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# INFLUENCE OF RESOURCE AVAILABILITY ON PERFORMANCE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF THARAKA NITHI

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#### **Abstract**

The availability of resources plays a critical role in shaping the performance of county governments, directly impacting their ability to execute projects and deliver public services effectively. Understanding how resource availability influences overall performance is essential for driving improvements in service delivery and project outcomes. Despite the importance of resource management, there is often a gap in optimizing the use of available resources, leading to missed opportunities for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. This paper sought to explore the influence of resource availability on the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The study applied a cause-effect research design. The study gathered data through questionnaires which were administered both physically and electronically. Data collected was analyzed through both descriptive and inferential analysis. Results revealed a β of 0.554 and a pvalue of 0.001, between resource availability and the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The study concluded that resource availability had a positive and significant influence on the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The study recommends that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi should optimize resource utilization by implementing efficient resource management strategies and provide continuous training and development for staff. Further, the study recommends that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi enhance monitoring and evaluation processes while strengthening financial management practices. Besides, the study recommended that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi should invest in advanced machinery and tools. Additionally, the study recommends that the County Government should encourage community involvement in project planning and implementation. Also, the study recommended exploring external funding opportunities, such as public-private partnerships or international grants. Finally, the study recommends prioritizing sustainable practices in project management, including the adoption of green technologies, to ensure longterm benefits and minimize environmental impact.

Key Words: Resource Availability, Performance, County Government

#### INTRODUCTION

Resource availability is critical for the survival of any organization as it ensures that organizations can take advantage of new opportunities while at the same time maintaining their position in the market. According to Korir and Bett (2018), a firm's performance is a function of its ability to acquire resources that are scarce and valuable in a manner that enables it to pursue

its objectives. An organization's ability to utilize its key resources determines its ability to survive in the market and achieve its strategic goals. The differences in performance between firms in the same industry can be attributed to the resources availability and their availability to utilize these resources. Several studies have sought to examine the effect of resource availability on performance whereby some believe that resource availability does not have an impact on resource availability (Abass, Munga, & Were, 2017). This school of thought is driven by the fact that some organizations have huge resources but are still struggling. The other school of thought believes that resource availability offers a competitive advantage to a firm enabling it to create and sustain a competitive edge in the market. This argument is further strengthened by several theories such as the resource-based view and dynamic capability approach.

The impact of resource availability on performance has been a source of several studies on the tenets of strategic management. This is because improving performance is at the heart of this field whereby firms seek to utilize every resource available to improve their performance (Makokha & Ngugi, L. (2022). Many studies have identified a positive relationship between organizational resources and their performance. Resources enable an organization to take advantage of new opportunities in the market while at the same time maintaining its competitive edge (Shigali & Shitseswa, 2023). The resources possessed by a firm are the main cause of competitive advantage, growth, and sustainability. Firms use resources to implement their strategies such as growth, diversification, and expansion which enables them to remain competitive.

Organizational resources entail both tangible and intangible resources which are all critical for firm growth. The tangible resources include physical assets such as buildings, the people, and the infrastructure (Wambua & Kiruthu, 2014). On the other hand, intangible resources include employees' skills and capabilities, market knowledge, innovational and inventions, brand names, and brand image. These resources are critical for enabling an organization to implement its strategies and achieve its goals. However, the availability of these resources alone does not guarantee results as firms have to utilize these resources effectively.

For state companies, resource availability is very important as they enable these entities to achieve their goals of delivering services to the citizens. However, most of these entities have not been able to achieve theory goals due to several challenges (Abass, Munga, & Were, 2017). Chief of the main challenges affecting the government entities is lack of resources, corruption, and incompetence. Globally, state and local governments have sought to implement reforms to improve performance by ensuring resources are well utilized (Lamaon & Omwenga, 2017). Most of the reforms in governments entail ensuring optimal resource allocation in the public sector and ensuring that these resources are used to uplift the livelihood of the people. However, reforms alone and political goodwill are not enough to ensure that the people will feel the development. Resources must be available to help in this course.

The Kenyan Counties were created in 2010 after the promulgation of the new constitution that sought to ensure that development reaches the grassroots (Mohamed, 2018). The creation of these counties has helped improve the standards of living of people in rural areas with notable progress in several sectors such as healthcare, education, and business. The performance of these counties remains important for the micro and macro-economic development of the country as a whole. The Kenyan government identifies the importance of ensuring that the counties utilize their resources effectively to ensure sustained economic growth (Muthui, 2016). However, the availability of resources has been a big challenge in the performance of these counties as it affects the implementation of key projects. As such, the performance of the counties is the main

course of concern to citizens, the national government, and all the other stakeholders at large. The poor performance of counties can be attributed to a decline in the resource-based and the increasing need for public services.

Tharaka Nithi County is one of these entities that seeks to bring development to the people of Tharaka Nithi. The County is located in the Mount Kenya region and has 15 wards spread over three constituencies (Akwalu, 2014). The leadership of the county is headed by elected leaders consisting of the governor and twenty members of the county assembly. With an area of 2,662 square kilometers and a population of 393,000 resource availability is key to ensure it serves the population well. Tharaka Nithi County gets its funding from the national government which is the main source of revenue for the county (Muia, 2022). However, lack of resources, poor utilization of the available resources, and lack of capabilities are some of the challenges affecting its ability to achieve its goals of ensuring sustainable development.

While several studies have identified resource availability on the poor performance of state-owned corporations in Kenya, few have focused on the county governments. For instance, Makokha and Ngugi (2022) explored the impact of organizational resources on the performance of State corporations in Kenya. In another study, Muthui (2016) explored the role of performance contracting in the public sector in Kenya. Very few studies have focused on resource availability in Tharaka Nithi County and how it affects the performance of the county which offers a research gap that this study seeks to fill. As such, this study will explore the influence of resource availability on the performance of the county government of Tharaka Nithi.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

# The Resource-Based View Theory

This theory originated from the works of Penrose (1959) and was later modified by Chadler (1962). This theory explains how an organization can achieve a competitive advantage by leveraging its resources. The foundation of this theory is that the different types of resources in an organization have a huge impact on its performance. The theory also states that a variation of resources enables an organization to differentiate itself in the market thus achieving better performance (Tennent, 2020). The resource-based theory explains that resource slack is a river of growth and presents the differences between the resources possessed by a firm and the demand for the resources in the current business. As such, two firms can have the same resources but differ in the demand for these resources. The differences in slack lead to better growth whereby firms with higher slack have more ability to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way.

The resource-based theory was originally built on the premise that resources are the single most important determinant of the firm's performance. The resources possessed in a firm are the main source of competitive advantage, growth, and overall performance (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen,1997). These resources include tangible resources, intangible resources, and human resources. However, resources alone will not guarantee better performance; firms must have the capabilities to put these resources into use. The resources have to be configured, reconfigured, and organized to ensure that they are advantageous to the organization (Lamberg, Ojala, & Gustafsson, 2022). As such, organizations that are unable to leverage their resources in a manner that creates value will experience a decline in performance. The capability to utilize resources ensures that a firm will take advantage of the available resources.

The resource-based theory is used in this study Tharaka Nithi can leverage the available resources to create value for the citizens. This theory explains how the county can utilize resources such as human capital, financial resources from the national government, and physical

resources to ensure it achieves its goals of providing services to the citizens (Sołoducho-Pelc & Sulich, 2020). The County can leverage its unique resources to ensure that Tharaka Nithi develops by focusing on the currently available resources. The theory also highlights the need for internal capability to ensure that the organizational resources are utilized effectively. The internal capability in Tharaka Nithi is crucial in explaining how Tharaka Nithi County can allocate and manage the available resources (Nasifoglu Elidemir, Ozturen, & Bayighomog, 2020). While this theory was originally applied in the private sector, it can be adapted in the private sector to explain how resource availability or constraints affect the County's performance in key sectors such as service delivery, economic growth, and development in all the twenty wards.

# **Empirical Literature**

Akinyi (2012) examined the influence of intangible and tangible resources on the performance of public secondary schools in Bondo District. The research employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey and a structured questionnaire whereby 28 public schools were targeted. A multiple and hierarchical regression analysis was used in the study. The results revealed that intangible resources have a great impact on the performance of the schools. The study also revealed that resource availability affects different aspects of performance. The physical resources such as ICT facilities, financial resources, and libraries had a positive impact on performance. The intangible assets such as organizational culture, reputation, and access to information have a positive impact on performance. However, this study was conducted in the education sector which operates under a different system compared to the Tharaka Nithi County government. As such, the results from this study cannot be used to make generalized conclusions on resource allocation in Tharaka Nithi County.

Denis and Kilonzo (2014) explored how resource allocation planning affects public sector procurement in Kenya. The study used a case study approach on the financial institution in a country whereby 12 firms were selected. The study used the Public Procurement Acts of 2005 and 2010 to guide the resource allocation procedure in public institutions. The results revealed that resources allocated in the public sector are not enough which in turn affects the performance. The study recommended that public entities should try and balance the resources allocated and allocate these resources in departments that are critical for organizational growth. However, this study was conducted in the financial sector which has a different source of resources compared to the County governments. Consequently, the results from this study cannot be used in the context of resource allocation in Tharaka Nithi County.

Josephine and Kimencu (2020) studied how resource allocation affects the strategy implementation and performance of Nairobi County government. This study was anchored on the resource-based view theory and the balanced scorecard theory. An explanatory research design was employed in this study whereby 161 staff in 10 departments in Nairobi County were targeted. A stratified sampling technique was used to select the 114 participants from the population. Both primary and secondary data sources were collected whereby the secondary data was obtained from the annual reports. The primary data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires. The analysis was done using thematic analysis while the presentation was done in a narrative form. The study noted that resource allocation has a positive and significant impact on the county government's performance. The study recommended the need for proper mechanisms of resource allocation to ensure that resources are allocated effectively. The study also recommended that Counties should ensure that their functions are backed with the necessary resources to ensure their strategies succeed. This study offers important insights on how resource

allocation impacts the Counties in the Kenyan context. However, this study was done in Nairobi County which has a different political and resources compared to Tharaka Nithi County.

Ntoiti and Makau (2022) investigated the impacts of resource allocation and availability on the performance and implementation of the Meru County government. Importantly, the study evaluated how resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure impact the performance of the Meru County government. A total of 291 employees were targeted using a descriptive research design. A multiple regression model was employed in the data analysis using SPSS software. The results revealed that resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure had a positive on the performance of the county governance. The study recommended that the county government should prioritize its resources on matters of strategic implementation. Besides, the study identified the need for the counties to create a wide resource base to finance their operations. Besides, the study noted that Counties need to have a clear mission and goals which should be made clear at every level. However, this study focused on the strategy implementation progress in Meru County rather than on resource allocation and availability. The results of this study cannot therefore be generalizable in the context of resource allocation and availability in Tharaka Nithi County.

Lamaon and Omwenga (2017) established the impacts of locally generated revenues on the performance of County governments in Kenya. A descriptive research design was employed in this study whereby the researcher examined whether funding from the national government influences the performance of county governments. The target population entailed 47 county governments whereby a sampling frame of 5 counties was used. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the relationship between the variables. The data was presented in tables, graphs, ranges, standard deviation, and mean. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the revenue generated by the County Governments and performance. However, this study focused I the impacts of locally generated revenues on the County governments implying that the results cannot be generalized in the context of resource allocation in Tharaka Nithi County.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Research Design: This study utilized a descriptive research design to bolster the validity of their findings and address the limitations inherent in each method. This study focused on the Tharaka Nithi County government using a descriptive research design to facilitate the organization of collected data effectively and meaningfully through the use of percentages and frequency distribution tables enabling the researcher to investigate the influence of resource availability on the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The study targeted Tharaka Nithi County headquarters as the unit of analysis while 160 top officials at the county government headquarters in Kathwana were the unit of observation.

**Sample and Sampling Methods**: This study used a stratified sampling technique to make conclusions about the research topic to enhance representativeness and also save on costs as emphasized by Rahman, et al. (2022). Taro Yamane formula was used at a sampling error of 5%. The formula is as follows,

 $n = N/1 + N(e^2)$ ..... equation (i)

Where: n is the required sample size, N is the total population size, and e is the desired level of precision.

n = 160/1 + 160(0.05 \* 0.05) = 114.29, which is 114 respondents to the nearest whole figure.

Data Collection Instruments and Methods: The study used questionnaires to collect the data and make conclusions about the items of research because they are easy to administer and

therefore gathers a large pool of data within a short time. Questionnaires also ensured the reliability and accuracy of the data due to the elimination of bias. The questionnaires consisted of both structured and semi-structured questions.

**Data Analysis**: This research analyzed data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative design was employed for open-ended constructs to delve deeper into specific variables. Quantitative research design (descriptive and inferential) allowed for a comprehensive quantification of viewpoints. The research employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to make conclusions about the research patterns. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data and quantify the main variables using percentages, and mean using frequency distribution, tables, and charts. Inferential analysis was conducted with a significance level of 0.05, to determine the influence of resource availability on performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi. The regression model utilized was expressed as follows;

 $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$ .....equation (ii). Where Y was the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi,  $\beta_0$  was the constant,  $\beta_1$  was the coefficient for resource availability,  $X_1$  was resource availability and  $\varepsilon$  was the error term

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Response Rate:** The study sought to collect data from a total of 114 respondents. However, a total of 106 questionnaires were returned as a result of constantly reminding the participants of the importance of providing the data representing a response rate of 92.98%. According to Fowler (2020), a response rate of above 60% is considered adequate, a response rate of above 70% is considered good and a response rate of above 80% is considered ideal.

# **Descriptive Statistics**

# **Descriptive statistics on Resource Availability**

Table 1 revealed that participants agreed with the statement, "Our institution has sufficient staff to manage various projects," as indicated by a mean of 4.09. Additionally, the results revealed that the participants agreed with the statement, "We had adequate funding to carry out multiple projects," as indicated by a mean of 4.08. Moreover, the results established that the participants agreed with the statement, "We have the necessary materials and supplies to execute different projects," as indicated by a mean of 3.93. Lastly, the findings revealed that participants agreed with the statement, "Our institution is equipped with the machinery and tools needed for infrastructural projects as indicated by a mean of 4.01.

The findings of the study concur with a study by Ntoiti and Makau (2022) in their investigation on the impacts of resource allocation and availability on the performance and implementation of the Meru County government. Importantly, the study evaluated how resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure impact the performance of the Meru County government. The results revealed that resource allocation, organizational culture, leadership, and organizational structure had a positive impact on the performance of the county governance. Moreover, the study identified the need for the counties to create a wide resource base to finance their operations. Also, the study noted that Counties need to have a clear mission and goals which should be made clear at every level.

Besides, Lamaon and Omwenga (2017) were in agreement with the findings of the study in their establishment of the impacts of locally generated revenues on the performance of County governments in Kenya. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the revenue generated by the County Governments and performance.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Resource Availability** 

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA		Std.
						Mean	<b>Deviation</b>
Our institution has sufficient staff to manage various projects.	5 (4.7%)	0	11 (10.4%)	54 (50.9%)	36 (34.0%)	4.09	.931
We had adequate funding to carry out multiple projects.	5 (4.7%)	3 (2.8%)	7 (6.6%)	54 (50.9%)	37 (34.9%)	4.08	.977
We have the necessary materials and supplies to execute different projects.					32 (30.2%)	3.93	1.063
Our institution is equipped with the machinery and tools needed for infrastructural projects.			14 (13.2%)	56 (52.8%)	30 (28.3%)	4.01	.889

# **Descriptive Statistics on Performance**

Results in Table 2 revealed that respondents agreed with the statement, "The time required to deliver public services has decreased," as indicated by a mean of 4.01. Besides, the results revealed that respondents agreed with the statement, "The expenses involved in carrying out infrastructural projects have gone down," as indicated by a mean of 4.08. Moreover, the results revealed that respondents agreed with the statement, "Stakeholders and the general public are pleased with the services we provide as indicated by a mean of 3.79. Lastly, the results revealed that respondents agreed with the statement, "We have generated job opportunities for both youth and the wider community," as indicated by a mean of 4.22.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Performance** 

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA		Std.
						Mean	<b>Deviation</b>
The time required to deliver public services has decreased.	4 (3.8%)	0	13 (12.3%)	63 (59.4%)	26 (24.5%)	4.01	.845
The expenses involved in carrying out infrastructural projects have gone down.	4 (3.8%)	12 (11.3%)	0	45 (42.5%)	45 (42.5%)	4.08	1.105
Stakeholders and the general public are	4 (3.8%)	10 (9.4%)		48 (45.3%)	27 (25.5%)	3.79	1.049

We have generated							_
job opportunities for both youth and the	0	1 (1.0%)	13 (12.4%)	53 (50.5%)	38 (36.2%)	4.22	.693
wider community.		, ,	,	,	,		

# **Inferential Analysis Correlation Analysis**

Table 3 revealed a Pearson (r) value of 0.635 and a p-value of 0.001 between resources availability and performance, which implied that there was a positive and significant relationship between resource availability and performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi.

**Table 3: Correlations Matrix** 

		Resources availability	Performance
Resources availability	Pearson Correlation	1	.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	106	106
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	106	106

<sup>\*\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

# **Regression Analysis**

Table 4 revealed that 40.3% of the changes in the performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi was explained by resources availability as indicated by an r-square of 0.403 with other factors not included in the study explaining the difference of 59.7% in the performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi.

Further, the results revealed an F-statistic value of 70.156 that was associated with a p-value of 0.001, which implies that the multi-linear regression model used in the study was a significant fit in predicting the performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi because the observed p-value of 0.001 was less than the critical chosen value of 0.05.

Results further revealed a beta coefficient of 1.831 and a p-value of 0.001 implying that the constant in the model was statistically significant in the prediction of the performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi. Further, results revealed a beta value of 0.554 and a p-value of 0.001 between resources allocation and performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi which implied that resources allocation significantly influenced the performance of County Government of Tharaka Nithi because the calculated p-value of 0.001 was less than the critical chosen value of 0.05. Josephine and Kimencu (2020) in their study on how resource allocation affects the strategy implementation and performance of Nairobi County government agreed with the findings of the study. The study being anchored on the resource-based view theory and the balanced scorecard theory noted that resource allocation has a positive and significant impact on the county government's performance.

**Table 4: Model Summary** 

Model Summary						
Model R R Square Adjusted R Square Std. Error of the Estimate						
1	.635 <sup>a</sup>	.403	.397	.58989		
ANOVA						

Mar	1.1	Sum of	ac.	Maan Canana	17	C:~
Mod	iei	Squares	df	Mean Square	Г	Sig.
1	Regression	24.412	1	24.412	70.156	$.000^{b}$
	Residual	36.189	104	.348		
	Total	60.601	105			
			Coeffic	pionts		

Coefficients								
Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients					
Mod	lel	В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.		
1	(Constant)	1.831	.260		7.028	.000		
	Resource Availability	.554	.066	.63	5 8.376	.000		

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Resource availability

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Conclusions**

The study concluded that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi has sufficient staff to manage various projects. The study also concluded that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi have adequate funding to carry out multiple projects. Moreover, the study concluded that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi have the necessary materials and supplies to execute different projects. Additionally, the study concluded that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi is equipped with the machinery and tools needed for infrastructural projects. Finally, the study concluded that resource allocation had a positive and significant influence on the performance of the County Government of Tharaka Nithi.

The conclusions of the study, therefore, are in agreement with the resource-based view theory which was originally built on the premise that resources are the single most important determinant of the firm's performance. The further posits that resources possessed in a firm are the main source of competitive advantage, growth, and overall performance. These resources include tangible resources, intangible resources, and human resources. However, the theory postulates that resources alone will not guarantee better performance; firms must have the capabilities to put these resources into use. The resources have to be configured, reconfigured, and organized to ensure that they are advantageous to the organization. As such, organizations that are unable to leverage their resources in a manner that creates value will experience a decline in performance. The capability to utilize resources ensures that a firm will take advantage of the available resources.

#### Recommendations

The study recommended that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi should optimize resource utilization by implementing efficient resource management strategies and provide continuous training and development for staff to keep them updated on the latest project management practices. Further, the study recommends that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi enhance monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that resources are being used effectively while strengthening financial management practices to promote transparency and efficiency in fund allocation and utilization. Besides, it is recommended that the County Government of Tharaka Nithi should invest in advanced machinery and tools to further improve the quality and efficiency of infrastructural projects. Additionally, the County Government should encourage

community involvement in project planning and implementation to help align projects with local needs and foster a sense of ownership among residents. Also, the study recommended exploring external funding opportunities, such as public-private partnerships or international grants, to enable the county to expand its project portfolio. Finally, the study recommends prioritizing sustainable practices in project management, including the adoption of green technologies, to ensure long-term benefits and minimize environmental impact.

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