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STRATEGIC CONTROL TECHNIQUES AND PERFORMANCE OF TEA PROCESSING COMPANIES IN KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Tea processing companies play a vital role in Kenya's economy, particularly in agricultural and rural development. As one of the country's leading export commodities, tea contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings and provides employment to thousands of people both directly and indirectly. However, tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya, face significant challenges that impact their performance. The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of strategic control techniques on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to assess the influence of premise control on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya and to determine the influence of strategic surveillance on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. This study was guided by Cognitive Load Theory, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Contingency Theory and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The study employed descriptive research design. This study targeted tea processing companies in Kiambu County. Currently there are 66 operational tea factories under the KTDA (MS) Ltd management, each managed by a board of directors elected by and from among the growers of the specific factory catchment (KTDA, 2024). 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. Seventeen respondents were used for pilot testing representing 10% of the sample size. In this study the collected data was analysed by both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Data was edited, sorted, coded and analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Inferential statistical methods such as correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test the relationship between the variables. The study adopted multiple linear regression analysis. The study concludes that premise control has a positive and significant influence on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. Further, the study concludes that strategic surveillance has a positive and significant influence on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the management of tea processing companies in Kenya should strengthen their internal quality control systems by implementing standardized procedures at every stage of production. By emphasizing strict adherence to operational guidelines companies can enhance product consistency and reduce losses caused by inefficiencies or defects.

Key Words: Strategic Control Techniques, Premise Control, Strategic Surveillance, Performance of Tea Processing Companies

Background of the Study

Tea processing companies play a pivotal role in the tea industry, acting as the bridge between the raw material—freshly plucked tea leaves—and the final product consumed by millions worldwide (Ibtasam, Uzma & Fazal, 2021). Their primary responsibility is to process the tea leaves in a way that maximizes flavor, aroma, and quality while maintaining the nutritional and chemical properties of the leaves. This process involves several crucial stages: withering, rolling, oxidation, drying, and sometimes additional steps like fermenting or blending, depending on the type of tea being produced (Sirajuddin, Muhammad & Muhammad, 2024). The decisions made during these stages significantly impact the taste profile and characteristics of the tea, making the role of tea processing companies vital in determining the quality of the end product (Abdel-Aziz & Saed, 2023).

Moreover, tea processing companies are essential in maintaining consistency and meeting the ever-growing global demand for tea. They often source tea leaves from various tea plantations, which may vary in altitude, climate, and soil conditions, all of which influence the flavor (Iradukunda & Irechukwu, 2023). By using controlled processes and advanced technologies, tea processors can create a standardized product that meets consumer expectations for taste, appearance, and quality, regardless of the origin of the leaves. This consistency is especially important in large markets where consumers are accustomed to specific flavor profiles. In addition, tea processing companies are also involved in packaging and branding (Ankomah *et al*, 2024). The packaging must not only preserve the tea's freshness but also appeal to consumers in a competitive market. With sustainability becoming increasingly important, many tea processing companies are also adopting eco-friendly packaging and sourcing practices to meet consumer demand for environmentally conscious products. The branding and marketing efforts of these companies further shape how tea is perceived by consumers, whether as a luxury product, an everyday beverage, or a health-conscious choice (Adeolu *et al*, 2023).

Strategic control techniques refer to the methods and processes that organizations use to monitor and evaluate the implementation of their strategic plans. These techniques help ensure that the organization’s strategy is effectively executed and that goals are being met (Agaba, Turyasingura & Kabagambe, 2023). Common strategic control techniques include financial controls, performance monitoring, benchmarking and balanced scorecards. Additionally, feedback systems and strategic reviews are employed to adapt and refine strategies in response to changing internal or external conditions (Kariuki & Mwanzia, 2024). These techniques allow organizations to remain agile and proactive, ensuring that their strategies remain aligned with both short-term needs and long-term goals. Premise control is a strategic control technique that focuses on monitoring the assumptions or premises underlying an organization’s strategy (Lumbasio & Mang’ana, 2024). This involves regularly evaluating the assumptions about the external environment, market conditions, and internal capabilities that were made during the strategic planning phase. This technique is particularly useful in industries or markets that are highly dynamic and subject to rapid change (Gichana & Oloko, 2023).

Implementation control focuses on monitoring the progress of the strategy’s execution, ensuring that the plans are being carried out effectively and on time. It involves tracking the performance of key activities, initiatives, and projects to ensure they are in line with the strategic objectives (Amal & Samson, 2021). Strategic surveillance continuously scans the external and internal environments for changes that could impact the organization’s strategy. It is a more passive, ongoing process that helps identify emerging trends, risks, or opportunities (Murunga & Deya, 2022). Special alert control is used for critical or high-priority situations that may require immediate attention. It involves the use of specific controls and measures to respond quickly to unexpected events, crises, or threats. This technique is vital for organizations that need to remain flexible and resilient in the face of uncertainty or sudden disruptions (Pratistha & Padjadjaran, 2024). This study seeks to determine the influence of

strategic control techniques on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya, play a significant role in the country's tea industry, which is one of the largest contributors to the national economy. Kiambu, located in the central highlands, provides ideal climatic conditions for tea cultivation—fertile volcanic soils, high altitude, and consistent rainfall (Kariuki & Mwanzia, 2024). This has led to the establishment of several tea factories and processing companies that serve both smallholder farmers and large estates in the region. One of the prominent players in Kiambu is the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA), which manages multiple factories across the county (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). Factories such as Githambo, Mataara, and Theta are under the KTDA umbrella and primarily process tea from small-scale farmers. KTDA not only facilitates tea processing but also offers extension services, marketing, and logistics support, helping farmers improve yields and access international markets (Gichana & Oloko, 2023).

In addition to KTDA-managed factories, Kiambu County is home to privately owned tea processing firms and estates such as Karirana Estates and Sasini Tea. These companies operate their own plantations and processing units, often producing high-quality specialty teas for export (Amal & Samson, 2021). They typically focus on more vertically integrated operations—managing cultivation, processing, and even packaging under one roof—allowing for greater quality control and branding. Tea processing companies in Kiambu also contribute to the local economy through employment and infrastructure development (Murunga & Deya, 2022). They offer jobs in the factories, farms, and related transport services, supporting thousands of households. Additionally, many of these companies are involved in community development projects, including road construction, education support, and water supply initiatives, making them vital to regional development (Kariuki & Mwanzia, 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Tea processing companies play a vital role in Kenya's economy, particularly in agricultural and rural development. As one of the country's leading export commodities, tea contributes significantly to foreign exchange earnings and provides employment to thousands of people both directly and indirectly (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). In counties like Kiambu, tea processing companies are at the heart of local economic activity, supporting farmers, generating revenue, and contributing to infrastructure development. These companies form a critical link in the tea value chain, ensuring that raw tea leaves are transformed into high-quality products ready for both local consumption and international markets (Gichana & Oloko, 2023).

However, tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya, face significant challenges that impact their performance. Despite Kenya achieving record earnings from tea exports, with a 31% surge to Kshs. 180.57 billion (approximately US$1.22 billion) in 2023, profitability remains a struggle for many companies. A major concern is overproduction, leading to a surplus of unsold tea (Kariuki & Mwanzia, 2024). In 2023, nearly 40% of the tea offered at auctions went unsold, translating to over 100 million kilograms of tea not being purchased. This surplus not only incurs storage costs but also results in a depreciation in value. Additionally, the introduction of a reserve price at tea auctions has contributed to decreased sales volumes, which further pressures the profitability of tea processors. Kiambu County's tea processors are also grappling with market share challenges (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). Kenya's total tea exports reached 522.92 million kilograms in 2023, but the industry faces significant competition from other tea-producing countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and China. Pakistan remains the largest consumer of Kenyan tea, but political instability in key markets like Sudan and Russia has disrupted trade flows (Gichana & Oloko, 2023). Furthermore, countries like India and Sri Lanka are intensifying their exports, which further challenges Kenya's market share. Efforts to expand into new markets like West Africa are ongoing, but

this requires substantial investment and time to establish a competitive foothold in these regions (Amal & Samson, 2021). As of 2023, only 8% of Kenyan tea exports were directed to African markets, showing the limited reach in this region.

Customer satisfaction for tea processing companies in Kiambu County is increasingly under pressure. The Tea Board of Kenya is actively working to address quality concerns, as product quality is critical for maintaining consumer satisfaction (Murunga & Deya, 2022). While Kenya's tea industry is globally recognized, there is growing competition from alternative teas like herbal and specialty teas, which have become increasingly popular among consumers (Kariuki & Mwanzia, 2024). For instance, in 2023, the global herbal tea market was valued at US$5.69 billion and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 7.1% between 2023 and 2030. This shift in consumer preferences represents a challenge for traditional tea producers in Kiambu County, who must innovate and improve their product offerings to retain customer loyalty. Companies must adapt to these changes by focusing on diversifying their product lines to meet the evolving tastes of tea consumers (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024).

Strategic control techniques are essential tools that organizations use to monitor and evaluate the implementation of their strategies to ensure that set goals and objectives are achieved effectively (Amal & Samson, 2021). Various studies have been conducted in different parts of the world on strategic control techniques and organization performance. For instance, Gichana and Oloko (2022) conducted a study on the influence of strategic control techniques on organizational performance of savings and credit cooperatives, Gaturu, *et al* (2023) researched on the influence of strategic control techniques on organizational performance of mission hospitals and Murunga and Deya (2021) examined on the influence of strategic control technique on performance of commercial banks. However, none of these studies focused on premise control, implementation control, strategic surveillance and special alert control on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. To fill the highlighted gaps, the current study sought to determine the influence of strategic control techniques (premise control, implementation control, strategic surveillance and special alert control) on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

General objective

The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of strategic control techniques on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya

Specific objectives

i. To assess the influence of premise control on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya
ii. To determine the influence of strategic surveillance on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Load Theory

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) was developed by John Sweller in (1987). The Cognitive Load Theory posits that human cognitive resources, particularly working memory, are limited and can become overwhelmed when solving complex problems (Masasi, Purnama & Galinium, 2021). Sweller argued that effective problem-solving relies on managing cognitive load to optimize learning and performance (Murunga & Deya, 2022). The theory suggests that instructional designs, strategies, and practices should aim to reduce unnecessary cognitive strain (extraneous load) while focusing cognitive resources on problem-solving and learning tasks (intrinsic and germane loads) (Wigwe, 2020). Problem-solving competencies are directly

linked to this theory as they require individuals to assess, analyze, and resolve challenges systematically while managing the mental demands of the task (Rupia, 2022). Key aspects of problem-solving—such as identifying the problem, generating alternatives, and evaluating solutions—can strain working memory (Ndigwa & Odollo, 2024). CLT supports strategies like chunking information, automating routine processes, and fostering schema development, which allow individuals to enhance their problem-solving skills by freeing up cognitive resources for higher-order thinking (Masasi, Purnama & Galinium, 2021). This theory was used to assess the influence of premise control on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Contingency Theory

Contingency Theory, developed by Fred Fiedler (1967) often associated with leadership and organizational management, proposes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership or management practices (Bell, 2020). Instead, the effectiveness of leadership styles, organizational structures, and management strategies depends on the specific context in which they are applied. This theory suggests that different situations require different kinds of leadership and management approaches for optimal performance (Oduro-Marfo, 2020). At its core, Contingency Theory asserts that various factors in the external environment and within the organization itself interact to determine the most effective leadership style or management practice (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). These factors can include the organization's size, its industry or sector, the complexity of its tasks, its culture, the skills and personalities of its employees, and the external environment such as market conditions or regulatory requirements (Owuondo, 2024).

One of the key principles of Contingency Theory is the idea of fit or match between the leader's or manager's style and the situational demands. For example, in a highly uncertain and rapidly changing environment, a more flexible and adaptive leadership style may be more effective than a rigid, authoritarian approach (Namuhisa, 2020). Similarly, in organizations with complex tasks that require specialized knowledge and expertise, leaders who can facilitate collaboration and empower their teams may be more successful than those who rely solely on hierarchical authority (Bell, 2020). Contingency Theory also emphasizes the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of each situation and tailoring leadership and management practices accordingly. This flexibility allows leaders and managers to adjust their strategies based on the specific challenges and opportunities they face, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness and performance (Oduro-Marfo, 2020). Critically, Contingency Theory challenges the notion of a universally "best" or "ideal" leadership style. Instead, it encourages leaders and managers to be adaptive and responsive, continuously evaluating and adjusting their approach to align with the evolving needs of the organization and its environment (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). By considering the contingency factors and adapting their practices accordingly, leaders can optimize their effectiveness and contribute to the overall success of their organizations (Namuhisa, 2020). This theory was used to determine the influence of strategic surveillance on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is illustrated in Figure 2.1 below. It shows the independent variables include the premise control, implementation control, strategic surveillance and special alert control while the dependent variable is the organizational performance. The conceptual illustrates the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables in the study. It also indicates the parameters of each variable.

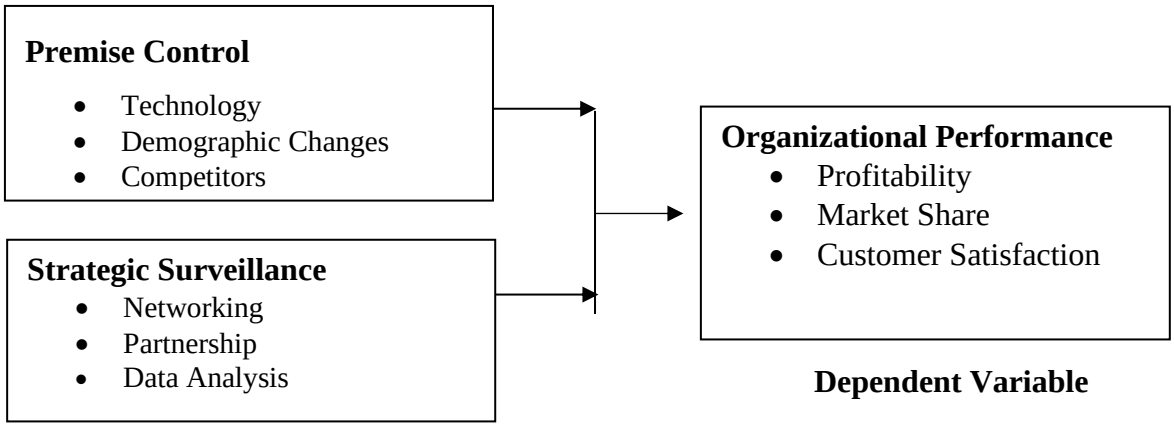

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

Premise Control

Premise control involves the systematic monitoring of the assumptions or premises on which a strategic plan is based. Since strategies are built on predictions about future trends in areas such as the economy, competition, technology, and regulations, premise control ensures these foundational assumptions remain valid over time (Masasi, Purnama & Galinium, 2021). If a key assumption changes significantly, the strategy itself may need to be revised or reconsidered. This control helps managers stay proactive by identifying early signs that the external or internal environment has shifted in ways that could affect strategic success (Wigwe, 2020).

Technology plays a critical role in shaping the strategic direction of organizations. It affects how businesses operate, produce goods and services, communicate with customers, and even how they compete in the market (Murunga & Deya, 2022). Rapid advancements in areas such as artificial intelligence, automation, and digital platforms can provide companies with opportunities to improve efficiency, reach new markets, and create innovative products. However, staying current with technological trends also requires ongoing investment and adaptability. Businesses that fail to keep pace risk falling behind, while those that leverage technology effectively can gain significant competitive advantages (Rupia, 2022).

Demographic changes significantly influence market demands and workforce dynamics. Shifts in population age, gender distribution, migration patterns, and cultural diversity affect what products or services are needed and how they should be marketed (Ndigwa & Odollo, 2024). For instance, an aging population might increase demand for healthcare services, while a younger demographic could drive growth in tech-based or lifestyle-oriented industries. Additionally, demographic trends can impact the availability and expectations of talent in the labor market, making it crucial for businesses to adapt both their offerings and internal practices to align with evolving societal structures (Masasi, Purnama & Galinium, 2021).

Competitors are a constant force that shape strategic decisions and market positioning. Understanding competitors' strengths, weaknesses, pricing strategies, and customer engagement efforts is essential for developing effective competitive strategies (Wigwe, 2020). The actions of competitors can directly impact a company's market share and profitability, prompting the need for continuous analysis and innovation. Whether it's through direct competition or emerging substitutes, companies must remain vigilant and responsive to maintain relevance and outperform rivals. Competitive intelligence, therefore, becomes an

indispensable tool in anticipating moves and formulating strategic responses (Murunga & Deya, 2022).

Strategic Surveillance

Strategic surveillance is a broader form of control that scans the external environment for any potential threats or opportunities that were not initially anticipated in the strategic plan (Bell, 2020). Unlike premise or implementation controls, which are more focused, strategic surveillance is designed to pick up on subtle changes or trends that could impact the organization's future. It involves gathering and analyzing information from various sources, including market data, news reports, and industry developments, to ensure the strategy remains relevant and adaptive in a dynamic environment (Oduro-Marfo, 2020).

Networking plays a vital role in personal and organizational growth by creating opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and resource access. For individuals, networking can open doors to mentorship, career advancement, and professional development (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024). For organizations, building strong networks within the industry or across sectors can lead to strategic insights, customer leads, and potential alliances. Effective networking fosters trust and mutual support, allowing businesses to stay informed about trends, competitive moves, and emerging opportunities. In a rapidly evolving market, the strength of one's network can be a powerful asset in staying adaptable and resilient (Owuondo, 2024).

Partnerships are strategic relationships that enable organizations to leverage each other's strengths for mutual benefit. Whether it's a joint venture, a supplier alliance, or a marketing collaboration, partnerships can help companies expand their reach, reduce costs, and innovate more effectively (Namuhisa, 2020). By sharing resources, expertise, and risk, businesses can achieve goals that might be difficult or inefficient to pursue independently. Strong partnerships require clear communication, aligned objectives, and mutual trust to succeed. When managed well, they can be a catalyst for growth, competitive advantage, and long-term value creation (Bell, 2020).

Data analysis is the process of examining, organizing, and interpreting data to support decision-making. It allows organizations to identify patterns, trends, and correlations that may not be immediately obvious. Through data analysis, businesses can gain deeper insights into customer behavior, operational efficiency, market conditions, and financial performance (Oduro-Marfo, 2020). These insights can drive more accurate forecasting, smarter strategies, and better allocation of resources. In today's data-driven world, organizations that effectively analyze and act on their data are better equipped to respond to challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and maintain a competitive edge (Lumbasio & Mang'ana, 2024).

Empirical Review

Premise Control and Organizational Performance

Masasi, Purnama and Galinium (2021) conducted a study on the effect of development of an on-premise control Indonesian handwriting recognition backend system using open source deep learning solution for mobile user. Existing handwriting recognition solution on mobile app provides off premise service which means the handwriting is processed in overseas servers. The study found that this research has the objective of developing an on-premise control Indonesian handwriting recognition using open source deep learning solution. In conclusion, the development of an on premise control Indonesian handwriting recognition backend system using open source deep learning solution for mobile user are built by using tensor flow to provide the on premise capabilities, IAM database format to gather Indonesian handwriting data, and adding rotation augmentation helps achieve improved result from the result of the initial experiment

Wigwe (2020) conducted a study on the effect of recovery of premises control in Nigeria: an assessment of the relationship of landlord and tenant law. Recovery of premises is one of the 1110st common areas of practice, and for many new wigs, it may be the first point of call in practice. In a densely populated COU11tly of over 160 million people with only a few houses, the relationship of landlord and tenant in Nigeria is inevitable and so also is the recovery of possession of premises control from tenants by their landlords. The study found that this article examines this simple but strict procedure for recovery of premises control ill Nigeria and issues arising therefrom. The study concluded that in Nigeria, a landlord can only properly recover possession in one instance- when a lawful occupier voluntarily vacates.

Murunga and Deya (2022) conducted a study on the influence of premises controls on performance of commercial banks in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study sought to establish the influence of premises 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. The study found that the banks have adopted premise controls to a very great extent. The study concludes that organizational aspects, industrial elements and environmental factors influence the performance of the banks.

Rupia (2022) conducted a study on the effect of premises control systems on performance of shipping companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. Businesses in these industries must function economically because shipping companies are crucial in allowing the international movement of goods and services. The sample size will be 81 personnel, with the target population being all 22 registered shipping lines with headquarters in Mombasa. The study found that the effectiveness of shipping businesses in Mombasa County was shown to be significantly and favorably impacted by the strategic surveillance control system; premises control system, special alert control system, and implementation control system. The study came to the conclusion that strategic surveillance controls enable the management of the business to keep an eye on various sources for hazards.

Ndigwa and Odollo (2024) conducted a study on the influence of premises control on the performance of airlines in Kenya. Premises control focuses on achievement of future goals rather than the evaluation of past performance. 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 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.

Strategic Surveillance and Organizational Performance

Bell (2020) conducted a study on the effect of surveillance strategies and populations at risk: bio political governance in Canada's National Security Policy. This article examines how Canada's new national security policy operates through language and practices that take elusive risks to the health and safety of the population as an opportunity for action, and is made possible through an expansion of surveillance. The study found that the article then focuses on two principle techniques of governance: first, guarding the freedom, health and safety of the population, and, second, expanding surveillance to give national security a totalizing reach. The study concluded that the usefulness of critical considerations on the proliferation of security mechanisms is to be found in how they seek to expose the normalizing processes entailed in security strategies themselves.

Oduro-Marfo (2020) conducted a study on the effect of strategic surveillance for development? Debating citizen identification systems in Ghana. Many Global South states are developing

citizen identification databases that are digital, smart and meant to be integrated and interoperable with other systems. The study finds a general consensus amongst state and non-state actors about the value of citizen identification systems to development in Ghana. The study concluded that it is puzzling that despite the growing notoriety of surveillance technologies, citizen identification systems with a surveillance-orientation are being promoted in/to Global South countries

Lumbasio and Mang'ana (2024) conducted a study on the influence of strategic surveillance controls on performance of customs and border control at Kenya revenue authority. This study sought to investigate the influence of strategic controls on performance of customs and border control at Kenya revenue authority. The findings of the study showed that strategic surveillance had a positive effect on performance. The study concluded that in sensitive sectors such as the immigration and border department, where unfavorable unforeseen circumstances are most likely to occur, it is prudent for managers to always have a contingency and a counter attack plan for their survival

Owuondo (2024) conducted a study on the effect of enhancing Kenya's national security: optimizing early warning and response surveillance systems. National security is a foundational priority for states, particularly in volatile global environments. For Kenya, optimizing early warning and response surveillance systems (EWS) is essential for countering a diverse range of threats, from terrorism and organized crime to cyber vulnerabilities. Findings reveal significant shortfalls in inter-agency coordination, technology integration, and community engagement, which collectively limit the efficacy of Kenya's EWS. The paper concludes with strengthening Kenya's surveillance capabilities by fostering inter-agency data sharing, incorporating advanced surveillance technology, and expanding community-based approaches to enhance early threat detection and rapid response

Namuhisa (2020) conducted a study on the effect of political factors, sustainability and scale up of mobile health projects as early warning systems in public health strategy surveillance in Kenya: A critical review. During the devolution process in Kenya, statutory fiscal, administrative and political powers were transferred from the central government to the county governments the study found that one of the strategies for achieving this goal is through the use of mobile phone technology due to its ability to access wide geographical areas, affordability once the initial investment in the technology and technical requirements is achieved and it's cheap to maintain in terms of resources, this has led to the establishment of mHealth projects in the health sector to be applied at the point of care delivery. The study concluded that mobile health technology can definitely contribute towards the achievement of the third SDGs goal by promoting healthy lives and the wellbeing of all people at all ages thus leaving no one behind as well as the UHC and vision 2030 objective

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed descriptive research design. This is because it is used when a study intends to describe a situation as it is (Cooper & Schindler, 2018). Descriptive research design focused on studying a problem in order to describe the variables under study. It was also used for quantitative and qualitative data analysis to enable the researcher to analyse the reality of research phenomena.

Target Population

Target population is the entire set of individuals (or objects) having the same characteristics as pointed out in the sampling criteria used for the study (Quinlan, 2019). This study targeted tea processing companies in Kiambu County. Currently there are 66 operational tea factories under the KTDA (MS) Ltd management, each managed by a board of directors elected by and from

among the growers of the specific factory catchment (KTDA, 2024). This study therefore targeted the management employees in these companies. In every company, the study targeted 1 top manager, 3 middle level managers and 5 lower level managers. The total target population was therefore 594 respondents.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sampling frame for this study was the list of management level employees at tea processing companies in Kiambu County. It is from this list that the study sample was selected from.

Sampling as described by Geteria, (2019) 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 Krejcie and Morgan (1970) 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 (594)

e = accuracy level required. Standard error = 5%

Sample calculation

$$n=\frac{594}{1+(594)0.05^2}$$

n=170.44

n=170 respondents

Table 3. 1: Sample Size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size
Senior level management	66	19
Middle Level Management	198	57
Low Level Management	330	94
Total	**594**	**170**

Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaires. The questionnaires were used, since they allow the respondents to answer the questions at their own convenient time (Kothari, 2018). Both open and close ended questions were used in order for respondents to make choices among a set of alternatives allowing them answer questions the way they choose. The use of self-administered questionnaires in data collection is effective to collect respondent's views with minimum errors.

Pilot Study

This involves testing for validity and reliability of the data collection instruments. Seventeen respondents were used for pilot testing representing 10% of the sample size. The study expected to tick the items in seventeen questionnaires to determine the influence of strategic control techniques on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The respondents in pilot testing were not used in the final data collection.

Data Analysis

In this study the collected data was analysed by both qualitative and quantitative analysis (Kombo & Tromp, 2018). After collecting data from the respondents, Data was edited, sorted, coded and analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analysed data and the results were presented in form of mean, percentages, and standard deviation. Inferential statistical methods such as correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test the relationship between the variables. The study adopted multiple linear regression analysis. This is because multiple regressions it enabled the researcher establish the effects of independent variables on dependent variables

The multiple regression model was tested as follows;

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

where;

Y-is organizational performance,

X_1–Premise control

X_2 - Strategic surveillance

Ɛ-Error term

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, and β_4 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 is model coefficient

In the model β_0, - is a constant term of the independent variables and β-Measure of sensitivity of the dependent variable Y known as the predictor.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics

Premise Control and Organization Performance

The first specific objective of the study was to assess the influence of premise control on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to premise control and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 4.1.

From the results, the respondents agreed that their organization actively monitors emerging technologies that could impact their operations (M=3.897, SD= 0.802). In addition, the respondents agreed that they regularly assess the risks and opportunities presented by technological changes (M=3.851, SD= 0.727). Further, the respondents agreed that they track demographic shifts to anticipate market needs (M=3.836, SD= 0.509).

From the results, the respondents agreed that changes in the customer base's demographics are regularly factored into their planning (M=3.765, SD= 0.651). In addition, the respondents agreed that they consistently monitor the activities and strategies of key competitors (M=3.749, SD= 0.613). Further, the respondents agreed that competitive intelligence is integrated into their strategic decision-making process (M=3.722, SD= 0.876).

Table 4. 1: Premise Control and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our organization actively monitors emerging technologies that could impact our operations.	3.897	0.802
We regularly assess the risks and opportunities presented by technological changes.	3.851	0.727
We track demographic shifts to anticipate market needs.	3.836	0.509
Changes in the customer base's demographics are regularly factored into our planning.	3.765	0.651
We consistently monitor the activities and strategies of key competitors.	3.749	0.613
Competitive intelligence is integrated into our strategic decision-making process.	3.722	0.876
Aggregate	**3.800**	**0.696**

Strategic Surveillance and Organization Performance

The third specific objective of the study was to determine the influence of strategic surveillance on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to strategic surveillance and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 4.2.

From the results, the respondents agreed that their organization actively engages in industry networks to stay informed about external trends (M=3.828, SD= 0.698). In addition, the respondents agreed that employees are encouraged to build professional relationships that provide strategic insights (M=3.817, SD= 0.825). Further, the respondents agreed that they maintain collaborative relationships that enhance their understanding of the external environment (M=3.771, SD= 0.697).

From the results, the respondents agreed that their partners regularly share information that is critical to strategic decision-making (M=3.762, SD= 0.672). In addition, the respondents agreed that they use data analytics to detect changes in market conditions and customer behavior (M=3.682, SD= 0.805). Further, the respondents agreed that their organization continuously improves its data analysis capabilities to enhance surveillance (M=3.615, SD=0.573).

Table 4. 2: Strategic Surveillance and Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization actively engages in industry networks to stay informed about external trends.	3.828	0.698
Employees are encouraged to build professional relationships that provide strategic insights.	3.817	0.825
We maintain collaborative relationships that enhance our understanding of the external environment.	3.771	0.697
Our partners regularly share information that is critical to strategic decision-making.	3.762	0.672
We use data analytics to detect changes in market conditions and customer behavior.	3.682	0.805
Our organization continuously improves its data analysis capabilities to enhance surveillance.	3.615	0.573
Aggregate	**3.746**	**0.712**

Organization Performance

The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. The results were as shown Table 4.3.

From the results, the respondents agreed that their organization consistently achieves its targeted profit margins (M=3.841, SD= 0.668). In addition, the respondents agreed that their financial performance exceeds that of key competitors in the industry (M=3.822, SD= 0.637). Further, the respondents agreed that their organization increases its share of the market in the last fiscal year (M=3.813, SD= 0.578).

From the results, the respondents agreed that they effectively expanded into new market segments or geographical areas (M=3.768, SD= 0.857). In addition, the respondents agreed that they receive a significant amount of repeat business from existing customers (M=3.744, SD=0.855). Further, the respondents agreed that customer complaints are minimal and are resolved promptly and effectively (M=3.712, SD=0.619).

Table 4. 3: Organization Performance

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our organization consistently achieves its targeted profit margins.	3.841	0.668
Our financial performance exceeds that of key competitors in the industry.	3.822	0.637
Our organization increases its share of the market in the last fiscal year.	3.813	0.578
We effectively expanded into new market segments or geographical areas.	3.768	0.857
We receive a significant amount of repeat business from existing customers.	3.744	0.855
Customer complaints are minimal and are resolved promptly and effectively.	3.712	0.619
Aggregate	**3.783**	**0.824**

Correlation Analysis

This research adopted Pearson correlation analysis determine how the dependent variable (performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya) relates with the independent variables (premise control and strategic surveillance).

Table 4. 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Organization Performance	Premise Control	Strategic Surveillance
Organization Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	151		
Premise Control	Pearson Correlation	.875**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	151	151	
Strategic Surveillance	Pearson Correlation	.817**	.312	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.066	
	N	151	151	151

From the results, there was a very strong relationship between premise control and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya (r = 0.875, 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 Masasi, Purnama and Galinium (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between premise control and organization performance.

Further, there was a very strong relationship between strategic surveillance and performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya (r = 0.817, p value =0.003). The relationship was significant since the p value 0.003 was less than 0.05 (significant level). The findings are in line with the findings of Owuondo (2024) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between strategic surveillance and organization performance.

Regression Analysis

Multivariate regression analysis was used to assess the relationship between independent variables (premise control, and strategic surveillance) and the dependent variable (performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya).

Table 4. 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.881	.776	.777	.10482

a. Predictors: (Constant), premise control, strategic surveillance

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 0.776. This implied that 77.6% of the variation in the dependent variable (performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya) could be explained by independent variables (premise control and strategic surveillance).

Table 4. 6: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.382	2	7.191	138.308	.002[b]
	Residual	3.785	148	.026		
	Total	18.167	150			

a. Dependent Variable: performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya
b. Predictors: (Constant), premise control and strategic surveillance

The ANOVA was used to determine whether the model was a good fit for the data. F calculated was 138.308 while the F critical was 2.434. The p value was 0.002. Since the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical and the p value 0.002 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 premise control and strategic surveillance on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Table 4. 7: Regression Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.341	0.089		3.831	0.000
premise control	0.388	0.100	0.389	3.880	0.000
strategic surveillance	0.365	0.094	0.366	3.883	0.001

The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 0.341+0.388X_1 + 0.365X_2 +\varepsilon$$

According to the results, premise control has a significant effect on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya β_1=0.388, 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 Masasi, Purnama and Galinium (2021) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between premise control and organization performance

Furthermore, the results revealed that strategic surveillance has a significant effect on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya β1=0.365, 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 Owuondo (2024) who indicated that there is a very strong relationship between strategic surveillance and organization performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

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

Further, the study concludes that strategic surveillance has a positive and significant influence on performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings revealed that networking, partnership and data analysis influence performance of tea processing companies in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the management of tea processing companies in Kenya should strengthen their internal quality control systems by implementing standardized procedures at every stage of production. By emphasizing strict adherence to operational guidelines companies can enhance product consistency and reduce losses caused by inefficiencies or defects.

Further, the study recommends that the management of tea processing companies in Kenya should establish a strategic surveillance system that continuously scans the external environment for emerging trends, market shifts, and regulatory changes. By proactively gathering and analysing relevant information companies can anticipate challenges and seize new opportunities.

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