
**INFLUENCE OF CRISIS MITIGATION STRATEGIES ON PERFORMANCE OF
TANA RIVER COUNTY IN KENYA**

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Accepted, Aug 2th, 2024

Abstract

Kenyan counties have faced significant challenges due to inadequate crisis mitigation strategies, particularly in managing natural disasters and health crises. The absence of effective early warning systems and preparedness plans in some counties has resulted in delayed responses to drought conditions, worsening food insecurity and water scarcity issues. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted deficiencies in health crisis mitigation strategies across Kenyan counties. A KNBS Report disclosed that over 50% of county governments in Kenya struggled in the first half of 2020 due to the considerable crisis triggered by the emergence of COVID-19. Consequently, this study investigated the effect of crisis mitigation strategies on the performance of Tana River County in Kenya. The study aimed to determine the influence of containment strategies and preventive strategies on the performance of the Tana River County Government. The study was underpinned by situational crisis communication theory and contingency theory. A descriptive survey design was employed, targeting 136 respondents. The research integrated both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Qualitative data was gathered through interview and was presented in prose. Quantitative data, obtained through closed-ended questions, was organized, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics summarized the data, while inferential statistics explored relationships of the variables. The study found that containment mitigation strategies display a positive and significant relationship with performance ($\beta=0.196$, $p=0.002$). Preventive mitigation strategies exhibit a positive and significant relationship with performance ($\beta=0.286$, $p=0.000$). The study concludes that containment and preventive mitigation strategies had positive and significant relationships with performance of Tana River County government. Robust containment strategies are recommended to prevent escalation and minimize negative consequences. Furthermore, comprehensive preventive strategies are recommended to enhance crisis preparedness, reduce likelihood of crises, minimize disruptions, and improve overall stability and performance.

Keywords: *Containment, Preventive, Mitigation Strategies, Performance*

INTRODUCTION

The performance of governments is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness with which governmental bodies implement policies, deliver services, and meet the needs and expectations of their citizens. When government institutions provide better services, they directly impact the well-being and satisfaction of citizens, contributing to a higher quality of life (Tumwebaze, 2019). These services must be equitable, accessible, and of high quality to ensure that all segments of the population benefit, which in turn fosters public trust and confidence in governmental institutions (Agbo, 2020). Furthermore, the development of infrastructure is a key indicator of a government's performance, reflecting its ability to support economic growth and improve the resilience of communities to social and environmental challenges (Guyo and Nyariki, 2023). Efficient infrastructure development, encompassing transportation, utilities, and public facilities, is essential for sustainable development and the well-being of the citizenry (Mousa, Zhang, and Sumarlah, 2023).

Performance of government institutions is crucial in determining their effectiveness in serving the public and fulfilling their responsibilities. Timely service delivery is another critical aspect of government performance, emphasizing the responsiveness and reliability of government institutions (Mwangi, 2022). The ability of these institutions to deliver services promptly affects public perception and trust, making it a fundamental component of effective governance (Muatwa and Shale, 2023). Delays and bureaucratic red tape can significantly hinder access to necessary services, undermining public confidence and satisfaction with governmental institutions (Moochi and Mutswenje, 2022). In sum, the performance of government institutions is intricately linked to their ability to provide high-quality services, develop and maintain essential infrastructure, and ensure the timely delivery of services to the public (Orji and Okolie, 2021). These elements are crucial for meeting the needs and expectations of citizens, fostering trust in public institutions, and supporting overall societal progress (Wikarsa, Pandelaki, and Kurnia, 2022).

Globally, in the United States, Payton (2021) underscored the effectiveness of crisis communication and management in protecting organizational reputation and profitability. In the Philippines, Dagohoy (2022) demonstrated a strong positive link between the perceived effectiveness of government preventative actions and the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccinations in Panabo City. In Indonesia, Wikarsa et al. (2022) reported high public approval of COVID-19 preventive measures in Manado city. In Jordan, Jaaffar et al. (2023) identified the critical role of transformational leadership and crisis management in sustaining hotel performance during crises. In Nigeria, Agbo (2020) demonstrated a positive correlation between conflict management and organizational effectiveness at the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State. In Rwanda, Ntivuguruzwa et al. (2020) discovered that effective financial risk management significantly enhanced the companies' ability to fulfill financial obligations and profitability. In Uganda, Tumwebaze (2019) revealed that negotiation, third-party intervention, and compromise significantly influence employee performance at the Kampala Capital City Authority. In Nigeria, Omene (2021) found that adept conflict management strategies enhance decision-making and productivity within organizations. Ntare, Shau, and Ojwang (2022) conducted a study in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and revealed that components such as internal environments, monitoring, event identification, risk response, and risk assessment significantly affects performance.

In Kenya, Mwangi (2022) found a significant and positive relationship between crisis mitigation techniques and the performance of SMEs in Nairobi's manufacturing sector. Muatwa and Shale (2023) reported that procurement optimization significantly influences the performance of Metropolitan Counties. Guyo and Nyariki (2023) identified policy conflicts and power struggles between national and county governments impacting public administration performance in Tana River Sub-County. Moochi and Mutswenje (2022) found that COVID-19 containment measures significantly impacted the operations of SMEs in Nairobi's CBD. Gikuhi (2020) highlighted the importance of crisis management practices for the continuity of star-rated hotels.

The performance can be influenced by crisis mitigation strategies (Ahmad, Bashir & Waqas, 2022; Coccia, 2022; Tambunan, 2019; Orji & Okolie, 2021; Tumwebaze, 2019; Omene, 2021; Muatwa & Shale, 2023; Jaaffar, Alzoubi, Alkharabsheh, & Rajadurai, 2023). Crisis mitigation strategies play a crucial role in managing and minimizing the impact of unexpected events across various sectors (Bian, Zhang & Mao, 2021). The effectiveness of crisis mitigation strategies can significantly impact performance in various fields, including business, healthcare, and public services. The goal is to reduce the potential damage and ensure a swift recovery. For example, in the business world, having a solid crisis management plan can help a company quickly adapt to disruptions, maintain operational continuity, and protect its reputation, ultimately supporting its long-term success. The mitigation strategies can reduce the impact of natural disasters, saving lives and preserving infrastructure (Hameed, Salamzadeh, Rahim & Salamzadeh, 2022).

Containment strategies are focused on limiting the spread and escalation of a crisis. This can involve measures such as providing an alternative workplace to prevent operational disruptions, implementing social distancing to control the spread of health-related crises, and managing stakeholder expectations to maintain confidence and trust (Jaaffar, Alzoubi, Alkharabsheh, & Rajadurai, 2023; Orji & Okolie, 2021). The goal of containment strategies is to keep the crisis from growing, thereby making it more manageable and lessening its overall impact. By containing the crisis, organizations can focus their efforts more effectively on resolving the core issues without the added challenge of an expanding scope (Moochi & Mutswenje, 2022).

Preventive mitigation strategies are all about taking steps to avoid crises before they occur or to lessen their impact (Ntare, Shau & Ojwang, 2022). This involves establishing clear prevention policies, actively detecting early signs of a potential crisis, and having a focused crisis management plan that can be quickly activated if needed (Wikarsa, Pandelaki & Kurnia, 2022). Equipping individuals and teams with risk management skills is also crucial, as this enables them to identify and address potential threats proactively (Payton, 2021). By investing in prevention, organizations can often sidestep crises altogether or significantly reduce their severity, saving resources and protecting their reputation in the long run.

Kenyan counties have faced significant challenges due to poor crisis mitigation strategies, particularly in managing natural disasters and health crises. According to Mwenda (2020), the lack of effective early warning systems and preparedness plans in some counties has led to delayed responses to drought conditions, exacerbating food insecurity and water scarcity issues. This situation is further compounded by inadequate resource allocation, which hinders timely interventions and relief efforts (Muricho, Otieno, Oluoch & Jirström, 2019).

Tana River County in Kenya is an exemplary case for studying the influence of crisis mitigation strategies on performance due to its unique geographical and socio-economic characteristics.

This county, located in the coastal region of Kenya, is prone to a variety of natural disasters, including floods, droughts, and conflicts over resources, making it particularly vulnerable to crises. According to the Kenya Red Cross Society (2018), Tana River County was significantly impacted by flooding, with the region experiencing one of the highest incidences of flood-related displacements in the country. The 2018 report indicated that over 100,000 individuals in Tana River County were affected by these floods, contributing significantly to the nationwide total of 244,407 displaced persons (Kenya Red Cross Society, 2018).

Additionally, the county's socio-economic indicators, such as high poverty rates and low literacy levels, exacerbate the vulnerability of its communities to crises (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). These factors make Tana River County a critical area for examining how effective crisis mitigation strategies can improve performance and resilience. Studying this county offers valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in implementing crisis mitigation strategies in regions with similar vulnerabilities, providing lessons that can be applied both within Kenya and in other similar contexts globally.

Statement of the Problem

Kenyan counties have encountered significant challenges due to poor crisis mitigation strategies, particularly in managing natural disasters and health crises. Mwenda (2020) indicates that the lack of effective early warning systems and preparedness plans in some counties has led to delayed responses to drought conditions, exacerbating food insecurity and water scarcity issues. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed gaps in health crisis mitigation strategies across Kenyan counties. A KNBS Report (2021) revealed that over 50% of county governments in Kenya failed in the first half of 2020 due to the significant crisis caused by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Otieno, Nyanjom, and Kaseje (2021) pointed out that many counties were ill-prepared for the pandemic, with insufficient healthcare infrastructure, limited testing capacities, and inadequate isolation facilities. Thus, the current study will examine the influence of crisis mitigation strategies on the performance of Tana River County in Kenya.

Tana River County in Kenya is an exemplary case for studying the influence of crisis mitigation strategies on performance due to its unique geographical and socio-economic characteristics. This county, located in the coastal region of Kenya, is prone to a variety of natural disasters, including floods, droughts, and conflicts over resources, making it particularly vulnerable to crises. According to the Kenya Red Cross Society (2018), Tana River County was significantly impacted by flooding, with the region experiencing one of the highest incidences of flood-related displacements in the country. The 2018 report indicated that over 100,000 individuals in Tana River County were affected by these floods, contributing significantly to the nationwide total of 244,407 displaced persons (Kenya Red Cross Society, 2018). Additionally, the county's socio-economic indicators, such as high poverty rates and low literacy levels, exacerbate the vulnerability of its communities to crises (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The conducting of the current study is due to the lack of a study that specifically examined the influence of crisis mitigation strategies on the performance of Tana River County Government. For instance, Omene (2021) investigated the relationship between conflict management strategies and effective organizational performance. The research by Guyo and Nyariki (2023) examined the influence of governance conflict between the national government and county government on public administration performance in the case of Tana River Sub-County. The

study conducted by Mwangi (2022) investigated the impact of crisis mitigation techniques on the operational outcomes of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the manufacturing industry in Nairobi County. Further, Muatwa and Shale (2023) examined the impact of procurement optimization on the performance of Metropolitan Counties in Kenya. Moochi and Mutswenje (2022) investigated the effects of COVID-19 containment measures on the financial performance of small and medium firms (SMEs) located in the Central Business District (CBD) of Nairobi. Gikuhi (2020) conducted a study on crisis management methods and business continuity specifically within the context of star-rated hotels in Kenya. Thus, conducting the current study is considered worthy for policy formulation in the case of Tana River County.

Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of containment mitigation strategies on performance of Tana River County government
- ii. To assess the influence of preventive mitigation strategies on performance of Tana River County government

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), introduced by Timothy Coombs in 2007, posits that organizations should adapt their crisis response strategies depending on the crisis's nature, the perceived level of organizational culpability, and potential reputational damage. Central to the theory is the idea that the public's perception of an organization's role in a crisis, influenced by the type of crisis, its history, and the organization's prior reputation, determines the extent of reputational harm and the appropriateness of a response strategy. SCCT offers organizations a systematic framework to navigate complex crisis situations. By analyzing the specific crisis and the organization's history, coupled with empirical data as underscored by Ide, Martin, and Totten (2011), SCCT guides organizations to select the most suitable communication response. This targeted approach aims to mitigate potential reputational risks and addresses stakeholder concerns effectively.

SCCT was relevant in the current study to examine the impact of containment mitigation strategies on the performance of Tana River County Government. SCCT stresses the importance of understanding the nature and context of a crisis to devise the most appropriate communication strategy. Containment includes strategies employed to manage and limit the adverse effects of a crisis. If the county government of Tana River faces a crisis, whether natural, political, or socio-economic, the public will form perceptions based on the government's communication about its containment measures. Leveraging SCCT can help the county government anticipate public perceptions, assess the potential for reputational damage, and craft communication strategies that not only inform the public but also foster trust and confidence. An appropriately framed message, guided by SCCT, can demonstrate the county's proactive approach, its commitment to addressing the crisis, and its focus on the well-being of its citizens, thereby positively influencing its perceived performance.

Contingency theory

The hypothesis was proposed by Edward Fiedler in 1964. According to Tellis and Fornell (1988), it is posited that the institution must formulate a contingency plan, and the management should provide guidance to its subordinates on how to effectively address a potential crisis that may impact the company. An organization is required to develop a strategic framework that will allow it to effectively navigate and overcome any potential crisis situations. According to Donaldson (2001), it is necessary for the contingency plan to possess adaptability in order to respond to fluctuations in environmental conditions and sources of production. The contingency plan should include a diverse array of strategies to enable management and staff to effectively address emergencies and expedite recovery from adverse circumstances. According to Maye and Engel (2013), the idea posits that the leadership abilities shown by individuals inside a company may serve as a foundation for motivating and fostering loyalty among other workers.

The theory was relevant in the current study to examine the influence of preventive mitigation strategies on the performance of the Tana River County Government. The theory postulates that there's no one-size-fits-all approach to management; rather, the effectiveness of strategies depends on the alignment between the organizational structure, leadership style, and the prevailing environmental factors. In the context of the Tana River County government, the theory's principles can provide insights into how the effectiveness of preventive strategies is contingent upon specific contextual elements. By considering factors such as the county's political, economic, and social conditions, the availability of resources, and the local culture, the county government can tailor its preventive mitigation strategies accordingly. This approach acknowledges that different situations demand distinct responses, enabling the county government to optimize its performance by implementing strategies that best suit its unique environment.

Empirical Literature review

Research was undertaken by Jaaffar, Alzoubi, Alkharabsheh, and Rajadurai (2023) to investigate the relationship between leadership, crisis management, and the enhancement of hotel performance. The study used a self-administered questionnaire survey that includes 119 participants who hold management positions in 3-to-5-star hotels in Jordan. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is used for the purpose of analysis. The results of the study suggest that the use of a transformational leadership approach and prior expertise in crisis management have a key role in enhancing a leader's capacity to maintain the performance of a hotel during times of crisis.

The study conducted by Orji and Okolie (2021) explores the perception of the effectiveness of social media in creating awareness about government COVID-19 preventive measures among residents of Imo State. The study's objectives include assessing the level of awareness among Imo State residents based on exposure to social media messages about COVID-19 preventive measures, evaluating the effectiveness of social media in influencing residents' behavior towards embracing these measures, and identifying factors that impact the effectiveness of social media in ensuring compliance with these measures. The research is grounded in the Health Belief Model and employs a survey research method. However, the study reveals that social media is not highly effective in influencing residents' attitudes towards embracing these preventive measures.

Ntare, Shau, and Ojwang (2022) conducted a study in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, focusing on the impact of enterprise risk management (ERM) practices on the performance of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs). They surveyed 335 participants and analyzed the data using structural equation modeling. Their findings revealed that components such as internal environments, monitoring, event identification, risk response, and risk assessment significantly influence ERM, which in turn positively affects SME performance. The knowledge gap from the study was that it only focused on SMEs while the current study will focus on a county government.

The research undertaken by Wikarsa, Pandelaki, and Kurnia (2022) focuses on evaluating the efficacy of COVID-19 preventive measures in the city of Manado. The study used the K-means approach for data analysis. The findings indicated that a majority of participants, namely 58%, perceived the preventive measures to be very effective. The participants demonstrated a notable degree of knowledge on COVID-19 and comprehended the potential ramifications of failing to comply with health guidelines. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that a fraction of the participants, namely about 10%, have voiced reservations regarding the efficacy of the health measures implemented in Manado.

In research done by Dagohoy (2022), the primary objective was to examine the relationship between the perceived efficiency of government preventative actions and individuals' attitudes and acceptance of COVID-19 vaccinations. The results indicated that the participants had positive perceptions on the efficacy of government preventative efforts and exhibited favorable sentiments towards COVID-19 vaccines. The research revealed a statistically significant and robust positive correlation between individuals' perceptions of the efficacy of government-implemented preventative measures and their attitudes and willingness to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

Conceptual framework

The interrelationship between the dependent variable and independent variables is illustrated by the conceptual framework.

Independent variables

Dependent variable

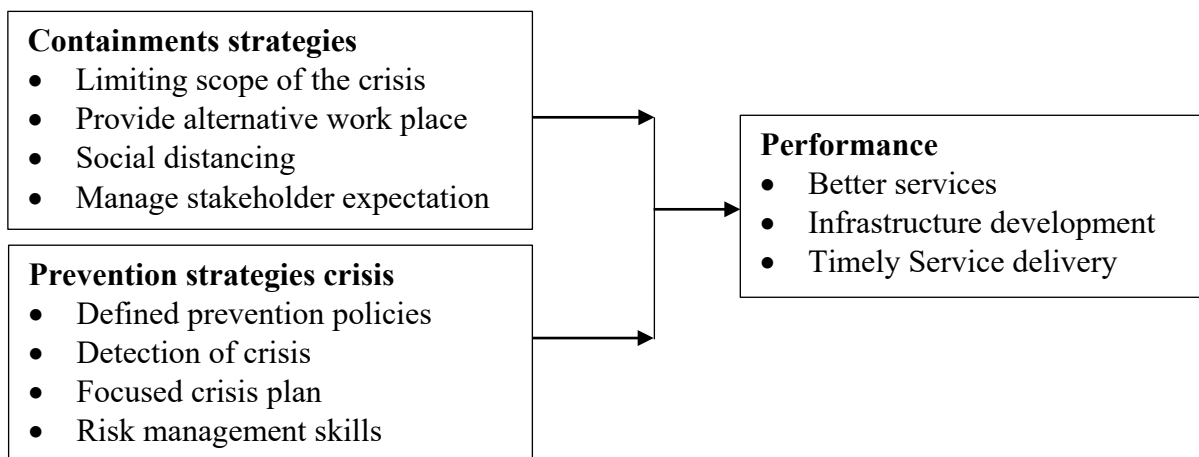


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was utilized in the study. This design was particularly suitable for providing a comprehensive and detailed overview of the phenomenon under investigation. By examining the influence of containment and preventive mitigation strategies on county government performance, the descriptive research design enabled the researcher to accurately describe and analyze the relationships between these variables.

The management staff members working for the Tana River County Government constituted the focus of this study's population. The overall population consisted of 136 individuals, including the County Executive, County Chief Officers, Directors, Administrators, and County Officers (Tana River County Government Report, 2023). The research used a census approach regarding the management staff of Tana River's County government as the unit of analysis. The study used questionnaires and interview guides to collect the data.

For the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes and patterns, which were presented in prose form. The quantitative data collected through closed-ended questions were organized, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics were employed to examine relationships and test hypotheses. This comprehensive approach to data analysis enabled the researcher to derive meaningful insights and generate a quantitative report for the study. The results were presented using tables

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The sample size for this study consisted of 10 county executives, 16 county chief officers, 20 directors, 18 administrators, and 72 county officers, totaling 136 participants. Of these, 124 respondents completed the questionnaire. The quantitative analysis and inferences were based on these 124 responses.

Descriptive statistics

The study variables were containment mitigation strategies, preventive mitigation strategies and performance. The descriptive statistics of the variables are presented in the following sections according to the study objectives.

Containment Mitigation Strategies

The summary of the descriptive statistics of containment mitigation strategies is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of Containment Mitigation Strategies

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
The county effectively limits the scope of crises when they arise, preventing further escalation	22.30%	61.10%	6.60%	8.80%	1.30%	2.06	0.87
The county provides alternative workplaces to ensure continuity of operations during crises	31.30%	52.00%	2.20%	11.90%	2.50%	2.02	1.02
Social distancing measures	18.50%	51.70%	5.30%	17.90%	6.60%	2.42	1.17

are promptly and effectively implemented by the county during relevant crises								
The county actively manages stakeholder expectations during crises, maintaining trust and communication	33.90%	40.80%	3.10%	16.90%	5.30%	2.19	1.22	
Rapid deployment of emergency services and resources is a strength of the county, helping to contain crises	27.90%	45.10%	3.40%	20.40%	3.10%	2.26	1.16	
The county employs targeted communication strategies to inform and guide the public during crises, effectively containing panic and misinformation	30.10%	37.30%	7.50%	16.00%	9.10%	2.37	1.31	
Average						2.22	1.12	

The study results found that 83.40% (22.30% + 61.10%) of the respondents disagreed that the county effectively limits the scope of crises when they arise, preventing further escalation, while 10.10% (8.80% + 1.30%) agreed with the statement, and 6.60% remained neutral. The mean score of the statement was 2.06 with a standard deviation of 0.87. Additionally, the study found that 83.30% (31.30% + 52.00%) of the respondents disagreed that the county provides alternative workplaces to ensure continuity of operations during crises, while 14.40% (11.90% + 2.50%) agreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.02 with a standard deviation of 1.02. Furthermore, 70.20% (18.50% + 51.70%) of the respondents disagreed that social distancing measures are promptly and effectively implemented by the county during relevant crises, while 24.50% (17.90% + 6.60%) agreed with the statement, and 5.30% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.42 with a standard deviation of 1.17.

Moreover, 74.70% (33.90% + 40.80%) of the respondents disagreed that the county actively manages stakeholder expectations during crises, maintaining trust and communication, while 22.20% (16.90% + 5.30%) agreed with the statement, and 3.10% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.19 with a standard deviation of 1.22. Additionally, 73.00% (27.90% + 45.10%) of the respondents disagreed that rapid deployment of emergency services and resources is a strength of the county, helping to contain crises, while 23.50% (20.40% + 3.10%) agreed with the statement, and 3.40% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.26 with a standard deviation of 1.16.

Finally, 67.40% (30.10% + 37.30%) of the respondents disagreed that the county employs targeted communication strategies to inform and guide the public during crises, effectively containing panic and misinformation, while 25.10% (16.00% + 9.10%) agreed with the statement, and 7.50% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.37 with a standard deviation of 1.31. The average mean score across all statements was 2.22, with an average standard deviation of 1.12. This implied that, on average, most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's containment mitigation strategies and their effectiveness.

From the interview sessions, it was found that the containment mitigation strategies employed by the county government can significantly influence its overall performance and ability to meet objectives and achieve goals. The study revealed that a majority of respondents disagreed that the county effectively limits the scope of crises when they arise, preventing further escalation. Failure to contain crises promptly can lead to widespread disruptions, resource depletion, and prolonged recovery periods, ultimately hindering the county's ability to maintain operational continuity and deliver essential services effectively.

The study found that the containment mitigation strategies, when implemented effectively, can contribute to improved performance by minimizing the impact of crises and ensuring business continuity. Strategies such as providing alternative workplaces, promptly implementing social distancing measures, actively managing stakeholder expectations, rapidly deploying emergency services and resources, and employing targeted communication strategies can help contain crises, maintain public trust, and mitigate potential escalations. By containing crises and their associated disruptions, the county government can better allocate resources towards achieving its core objectives and goals, rather than diverting significant efforts towards crisis management and recovery.

In addition, it was reported that the county government faces several challenges and hurdles when implementing containment mitigation strategies to boost its performance. Limited resources, logistical constraints, and the unpredictable nature of crises can strain the county's capabilities to respond swiftly and effectively. Coordinating the deployment of emergency services, resources, and personnel across various departments and agencies can be a complex undertaking, requiring robust communication channels and synchronized efforts. Additionally, managing stakeholder expectations and effectively communicating with the public during crisis situations can be challenging, particularly when dealing with rapidly evolving circumstances and the potential for misinformation to spread.

The study found that overcoming these challenges requires a comprehensive and well-coordinated approach to containment mitigation strategies. Investing in emergency preparedness, conducting regular training and drills, fostering inter-agency collaboration, and leveraging advanced communication technologies can enhance the county's ability to respond rapidly and effectively to crises. Furthermore, establishing clear protocols, decision-making processes, and contingency plans can streamline crisis management efforts and minimize the potential for confusion or delays. By addressing these challenges proactively, the county government can strengthen its containment mitigation strategies, ultimately improving its overall performance and ability to achieve its objectives and goals, even in the face of emergencies or unforeseen events.

Preventive Mitigation Strategies

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of preventive mitigation strategies.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Preventive Mitigation Strategies

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
The county has clearly defined prevention policies in place, which are crucial for avoiding potential crises	40.40%	35.40%	6.60%	14.10%	3.40%	2.05	1.16
Effective detection systems are in place within the county to identify potential crises early, allowing for timely interventions	16.90%	60.20%	7.80%	9.40%	5.60%	2.27	1.03
There is a focused crisis management plan that addresses specific potential crises	20.40%	51.10%	4.70%	21.60%	2.20%	2.34	1.10
Risk management skills are actively developed and valued within the county's workforce, contributing significantly to its ability to prevent crises	30.10%	49.20%	2.20%	7.20%	11.30%	2.01	1.26
Regular training and drills are conducted by the county to ensure all staff are prepared for potential crises, reinforcing prevention strategies	24.80%	57.70%	3.80%	8.50%	5.30%	2.12	1.05
The county engages in continuous monitoring of internal and external environments to anticipate and prevent potential crises	32.30%	43.90%	4.70%	10.00%	9.10%	2.20	1.25
Average						2.17	1.14

The study results found that 75.80% (40.40% + 35.40%) of the respondents disagreed that the county has clearly defined prevention policies in place, which are crucial for avoiding potential crises, while 17.50% (14.10% + 3.40%) agreed with the statement, and 6.60% remained neutral. The mean score of the statement was 2.05 with a standard deviation of 1.16. Additionally, the study found that 77.10% (16.90% + 60.20%) of the respondents disagreed that effective detection systems are in place within the county to identify potential crises early, allowing for

timely interventions, while 15.00% (9.40% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, and 7.80% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.27 with a standard deviation of 1.03.

Furthermore, 71.50% (20.40% + 51.10%) of the respondents disagreed that there is a focused crisis management plan that addresses specific potential crises, while 23.80% (21.60% + 2.20%) agreed with the statement, and 4.70% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.34 with a standard deviation of 1.10. Moreover, 79.30% (30.10% + 49.20%) of the respondents disagreed that risk management skills are actively developed and valued within the county's workforce, contributing significantly to its ability to prevent crises, while 18.50% (7.20% + 11.30%) agreed with the statement, and 2.20% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.01 with a standard deviation of 1.26.

Additionally, 82.50% (24.80% + 57.70%) of the respondents disagreed that regular training and drills are conducted by the county to ensure all staff are prepared for potential crises, reinforcing prevention strategies, while 13.80% (8.50% + 5.30%) agreed with the statement, and 3.80% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.12 with a standard deviation of 1.05.

Finally, 76.20% (32.30% + 43.90%) of the respondents disagreed that the county engages in continuous monitoring of internal and external environments to anticipate and prevent potential crises, while 19.10% (10.00% + 9.10%) agreed with the statement, and 4.70% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.20 with a standard deviation of 1.25. The average mean score across all statements was 2.17, with an average standard deviation of 1.14. This implied that, on average, most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's preventive mitigation strategies and their effectiveness.

Performance

The summary of the descriptive statistics of performance is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Performance

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev
The county has been providing better services compared to other counties, indicating a superior approach to community needs and performance.	35.50%	45.20%	6.40%	7.30%	5.60%	2.02	1.11
In terms of infrastructure development, the county outperforms neighboring counties, showcasing its commitment to long-term growth and performance.	32.30%	41.80%	8.10%	11.30%	6.50%	2.18	1.19
The county's service delivery is more timely and efficient compared to other counties, reflecting its high	30.70%	39.50%	3.20%	16.90%	9.70%	2.35	1.33

operational standards and performance.

Residents in the county experience a higher quality of service across various sectors than those in surrounding counties, highlighting exceptional performance. 14.50% 64.50% 6.50% 9.70% 4.80% 2.26 0.99

The proactive and innovative infrastructure projects in the county set it apart from others, contributing to its outstanding performance and community well-being. 25.80% 55.70% 5.60% 10.50% 2.40% 2.08 0.98

The county's responsiveness to service requests and issues surpasses that of neighboring counties, emphasizing its dedication to excellence in performance and service delivery. 19.40% 57.30% 2.40% 15.30% 5.60% 2.31 1.12

Average **2.20** **1.12**

The study results found that 80.70% (35.50% + 45.20%) of the respondents disagreed that the county has been providing better services compared to other counties, indicating a superior approach to community needs and performance, while 12.90% (7.30% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, and 6.40% remained neutral. The mean score of the statement was 2.02 with a standard deviation of 1.11. Additionally, the study found that 74.10% (32.30% + 41.80%) of the respondents disagreed that in terms of infrastructure development, the county outperforms neighboring counties, showcasing its commitment to long-term growth and performance, while 17.80% (11.30% + 6.50%) agreed with the statement, and 8.10% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.18 with a standard deviation of 1.19.

Furthermore, 70.20% (30.70% + 39.50%) of the respondents disagreed that the county's service delivery is timelier and more efficient compared to other counties, reflecting its high operational standards and performance, while 26.60% (16.90% + 9.70%) agreed with the statement, and 3.20% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.35 with a standard deviation of 1.33. Moreover, 79.00% (14.50% + 64.50%) of the respondents disagreed that residents in the county experience a higher quality of service across various sectors than those in surrounding counties, highlighting exceptional performance, while 14.50% (9.70% + 4.80%) agreed with the

statement, and 6.50% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.26 with a standard deviation of 0.99.

Additionally, 81.50% (25.80% + 55.70%) of the respondents disagreed that the proactive and innovative infrastructure projects in the county set it apart from others, contributing to its outstanding performance and community well-being, while 12.90% (10.50% + 2.40%) agreed with the statement, and 5.60% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.08 with a standard deviation of 0.98. Finally, 76.70% (19.40% + 57.30%) of the respondents disagreed that the county's responsiveness to service requests and issues surpasses that of neighboring counties, emphasizing its dedication to excellence in performance and service delivery, while 20.90% (15.30% + 5.60%) agreed with the statement, and 2.40% remained neutral. The mean score of this statement was 2.31 with a standard deviation of 1.12. The average mean score across all statements was 2.20, with an average standard deviation of 1.12. This implied that, on average, most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's performance compared to other counties.

Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics section included the correlation and regression analyses. Correlation analysis was employed to identify the strength and direction of associations among variables, providing insights into how they relate to each other. Regression analysis further explored these relationships, allowing for the prediction of dependent variable values based on the independent variables.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis examines the association between independent and dependent variables. The correlation results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Results

		Performance	Containment mitigation strategies	Preventive mitigation strategies
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Containment mitigation strategies	Pearson Correlation	.680**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
Preventive mitigation strategies	Pearson Correlation	.628**	.535**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

The study found that containment mitigation strategies are similarly positively correlated with performance ($r=0.680$, $p=0.000$). Preventive mitigation strategies have a positive association with performance ($r=0.628$, $p=0.000$). The study results concur with the findings of John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) who indicated that constructive conflict management enhances organizational effectiveness by fostering healthy competition and improved communication.

Tumwebaze (2019) reported that negotiation and third-party interventions positively impact employee performance at Kampala Capital City Authority.

Regression Analysis

Table 4: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.812a	0.659	0.647	0.1880959

a Predictors: containment mitigation strategies, preventive mitigation strategies.

The study results in Table 4 show that the R Square value is 0.659, indicating that approximately 65.9% of the variance in the dependent variable, which is the performance of Tana River County government can be explained by the predictors: Containment mitigation strategies and preventive mitigation strategies. This substantial proportion suggests a strong collective influence of these predictors on performance. The analysis of variance results in the multiple analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.066	2	2.033	57.469	.000b
	Residual	4.235	121	0.035		
	Total	8.301	123			

a Dependent Variable: Performance

b Predictors: containment mitigation strategies, preventive mitigation strategies.

The study results presented in Table 5 show that the p-value associated with the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the regression model is 0.000. This indicates that the model, which includes predictors such as containment mitigation strategies and preventive mitigation strategies is statistically significant in explaining the variation in performance. With a p-value below the conventional threshold of 0.05, there is strong evidence to suggest that the relationship between the predictors and performance is not due to random chance. Therefore, the findings provide robust support for the significant influence of these predictors on the performance of Tana River County government. The regression of coefficient results is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regressions of Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.043	0.154		0.280	0.780
Containment mitigation strategies	0.196	0.061	0.246	3.229	0.002
Preventive mitigation strategies	0.286	0.056	0.325	5.063	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance

The multiple regression model thus becomes;

$$Y = 0.043 + 0.196X_1 + 0.286X_2$$

The study found that containment mitigation strategies display a positive and significant relationship with performance ($\beta=0.196$, $p=0.002$). Preventive mitigation strategies exhibit a positive and significant relationship with performance ($\beta=0.286$, $p=0.000$). The study results concur with the findings of Omene (2021), who revealed that effective conflict management strategies improve decision-making and organizational productivity. John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) reported that constructive conflict management enhances organizational effectiveness by fostering healthy competition and improved communication.

Discussion of the Findings

The descriptive statistics revealed an average mean score of 2.13 ($SD=1.07$), indicating that most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's confrontation mitigation strategies and their effectiveness. This low score suggests shortcomings in the county's ability to address crises head-on and resolve conflicts proactively. The correlation analysis demonstrated a positive and significant association between confrontation mitigation strategies and performance ($r=0.575$, $p=0.000$). Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between confrontation mitigation strategies and performance ($\beta=0.128$, $p=0.018$). These findings highlight the importance of effective confrontation strategies for enhancing organizational performance, despite the county's perceived inadequacies in this area. A comprehensive review and overhaul of the county's confrontation mitigation approaches are necessary to align them with best practices and unlock their potential for improving crisis management and overall performance.

The descriptive statistics for cooperation mitigation strategies mirrored the concerning trend, with an average mean score of 2.16 ($SD=1.10$), implying that most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's cooperation mitigation strategies and their effectiveness. This low score suggests inadequacies in the county's efforts to collaborate and cooperate with stakeholders in crisis mitigation. The correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant association between cooperation mitigation strategies and performance ($r=0.618$, $p=0.000$). Additionally, the regression analysis demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between cooperation mitigation strategies and performance ($\beta=0.334$, $p=0.000$). These findings underscore the importance of robust cooperation strategies for enhancing organizational performance, despite the county's perceived shortcomings. The county should prioritize the development of strong partnerships, communication channels, and collaborative frameworks to leverage collective expertise and resources for effective crisis mitigation and improved performance.

The descriptive statistics for containment mitigation strategies further reinforced the concerning trend, with an average mean score of 2.22 ($SD=1.12$), indicating that most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's containment mitigation strategies and their effectiveness. This low score suggests inadequacies in the county's efforts to contain and limit the impact of crises. The correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant association between containment mitigation strategies and performance ($r=0.680$, $p=0.000$). Moreover, the regression analysis demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between containment mitigation strategies and performance ($\beta=0.196$, $p=0.002$). These findings highlight the crucial role of effective containment strategies in enhancing organizational performance, despite the county's perceived shortcomings. A thorough assessment and strengthening of the county's

containment mitigation strategies, including contingency planning, resource allocation, and rapid response mechanisms, are essential for minimizing the negative consequences of crises and improving overall performance.

The descriptive statistics for preventive mitigation strategies solidified the overall pattern, with an average mean score of 2.17 (SD=1.14), implying that most respondents disagreed with the statements regarding the county's preventive mitigation strategies and their effectiveness. This low score suggests inadequacies in the county's efforts to anticipate and prevent crises. The correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant association between preventive mitigation strategies and performance ($r=0.628$, $p=0.000$). Furthermore, the regression analysis demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between preventive mitigation strategies and performance ($\beta=0.286$, $p=0.000$). These findings underscore the importance of robust preventive strategies for enhancing organizational performance, despite the county's perceived shortcomings. The county should invest in comprehensive risk assessment, early warning systems, and proactive mitigation measures to enhance its crisis preparedness, resilience, and overall performance.

The study results concur with the findings of Tumwebaze (2019) who indicated that negotiation and third-party interventions positively impact employee performance at Kampala Capital City Authority. Agbo (2020) demonstrated a significant positive correlation between conflict management and organizational effectiveness at the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State. Guyo and Nyariki (2023) identified governance conflicts between different government levels as detrimental to public administration performance. Omene (2021), who revealed that effective conflict management strategies improve decision-making and organizational productivity. John-Eke and Akintokunbo (2020) reported that constructive conflict management enhances organizational effectiveness by fostering healthy competition and improved communication.

Mousa, Zhang, and Sumarliah (2023) noted that addressing public-private partnership barriers facilitates project implementation in Palestinian construction projects. Mwangi (2022) showed that crisis mitigation techniques positively influence performance. Moochi and Mutswenje (2022) discovered that containment measures impact performance. Jaaffar et al. (2023) emphasized that transformational leadership and crisis management expertise improve performance during crises. Orji and Okolie (2021) found high awareness but limited effectiveness of social media in promoting COVID-19 preventive measures among Imo State residents.

Conclusions

The study concludes that effective containment mitigation strategies have a positive influence on the performance of Tana River County government. Containment strategies aimed at limiting the scope of crises, providing alternative workplaces, implementing social distancing measures, and managing stakeholder expectations are crucial for preventing further escalation and minimizing negative consequences. By implementing these robust containment measures, the county can effectively contain crises, protect stakeholders and resources, maintain operational continuity, and ultimately enhance overall performance.

Preventive mitigation strategies have a positive influence on the performance of Tana River County government. Preventive strategies, such as defined prevention policies, detection of potential crises, focused crisis plans, and risk management skills, are essential for anticipating

and mitigating potential threats before they occur. By investing in these proactive measures, the county can effectively identify and address potential risks, reduce the likelihood of crises, minimize potential disruptions to operations, and ultimately improve crisis preparedness, resilience, and overall performance outcomes.

Recommendations

The study recommends that Tana River County government should implement robust containment mitigation strategies to prevent crises from escalating and minimize their negative consequences. This can be achieved by establishing measures to limit the scope of crises, providing alternative workplaces to ensure operational continuity, enforcing social distancing protocols, and effectively managing stakeholder expectations. By implementing these containment strategies, the county can protect stakeholders and resources, maintain essential services, and minimize the overall impact of crises on its performance.

The study recommends that the county government should invest in comprehensive preventive mitigation strategies to enhance crisis preparedness and resilience. This can be accomplished by developing clear prevention policies, implementing early detection systems for potential crises, formulating focused crisis plans tailored to specific risks, and enhancing risk management skills among personnel. By adopting a proactive approach to crisis prevention, the county can identify and address potential threats early on, reduce the likelihood of crises occurring, and minimize potential disruptions to its operations, ultimately contributing to improved performance and overall organizational stability.

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