

# **STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF WATER AND SEWAGE COMPANIES IN NAKURU CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

The performance of water and sewerage corporations has long been a major concern, similar to those faced by other businesses. With Nakuru County recently been granted city status, there is a greater need to improve service delivery to match urban norms. The study applied descriptive research design, the study targeted 153 members of the top and middle management teams across four water and sewerage businesses in the county. The study's theoretical foundation is based on Resource-Based Theory, the McKinsey 7S Model theory with the balanced scorecard framework. The main objective of this study was investigating the existing relationship between management and organizational performance. The study also applied a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 in accessing reliability and validity of the instruments of survey. The study used SPSS in analyzing its data. The performance of water and sewerage companies was shown to be significantly positively correlated with strategy formulation ( $\beta=0.219$ ,

$\text{Sig}=0.00<0.05$ ). These results highlight how strategic management elements are interrelated and affect organizational performance in a synergistic way. According to the report, raising performance levels requires better strategic management techniques. To guarantee long-term gains in the water and sewerage sector, it advises Nakuru County to give priority to capacity building, technology developments, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing review. These results highlight how strategic management elements are interrelated and affect organizational performance in a synergistic way. According to the report, raising performance levels requires better strategic management techniques. To guarantee long-term gains in the water and sewerage sector, it advises Nakuru County to give priority to capacity building, technology developments, stakeholder engagement, and ongoing review.

**Keywords:** Strategy Formulation, Execution, Assessment, Strategic Management Practices and Performance.

## INTRODUCTION

Approximately 80% of global wastewater, containing pollutants ranging from human waste to hazardous industrial discharges, remains untreated due to the complexity of removing contaminants. This untreated wastewater presents significant environmental challenges on local, national, and international levels, raising concerns about the efficiency of water and sewerage companies. The types and levels of contaminants in freshwater directly influence its usability for essential activities like drinking, agriculture, and sanitation. As noted in the 2020 World Bank report, pollution in freshwater ecosystems adversely affects aquatic life, disrupting habitats and impacting species such as fish.

The 2016 *Snapshot of the World's Water Quality* revealed that rivers in regions like Latin America, Africa, and Asia face severe pollution issues. About one-third of these rivers are affected by pathogenic pollution, one-seventh by organic pollution, and one-tenth by salinity

issues (UNEP, 2016). These pollutants originate from diverse sources, including pathogens in human and animal waste, nutrient runoff from agriculture, industrial chemicals, and salinity from irrigation and wastewater (World Water Quality, 2021). Emerging threats such as plastic pollution and pharmaceutical contaminants exacerbate these issues, further harming aquatic ecosystems and impairing the performance of water utilities (UNEP, 2020).

Despite efforts to improve clean water access, many water companies in Africa face challenges such as outdated infrastructure and rising demand. According to a 2016 World Bank report, only one-third of urban African residents' ingress to flowing fluid. While utility performance improvement importance is widely acknowledged, inadequate resources and infrastructure continue to hinder progress. Addressing these challenges will require targeted investments, modernized systems, and enhanced management practices to ensure sustainable water services. Increased investment in utility infrastructure is crucial to expand access to a safe water supply in urban areas, particularly within African countries. Nevertheless, improving operational and maintenance capacities remains a persistent challenge in African nations. This underscores the local nature of water services, where the performance of utilities is greatly influenced by specific conditions in each locality. According to a 2021 report from the International Initiative on Water Quality, poor water quality is a significant global issue, including in Kenya. It poses threats to human health, reduces food production, disrupts ecosystem functions, and hampers economic development. The decline in water quality has wide-ranging impacts on the environment, society, and economy.

Yeleliere, Cobbina, and Duwiejuah (2018) assert that the world's limited water resources face an escalating threat from pollution caused by the widespread discharge of inadequately treated or untreated wastewater into various bodies of water. This concern regarding water pollution has also been emphasized by Boretti (2019). Furthermore, the presence of emerging contaminants like pesticides, household and industrial chemicals, insecticides, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals, along with the impact of climate change, introduces a new and uncertain risk to water quality. The long-term consequences of these factors on ecosystems and human health are not yet fully understood, as emphasized by UNESCO (2019). Since high levels of land pollution impair the quality of their services, these issues have a substantial influence on the performance of water and sewerage businesses in Kenyan society (UNEP, 2016).

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to UN Habitat 2019, Nakuru being the fourth largest in Kenya. On its expansion in the highest rate in East Africa at 13% per year. According to population estimates, Nakuru Town is home to 500,000 people, of whom 44% (218,216) dwell in unofficial settlements. Only 25% of the population have access to sewer services, leaving the other 75% to rely on onsite sanitation options including pit latrines, VIPs, and septic tanks. Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) is a substantial difficulty, particularly in low-income, high-density areas where the bulk of urban residents reside. Only 41.3% of Nakuru County's sanitation is improved, 35.3% of it consists of shared facilities, and 23.3% of it is not, according to statistics from the (WSP) and Kenya's National Ministry of Health (2018). The County's Open Defecation (OD) rate is 2.8%. The key intervention objective going ahead for the Nakuru County Department of Health and its partners is to bring the county's unacceptable levels of unimproved and OD sanitation levels (26.1%) to acceptable levels of improved sanitation (UNEP, 2021).

Water contamination from unreliable sources, community washing in contaminated sewage water, human waste dumped into water channels, particularly in Nakuru County raises significant concerns for water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects including situations where women and girls must wait until after dark to attend to their sanitation needs, which adversely affects their health. In addition to having limited capacity and poor management of the WASH facilities, there is a lack of understanding of the connections between water, excrement, and illness (Ministry of Health, 2020). The majority of initiatives fail to be sustainable, and communities are not sufficiently included in discussions about better sanitary practices. The project activities are not being carried out as planned for the program; new technologies are being adopted slowly; there is a lack of community cohesiveness; and environmental protection and resource conservation are declining in the County. According to the water and environment report (2021), Nakuru County now has a 66% water supply coverage rate. As a result, increasing the county's water supply is urgently needed. While some will continue to take between one and four minutes to obtain drinking water, many county residents still travel six kilometers to the closest water source (Nakuru County Government, 2021).

### **Objective of the Study**

To examine effect of strategic management practices on performance of water and sewerage companies in Nakuru City, County.

### **Specific Objective**

To examine the effect of strategy formulation on performance of water and sewerage companies in Nakuru City, County.

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Balance Score Card Model**

The BS framework, developed in 1992 by Kaplan and Norton, provides a methodical way to implement firms strategical vision into quantifiable subjective. This framework seeks to give a complete way to evaluating and managing performance that outperforms traditional financial

metrics. It serves as an example of Kaplan and Norton's work on performance assessment and management, as described in their 1996 article. Its objective is to create a strategic framework in which all business actions are linked together in a cause-and-effect chain, defining goals, assessing performance, and communicating with all stakeholders to guarantee knowledge of how individual behavior affects the organization's vision.

The choice of client perspective indicators in a model is influenced by clientele class and merit provided by the company. By considering the priorities of their target consumers, businesses can develop strategies that align with and cater to the specific customer group they aim to attract. The internal business process viewpoint focuses on the tasks that a company has to comprehend and carry out well in order to succeed. Because they are essential to efficient operations and client pleasure, companies frequently place a high importance on components including order processing, order fulfillment, shipping, and production (Martins, 2015). When customers complain about late deliveries, a company may need to emphasize internal processes to establish an efficient delivery system or improve an existing one. To accomplish this, executives must conduct a comprehensive internal assessment and innovation review. With global competition, firms have less time to introduce their products to the market, making it essential to optimize internal processes (Wawira, 2016). By focusing on internal procedures and continuous improvement, companies can enhance their delivery systems and effectively address customer concerns.

A successful scorecard is made possible by the learning and growth perspective since it integrates the employees' abilities with reliable information systems. The Balance Score Card Model's recommendations therefore support an organization's performance, which is supported by this notion.

### **Ansoff Strategic Success Theory**

According to the theory first put forth by Ansoff (1984) and then expanded upon by Ansoff and McDonnell (1990). Three requirements need to be fulfilled in order to optimize performance potential: First and foremost, given the volatility of its surroundings, the organization's strategic conduct needs to be suitably aggressive. This means that the organization should adopt a proactive and dynamic approach that matches the level of uncertainty and volatility in the external factors. The capacity of an organization should be responsive and adaptable to the level of aggressiveness in its strategy. The system should have the needful footage, capacity, and competencies to execute the chosen strategy effectively and achieve the desired outcomes. Finally, the elements of the organization's capabilities need to complement and cooperate with one another.

The Ansoff tool is utilized to determine the necessary adaptations in a company's internal capabilities and strategy to ensure success in evolving environments. Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) suggest that these skills assist managers in navigating the continuous change and uncertainty in their surroundings. According to Ansoff and McDonnell (1990), the amount of turbulence in the corporate environment influences the systems used by businesses. As the environment becomes more turbulent, organizations tend to develop complex, rapid, and

sophisticated systems to effectively navigate the challenges and uncertainties they face. In relatively stable and less turbulent environments, companies commonly employ positioning systems such as long-run planning, strategical preparation, and strategic posture planning. These systems focus on setting clear objectives, formulating strategies, and establishing a competitive position over an extended period of time. However, in highly turbulent environments characterized by rapid changes, unpredictability, and intense competition, real-time systems become more suitable. These systems include strategic surprise management and strategic issue management, which emphasize agility, flexibility, and adaptability to swiftly respond to emerging challenges and exploit opportunities in a dynamic environment. Understanding the level of turbulence enables companies to select the most appropriate systems that align with the environmental demands and enable effective strategic management in the face of uncertainty and change.

Didonet, Simmons, Diaz-Villavicencio & Palmer (2012), provide an examination of how environmental uncertainty and small market business orientation are correlated. They argue that institutions create a market orientation because of the need for gathering all the necessary and useful information from the market such that the intelligence obtained is used in responding to and meeting the needs of customers. Market orientation is described as the response that a firm has in regards to the environmental factors in which it operates in. Bharati and Chaudhury (2006) concur that small entrepreneurial firms are an integral item of various countries' economy.

In the social contexts, political, and economic contexts, Drucker (1980) noted that organizations encounter new realities, problems, and uncertainties. According to Ansoff (1988), the environment has evolved to be more innovative, complicated, and unpredictable. Chandler (1962) recognized the significance of both environmental turbulence and the relevance of strategy, structure, and environment alignment inside a company. Numerous authors have looked at the significance of keeping the external world and the organization in sync. For instance, Miles and Snow (1978) discovered that nonhierarchical groups were better suited to contexts that changed quickly.

The Strategic Success Hypothesis, according to Ansoff, asserts that when the three following criteria are satisfied, an organization's performance potential is at its highest level: The organization's aggressive strategic approach is in line with the volatility of its surroundings. The organization's capabilities are as responsive as its approach is aggressive. The elements that make up the organization's capabilities must cooperate with one another. An organization's environment's changeability and predictability are both measured by the concept of environmental turbulence. Changeability is a combination of two characteristics: the complexity of the environment in which an organization functions and the distinctiveness of the issues it faces in that environment.

## **Empirical Literature Review**

### **Strategic Formulation and Performances**

Isaack and Muathe (2017) looked at the connection between public health facilities and strategy development in Mandera County. A mixed study technique was used to collect data from 51 participants, including nursing officers, hospital directors, Mandera Referral Hospital employees, and health administrators. The plan's design and the functioning of Mandera County's public health facilities were shown to be positively and significantly correlated by the research.

In examining the existing relationship between effect of public health firms and strategic formulation within Mandera County with a mixed research design being implied. All 50 public health hospitals were involved and out of which 51 participants selected. These individuals held a range of positions in healthcare organizations, such as nursing officers, administrators, and hospital directors. The study revealed a positive correlation significance between the subjects under investigations. Even though the results of the study were only narrowed down to Mandera health facilities without generalizing other study facilities in the Country as a whole. Nonetheless, the researchers recommended that Nakuru County's water and sewerage companies be the subject of further investigation. Comparative studies of this kind have the potential to yield important insights that may be applied to a variety of sectors and geographical areas.



In Isiolo county some other researchers named Santura et al,(2017) realized while conducting a study on efficacy and strategic implementation that, Since the project participants were easily accessible, a census of all 63 county government management workers was conducted. Descriptive statistics were taken into consideration for analysis, and questionnaires were used to gather evidence. A correlation link was tested that revealed indeed a positive correlation existing between the investigated variables which is efficacy and strategic implementation. Aldhaferi, Ameen, and Isaac (2020) looked into how developing strategies encourages growth and learning in the UAE government service. In order to get input on how strategy creation affects the effectiveness of UAE government services.

To get numbers from the participants, the researchers used a non-probability survey method. Strategy execution which includes tactics, layout and personnel, was found to greatly boost how well the organization works. The way a strategy is implemented helps explain about 19.3% of the variation in an organization's effectiveness. The findings matter a lot to the UAE public sector and especially the Abu Dhabi jurisdictional authorities. A descriptive survey approach proved to be fit for exploring how NHIF operated in the county. The study covered 250 employees at the NHIF headquarters within departments like human resources, relations with government, research and development, managing the brand, handling finances and strategy.

They were selected because they gave useful details on how the NHIF strategizes its policies. Experts collected data using a descriptive research method and statistics which allowed them to learn about the link between implementing a plan and bank performance. People responsible for managing organizations in healthcare and elsewhere can take ideas from this text to boost the efficiency and bottom line of their operations. The study surveyed 250 employees from NHIF headquarters and these subjects worked in human resources, government relations, research and development, brand management, finance and business strategy. The information was organized using frequency, proportion, mean and SD to give a general view of the answers received. Furthermore, using inferential statistics, correlations and regression were applied to find out how variables are linked to each other.

The outcomes of the study were easily understood by readers since graphical and tabular displays highlighted the key results. It was found through regression analysis that the tested factors had a big impact on the success of NHIF. This makes clear that formulating strategies effectively has a big impact on the overall success of the NHIF. The study revealed important ways strategic management practices enhance an organization's results which can guide the healthcare sector and any other groups hoping to improve their effectiveness through strategies. Even though the research was about NHIF's management, it was mentioned that another investigation will examine the management staff in Kenya's water and sewerage companies next. It opens up the opportunity to research how businesses in a particular industry in the country improve from using different strategic approaches. They might help explain the practices and outcomes of strategic management in many areas and industries in Kenya. These kinds of studies allow organizations to apply proven approaches and helpful practices that help their performance. Looking at different industries allows you to see how organizational results are affected by the development of strategies in Kenya's changing economy.

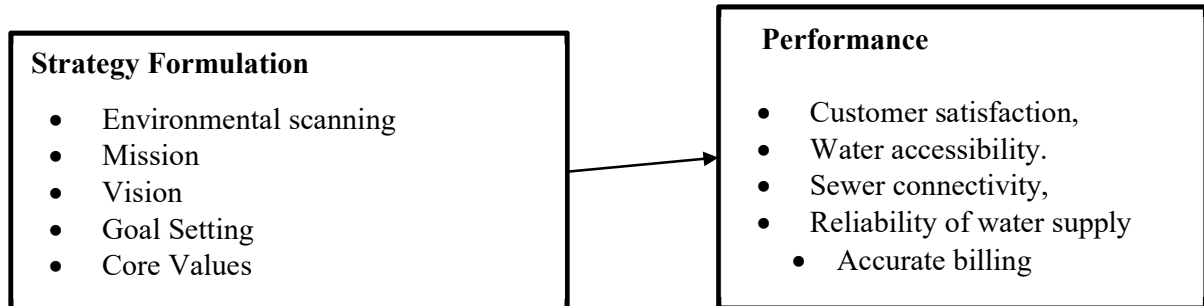


### Conceptual Framework

The structure exhibits the anticipated link between the predictor variables; (strategic formulation) and the dependent variable (performance). Figure 1 below clearly illustrates this.

#### Independent variables

#### Dependent variable



Source: Researcher (2025)

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

### Research Design

The study used a descriptive investigate methodological analysis, a tried-and-true method for examining data and gaining a comprehensive understanding of certain groups or occurrences. It entails "what," "where," "when," and "how" aspects of a population and situation in order to systematically characterize it rather than providing answers to the "why." This research approach is especially well-suited to the study's environment for investigating the impact of strategic governance practices.

### Target Population

This study entails focus on the management staff of NWSC, NARUWASCO, NAWASSCO, and NAIVAWASCO in Nakuru County enables a targeted and thorough examination of strategical administration pattern and their effects on organizational execution. Responses came from the middle and higher management teams where the trget population was 153 management staff that led to a sample size of 100 staff.

### Data Collection Instruments

The study used primary data where structured were administered using with the help of the research assistant.

### Data Collection Procedure

Before collecting data, Kenyatta University approved and authorized the researcher to collect data necessary for the study. Further, authorization was sought from the NACOSTI. Once permission is granted, questionnaires were administered using a drop and pick strategy.

## Data Analysis and Presentation

Once data collection was complete, the researcher put the materials in order by their research variables. The statistical tool SPSS was applied to the data since it includes both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. In order to present all the data, descriptive statistics were used. The next step to organize and observe possible patterns is to calculate metrics such as mean, standard deviation and frequency distributions. Descriptive statistics make it possible to see how the variables fluctuate and what main patterns exist. The results were presented using tables, charts and graphs which made it efficient to understand. For this model, Y is the outcome showing how well water conservation bodies performed in Nakuru County, Kenya. The independent variables were the process of devising a strategy (X1). The  $\beta$  values represented the association between Y and each of the independent variables and  $\alpha$  measured the fit of the model.

The equation of multiple regression model below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1$$

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Strategy execution and Formulation

The primary goal of the study was to determine the influence of strategy creation on the performance of water and sewerage organizations. To calculate the descriptive statistics, a five-point Likert scale was used, with 1 equaling 5. Three represented neutral, two disagreed, one strongly disagreed, five strongly agreed, and four agreed. Respondents were asked to score the claims.

*Table 1: Strategy Execution and Formulation*

Statement	Standard	
	Mean	Deviation
a) The company use SWOT analysis for environment scanning	3.763	1.177
b) The company have well planned mission	3.619	1.248
c) The vision of the organization is well captured and formulated	4.068	1.039
d) The organization missions and vision are centered in customer satisfaction	3.542	1.332
e) The company has its goal set and attains goals that the organization set	4.025	1.146
f) The company has core values so as to protect the environment and perform well	4.178	1.005
g) The company formulate dynamic strategy so as to increase performance	3.941	1.130
h) The company are more efficient with policies formulated	3.602	1.263
Average	3.842	1.167

*Source: Researcher (2025)*

The table displays the respondents' answers to statements on strategic approaches, which range from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The mean values show the respondents' overall views on each statement.

Across the statements, it is evident that the respondents generally hold positive views on the strategy formulation processes within their organizations. As high as 4.178, signaling an agreement, was recorded for the statement concerning the presence of core values to protect the environment and enhance performance. Additionally, the statements about well-captured organizational vision (mean = 4.068) and attaining set goals (mean = 4.025) also received high mean scores, demonstrating agreement among respondents. However, the respondents expressed a slightly lower level of agreement (mean = 3.542) point the arrangement of organizational missions and vision with customer satisfaction.

### Performance of WSC

A crucial component of this research, the performance evaluation of WSC, is the subject of Section 4.4. In order to give a thorough grasp of customer happiness, water accessibility, sewer connectivity, water supply dependability, and proper billing within these businesses, the section focuses on descriptive information pertaining to key performance metrics. The efficacy and efficiency of water and sewerage services are largely determined by these parameters.

*Table 2: Performance of WSC*

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
a) Customer satisfaction	3.924	0.984
b) Water accessibility	4.093	1.073
c) Sewer connectivity	3.797	1.078
d) Reliability of water supply	4.008	1.077
e) Accurate billing	4.102	0.960
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.985</b>	<b>1.035</b>

*Source: Researcher (2025)*

The average score for water accessibility was 4.093, indicating that most respondents thought the water services were easily accessible. With a mean score of 3.797, sewer connectivity was rated as somewhat less satisfactory than water accessibility. Water supply reliability had a score of 4.008, meaning that most respondents thought the water supply was dependable. The high mean score of 4.102 for accurate billing indicates that respondents were happy with the services' accuracy. In terms of customer satisfaction, water accessibility, water supply dependability, and correct invoicing, the respondents generally agreed that the water and sewerage providers were doing a good job. However, given that satisfaction ratings were somewhat lower in the sewer connectivity sector, there may be space for development.

The findings are consistent with a number of theories examined in this research, such as the Balanced Scorecard framework, which highlights the importance of aspects of service quality including water accessibility, water supply dependability, and correct billing in assessing customer happiness. The focus on resource allocation and management techniques during plan implementation also reflects the Resource-Based View Theory, which enhances service quality. different results highlight how intricately different ideas interact to influence the tactics and output of water and sewerage corporations.

## Inferential Statistics

Multivariate regression analysis of performance and strategic management methods (Tables 3, 4 and 5): The study's use of inferential statistics explores the deeper connections between water and sewerage firm performance measures and different strategic management processes, including strategy creation, execution, and assessment.

*Table 3: Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.915 <sup>a</sup>	0.838	0.833	0.40774	0.803

*Source: Researcher (2025)*

The results in Table 3, which show a very high coefficient of determination (R-square = 0.838), demonstrate the association's durability. This graph illustrates that differences in strategic management strategies account for about 83.8% of the variation in the performance of water and sewerage companies. This finding suggests a strong and considerable association, implying that good strategic management has a significant impact on these organizations' overall performance picture.

*Table 4: ANOVA*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	97.700	3	32.567	195.887	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	18.953	114	0.166		
Total	116.653	117			

*Source: Researcher (2025)*

The ANOVA findings shown in Table 4 provide additional support for the analysis. According to the extremely significant F-statistic ( $F = 195.887$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the performance results are significantly impacted by the strategic management techniques taken together. The relevance of strategic management techniques overall in influencing the success of water and sewerage enterprises is reaffirmed by this statistical significance.

*Table 5: Model Coefficient*

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.219	0.160	—	1.372	.173
Strategy Formulation	0.219	0.060	0.237	3.657	.000

**Note.**

Dependent Variable: Performance of Water and Sewerage Companies

*Source: Researcher (2025).*

These equations in Table 5 make it possible to see how variables are related to each other. The 0.219 beta that strategy formulation has suggests that for every increase of one unit in effective strategy formulation, water and sewerage businesses see a rise in performance by 0.219 units.

## Conclusion

This study reveals the delicate link between strategic planning influence the performance of Nakuru County's water and sewerage firms. It emphasizes the holistic character of strategic

management, in which each phase of the process impacts and amplifies the consequences of the previous ones. A symbiotic relationship exists among these strategic components, creating a synergistic effect that propels organizations toward unprecedented levels of success. Through strategic formulation, companies articulate their vision and set the course for their future endeavors. Strategic implementation breathes life into these plans, transforming visions into tangible realities. Lastly, strategic evaluation acts as the compass, guiding organizations on their journey by providing continuous feedback and course corrections.

### Recommendations

**Technological Integration:** Embracing advanced technologies and data-driven tools can streamline strategy implementation and evaluation processes. Implementing digital solutions can enhance efficiency, decision-making, and overall performance.

**Continuous Evaluation:** Establishing a culture of continuous evaluation and learning is crucial. Companies should regularly assess their strategies, benchmark against industry best practices, and adapt to changing market dynamics.

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