371 . The p -value was 0.000 . Since the F -calculated was greater than the F -critical and the p value 0.000 was less than 0.05 , the model was considered as a good fit for the data. Therefore, the model can be used to predict the influence of strategic initiation and strategic control on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.255	0.066		3.864	0.000
	Strategic initiation	0.338	0.087	0.337	3.885	0.001
	Strategic control	0.360	0.093	0.359	3.871	0.000

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

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.255 + 0.338X_1 + 0.360X_2 + \varepsilon$$

According to the results, strategic initiation has a significant effect on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta_1=0.338$, p value= 0.001). The relationship was considered significant since the p-value 0.001 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Gagné and Veenstra (2020) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between strategic initiation and organization performance.

The results also revealed that strategic control has significant effect on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya ($\beta_2=0.360$, p value= 0.000). The relationship was considered significant since the p-value 0.000 was less than the significant level of 0.05. The findings are in line with the findings of Murunga and Deya (2022) that there is a very strong relationship between strategic control and organization performance.

Conclusions

The study concludes that strategic initiation has a positive and significant effect on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that technology orientation, customer orientation and risk-taking orientation influence performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

In addition, the study concludes that strategic control has a positive and significant effect on performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Findings revealed that strategic surveillance, premise control and special alert control influences performance of food manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that food manufacturing firms in Kenya should strengthen strategic initiation by adopting a structured and participatory approach to strategy formulation that involves key stakeholders, including management, employees, and supply chain partners, from the outset. This ensures that strategic goals are clearly defined, aligned with market demands, and realistically resourced, thereby enhancing ownership and commitment during implementation.

In addition, the study recommends that food manufacturing firms in Kenya should strengthen strategic control by establishing robust performance monitoring and evaluation systems that track key performance indicators aligned with their strategic objectives. This involves regular review of financial and operational metrics, timely feedback mechanisms, and the use of data analytics to identify deviations and implement corrective actions promptly.

REFERENCES

- Abdolghader, T, Memarzadeh, G., & Najafbeigi, R. (2021). Designing strategic control model in order to realize purposes of 20-year landscape document in Islamic Republic of Iran. *Research Journal of Recent Sciences*, 4(3), 16-24
- Abdulrahman, A. M. A., & Qais, A. A. (2020). The impact of strategic planning on improving institutional performance at Limkokwing University of creative technology in Malaysia. *International Journal of Psychology and Cognitive Science*, 4(3), 112-129.
- Abujraiban, A., & Assaf, G. J. (2022). Effect of strategic planning of human resources in management performance. *Civil Engineering Journal*, 8(8), 1725-1738
- Aduloju, S. A., & Akindipe, O. E. (2022). The effect of strategic control techniques on organizational performance of selected SMEs in Lagos State. *ACTA Universitatis Danubius*, 18(1), 224-247

- Akunne, C. S., Nwoye, M. I., Adewale, B. A., & Abubakar, H. L. (2023). Strategy planning and resource availability determinants in performance of electricity distribution companies in Nigeria. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 11(6), 942-971
- Bagiyan, S. (2021). Understanding Descriptive Studies in Research: Insights and Applications. *A Journal of Management Research and Theory*, 16(5), 429-457.
- Barney, J. B. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120.
- Chemiat, J. C., & Kiptum, K. G. (2020). Relationship between employee performance appraisal initiative and strategy implementation at Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 2(3), 46-63
- Chimkono, M. E. M., & Deya, J. (2020). Determinants of implementation of national government strategic initiatives in Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 9(9), 37–50.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). Routledge.
- Creswell, R. (2019). Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. USA: Sage Publications.
- Cronbach, L. J. (2019). My Current Thoughts on Coefficient Alpha and Successor Procedures. Washington, D: *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 64(3):391-418.DOI:10.1177/0013164404266386
- Flick, U. (2019). An Introduction to Qualitative Research (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Gagné, T., & Veenstra, G. (2020). Trends in smoking initiation in Canada: Does non-inclusion of young adults in tobacco control strategies represent a missed opportunity? *Canadian Journal Public Health*, 108(1), 14–20
- Glaister, K. W., Omer, D., Ekrem, T., Mehmet, D., & Sekim, Z. (2020). A causal analysis of formal strategic planning and firm performance Evidence from an emerging country. *Management Decision*, 46(3), 365-391
- Grant, R. M. (2021). *Contemporary strategy analysis: Text and cases edition* (10th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons
- Greening, N. (2019). *Data Analysis and Presentation using Statistical Techniques*. Scientific Research Journal, 8(9).
- Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., and Hoskisson, R. E. (2019). *Strategic Management: Concepts*. *Journal of Advances in Management Research*, 6(6), 10-40.
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360.
- Maina, E. W. (2024). *Influence of strategy planning on competitiveness of Kenyan tea*. Retrieved from <http://ir.jkuat.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/4772/>
- Mpanju, A. K. (2024). Strategy planning practices and performance of government construction projects in Tanzania: A Case Study of Five Regions. *International Research Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 3(10), 113–123
- Muchira, N. W., & Mwanzia, M. (2025). Strategic control techniques and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. *Open Science Journal*, 3(1), 139-155
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2019). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (3rd ed.). African Centre for Technology Studies.

- Murunga, N. J., & Deya, J. (2022). Influence of strategic controls on performance of commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration*, 4(1), 328-345.
- Muvunyi, C. A, Bigirimana, N., & Tuyishime, A. (2023). *Initiatives and strategies to strengthen the national, regional, and international global health security: a case study of Rwanda biomedical center*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4957490>
- Ndigwa, E. K., & Odollo, L. (2024). Influence of strategy control on the performance of airlines in Kenya. *International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship*, 8(2), 282-295
- Ngutu, S. M. (2020). *Rapid results initiative: a strategy implementation tool by the national social security fund – Kenya*. Retrieved from <https://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/>
- Njue, J. N., & Njoroge, B. (2023). Analysis of strategy planning' influence on competitiveness of Equity Bank Limited in Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business And Social Sciences*, 12(12), 923-951
- Nyetweka, F & Dushimimana, J. de D. (2024). Strategy planning practices and project performance: A Case of King Faisal Maternity Ward Project Implementation in Gasabo District, Rwanda. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(2), 147–155.
- Ole-Kisirkoi, S. (2022). *Influence of strategic planning on competitiveness of commercial banks in Kenya*. Retrieved from <http://ir.jkuat.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/>
- Song, M., Subin, I., Hans, B., & Lisa, Z. S. (2021). Does strategic planning enhance or impede innovation and firm performance? *Journal of Production Innovation and Management*, 28(5), 503-522
- Tajuddin, A. F. A., & Musa, M. (2024). The effects of strategy planning on organizational performance: evidence from the Pakistan Local Authorities. *E-jurnal penyelidikan dan inovasi*, 11(2), 43-68
- Tetteh, K., Kwatia, D.A., Asante, D., Kyeremeh, A., & Nyame, P.E. (2024). Leveraging procurement capabilities and strategy planning for project success in the construction industry in Ghana. *Built Environment Project and Asset Management*, 16(7). 123-137
- Tukundane, H & Yang, Y. (2024). Effect of strategy planning practices on the performance of building construction companies in Uganda: A Case Study of the City of Kampala. *Buildings*, 14(6), 18-28.