



**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE IN KENYA: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this study was to critically review the existing literature by using the PRISMA framework on strategic management practices and organizational performance in Kenya to establish current knowledge on the subject. This review was guided by four research questions: (i) What are the recent trends in strategic management? (ii) What strategic management constructs used in the reviewed literature? (iii) What are the popular strategic management theories used in studies in Kenya (iv) What is the influence of strategic management practices on performance? Three databases were accessed: Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Science Direct. The findings reveal that the focal lens of the SM discipline continues to explore both the internal sphere and external factors with greater interest in external considerations using both conventional and unconventional tools. Firms need to integrate micro and macro aspects using a wide range of research methods and complex quantitative tools and techniques, thus producing other diverse SM dimensions. Current research on SM is focused on knowledge management, corporate governance and strategic leadership, strategic management processes, organizational structure and culture, technology, innovation and change management, quality management, strategic human resource management, and stakeholder management and communications strategy in a rapidly changing business environment. The findings also show that strategic management's consensual meaning and multidimensional constructs remain as diverse as its theories and concepts because its subject of interest overlaps with many other scientific fields. The most popular theories are resource-based view followed distantly by contingency theory, competitive advantage theory, stakeholder theory, agency and institutional theory among other theories. Research reveal positive significant impact of SM application and processes on organizational performance. However, contextually, the use of new emerging quantitative tools and decision matrices, improved theories, and behavioral strategies and entrepreneurial knowledge are yet to be explored. Future research should explore new theoretical perspectives using new methodologies and the application of quantitative tools to address emerging business conditions and incorporate a wider level of analysis utilizing metrics of internal, external, macro, and micro perspectives. Similar studies should consider thesis studies in their literature reviews and explore wider access to other relevant databases.*

**Keywords:** *Strategic Management Practices, Strategic Management, Performance, Kenya*

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## INTRODUCTION

There is not a single, widely accepted definition of strategic management (Markiewicz 2011), thus semantic consensus in the academic field of strategic management (SM) might be expected to be fragile or nonexistent (Guerras-Martín et al., 2014). Some scientific fields, such as economics, sociology, marketing, finance, and psychology, share some similarities with its areas of interest (Hambrick and Chen, 2007). According to Sonnenberger et al. (2018) and Palladan and Adamu (2018), SM is a rapidly evolving and contemporary scientific research field as a result of the synergies that arise from this interaction between disciplines. Throughout the last fifty years, SM has steadily developed into a mature field while simultaneously broadening its scope of research topics and methodologies, thanks to the pioneering contributions of Alfred Chandler (1962), Igor Ansoff (1965), and Kenneth Andrews (1971) (Guerras-Martín, Madhok, and Montoro Sanchez, 2014).

Chiwawa et al. (2021) found that the definitions of the SM concept varied throughout the literature review. According to Pawliczek et al. (2022), this appears to illustrate how SM concepts and ideas have changed and will likely continue to change in the future as new complexities arise. SM, for example, was operationalized broadly by Dess et al. (2019) as the analyses, decisions, and actions an organization undertakes in order to build and maintain competitive advantages. It is the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. , according to David (2011), who provided a fairly limited definition. Palladan and Adamu (2018) offered a definition of SM that integrates the two earlier definitions, stating that it comprises organizing, planning, directing, and controlling a firm's strategies that reflect decisions and actions that improve a company's competitiveness. On the other hand, Makhanga (2017) defines SM as having four fundamental parts or components: control, evaluation, implementation, and strategic planning.

According to Palladan & Adamu (2018), strategic management is becoming increasingly essential in today's world. As a result, SM is required in circumstances where traditional norms are questioned and modified (Palladan et al. 2016). As per Schönberger et al. (2018), the field of SM is currently focusing research on the performance of companies, the development of capabilities, and the possibility of driving innovations to remain competitive (Schonberger et al., 2018).

As vagueness in strategic planning is replaced with objectivity and specificity, businesses are currently using new trends and tools to engage in strategic planning processes effectively. Innovative ideas about how businesses can function and attain their strategic position are produced through the application of both traditional and non-conventional approaches (Schonberger et al., 2018; Grant, 2001). The numerous methods, tools, and procedures that an organization undertakes to achieve its goals are strategic management practices (Chiwawa. et al., 2021). How strategic management is implemented in an organization defines a firm's strategic management practices (Ali & Qun, 2017).

The extant literature on strategic management in different industries in Kenya has revealed various constructs, dimensions, and theories (Kande et al., 2021, Malova & Kihara, 2018, Kande et al., 2017). Some constructs and theories dominate the literature and there also some that appear rather sparsely. Evidently, no systematic studies have been carried out to show the synthesis of these studies in an effort to provide a comprehensive improved SMP model. This suggests the need to map these variations to extend the body of knowledge. Similarly, any improvement of the said model can be carried out empirically in future research to arrive at a more conclusive representation and findings (Kimemia & Kungu, 2021).

The first aspect of this review searched the literature to allow us to understand the recent trends in SMP worldwide. The second stream of literature focuses on mapping and classifying

published articles by reviewing frequency distributions with respect to year, methodology, and segment, followed by mapping SMP constructs and popular theories. Finally, the last section concerns itself with the synthesis of the impacts of strategic management practices on performance and identifies the knowledge gaps that exist in the current literature on SMP and performance in future research.

The wide range of conceptual frameworks employed, as well as the different industries covered in the various contributions, indicates that SMP is an important issue. Based on the research objectives, the following questions arise.

- RQ1: What are recent trends in strategic management as a discipline?
- RQ2: What are the varied strategic management constructs?
- RQ3: What are the popular strategic management theories used by Kenyan scholars?
- RQ4: What is the influence of strategic management practices on firm performance?

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. The immediate section presents the theoretical background related to SMP literature, covering the evolution of SMP. This is followed by the methodology section, where the review process is explained and the research questions are discussed. The findings of the literature review are reported in the next section, and conclusions are presented in the final section.

### **Background of Strategic Management**

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, strategic management has expanded its body of knowledge regarding the strategic direction and management of the business (Lopez & Martin, 2013). Its roots are primarily located in works by Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), and Andrews (1971), and it dates back to the 1960s. As a result, it has undergone substantial development, maturing into a more established and sophisticated field within the field of management (Guerras-Martin et al., 2014). The

development of strategic management has been influenced by many contributions from various social science disciplines. The discipline has evolved and matured over the last few decades, as evidenced by developments. It now has a greater range of theories, topics analyzed, and methodologies, along with a great capacity for analysis (Guerras-Martin et al., 2014).

There are several reasons for this growth. For example, the range of topics covered has significantly expanded and now includes, among other things, internationalization, firm collaboration, strategies and competition in the product and factor markets, and strategic leadership. The scope of research methods has also expanded; for example, quantitative tools based on sophisticated econometric techniques, multilevel analysis, and, more recently, hybrid methodologies, have supplanted in-depth case studies (Guerras-Martin et al., 2014). The growing consensus on certain fundamental ideas, like the definition or concept of strategy or strategic management, is another sign of the discipline's increasing maturity (Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martin, 2012).

In retrospectively, the variety of scholars drawn to strategy research has been steadily rising (Guerras-Martin et al., 2014). Consequently, strategic management has amassed a sizable body of theoretical and empirical knowledge over the course of its development (Guerras-Martin et al., 2014).

Compared to other business school disciplines, the SM field is theoretically and topically diverse, lacking a single, well-developed paradigm; as such, its multidisciplinary perspectives can be viewed as a strength and virtue. Furthermore, there is an abundance of evidence demonstrating the field's recent advancements and success in handling challenging and evolving management issues. Accordingly, the theories applied in strategic management are drawn from a broad variety of disciplinary traditions, and this contributes significantly to the topical diversity of strategic management research (Leiblein & Reuer 2020).

Schonberger et al. (2018) noted that a review of the literature conducted in the last few years shows that numerous attempts have been made to systematically examine the SM field's domain, trace its historical development and structure, and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Research suggests that SM scholars think there has been enough research done to map the intellectual domain of their field, define its boundaries, and support these kinds of analyses (Schonberger et al., 2018).

### METHODOLOGY

The search was conducted using the scientific databases Google Scholar, Research Gate, and Science Direct, as these resources had adequate published articles covering the topic in this context. University repositories had a larger number of accessible unpublished works (theses) on the same, presenting a window for future studies; however, this study focused only on accessible published articles in top-tier journals (see Journal distribution pg. 17).

The keywords used were 'strategic management practices Kenya,' covering the literature between

2015 and 2022. The review included the full article texts of published journals, reports, reviewed papers, and book chapters, excluding other literature. Additionally, for the collection of other relevant literature, the bibliographies of the results already determined were analyzed.

The selection process included the following steps; The phrase 'strategic management practices Kenya' was searched in titles covering only those in English language and was downloaded and saved in Mendeley application for importation and summarization in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and irrelevant and duplicates studies were removed.

The criteria for inclusion and exclusion were followed and quality criteria were applied, only fully published articles between 2015 to 2022 with the title 'Strategic Management Practices Kenya'. Duplicates, non-published and inaccessible papers were removed, other criteria included assessing the title, context, and research objectives.

Data extraction was carried out based on the specific areas of each selected article i.e., the constructs, methodology, and theory.

### Prisma Framework

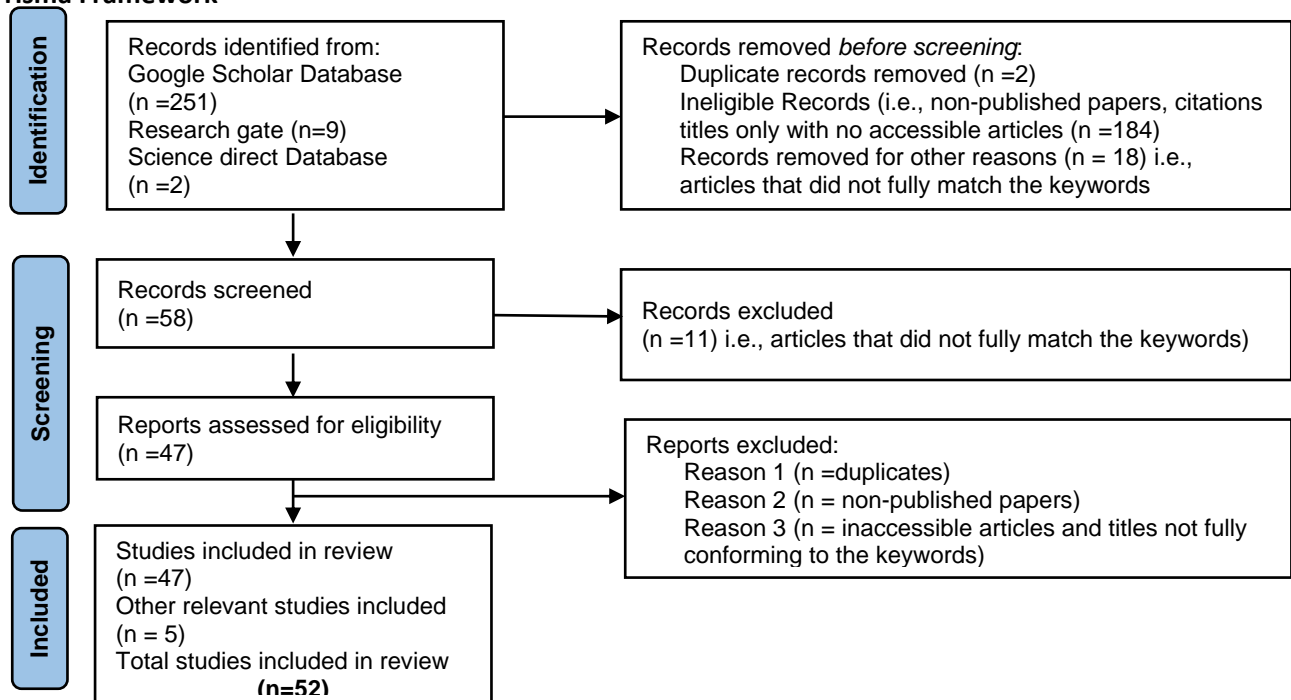


Figure 1 : Prisma Framework  
Adapted from page et al. (2021).

In the above PRISMA framework, only fully published accessible articles were identified then screened for full conformity to the keywords enumerated earlier and were thus included in the selection. Non-published articles, duplicates and citation titles with no accessible articles were excluded. During the search process, it was noted that several empirical studies done in this area remain unpublished and in thesis form making them ineligible for this study. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for future studies to include thesis papers in their future reviews.

## RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The section highlight the extant of literature and guided by the research questions of this study, distribution of articles in relation to year, methodology, segment, constructs and theories in relation to the articles reviewed followed by its analysis.

### Recent Trends in Strategic Management Field

Strategic management is continuously enriched by the current research results in economics and management sciences (Barczak et al, 2021). The development of strategic management concepts has brought about two important dimensions. The first dimension is the emergence of subsequent, new strategic management concepts that borrow from the previous schools and approaches and the second dimension of development applies to the operationalization and adjustment of the previous concepts to the changing conditions. These changes have specific consequences, both for the strategic management process and the future research areas related to the strategic management concept (Barczak et al, 2021).

Moreover, the contemporary conditions of business operations create new challenges for strategic management including the use of dynamic capabilities in strategy, relational strategies, technology development and automation of processes (Barczak et al, 2021). In view of these challenges, some researchers postulate the assumption of a new term: neostrategic

management (Barczak et al, (2021). The neostrategic management concept, addresses an important and valid problem of adjusting the strategic management concept to the new economic conditions of the 21st century (Barczak et al, 2021). These problems are in the areas of networking the organizations, a multidisciplinary approach to strategic management, learning organization, the enterprising nature of strategic thinking, and strategic group leadership. Further, the development of strategic management has also been significantly influenced by two factors namely, the advent of the era of the knowledge-based economy (KBE) and the advent of the era of Industry 4.0 which assumes that companies will create global networks, including machinery, storage systems, and production facilities in the form of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) (Barczak et al, 2021).

Meanwhile, various aspects of the strategic planning process are under review today as organizations wrestle to compete more effectively in an ever-changing world (David et al., 2021). Five new trends or tools utilized today by firms to more effectively engage in strategic planning. include: increased need to follow a strategic planning model; increased need to develop quality vision and mission statements; a new improved method for incorporating SWOT analysis into practice, utilizing two matrices one internal and one external to provide a less biased way to access the current strategy fit and the use of a decision matrix commonly called the QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) for assessing the relative attractiveness of various strategies (David et al., 2021).

The multidisciplinary nature of strategic management attracts the interests of researchers from different disciplines; economics, organizational theory, sociology, psychology, management etc. (Guerass-Martin et al., 2014) this results in emergence of many tools and staples of analysis to determine the factors of firm success bringing in different firm aspects and variables of

interest. Just as told by Mintzberg (1990) about the ancient fables story retold by John Godfrey about the blind men setting out to describe the elephant solely by touching and thus each one describes a different part of the animal. Similarly, different authors from varied disciplines and backgrounds have come up with varied approaches or dimension of SM. So as to make sense of this diversity of factors, authors broadly classified these factors according to some criterion of internal and external considerations (Guerass-Martin et al., 2014).

An alternative and complementary criterion has emerged that enables researchers organize the research according to the level of analysis adopted at the macro level or micro levels presenting a new dimension of internal vs. external and macro vs. micro considerations. There is the notion that many scholars have given the primacy of their attention to either internal or external considerations when explaining firm success in line with the popular metaphor of the pendulum designed by Hoskisson et al., (1999). This metaphor explains how SM has always tended to look for the factors of success between two extremes of inside or outside a firm or a adopt a middle position that includes both mirrored by the theories used between 1960s to 1990s to underpin SM which has given way to subsequent theories (Guerass-Martin, 2014).

However, in recent years research in strategy has focused more on internal rather than external research. This means that studies linked to resources has been growing slowly and steadily with data showing the importance of internal factors and external factors declining although both factors are not fully exhausted. In addition, recent studies in strategy keep exploring new topics and approaches both in the external sphere and within firms with growing interest on external considerations and extends the industry's traditional analysis by introducing new environmental variables e.g., laws, traditions or culture to shed light on the relationship between the environment and strategy. Moreover, certain recent trends in the RBV have extended to include

environmental elements i.e., "the demand side". Similarly, on the external sphere a different perspective has emerged rooted in Austrian economics-based notions of entrepreneurship weighing in on the existence of entrepreneurial knowledge by direct market participation aimed at discovery of profit opportunities. Firm agency and competitive agility therefore become much more central to this perspective with the focal lens of competitiveness shifting from advantage to opportunities (Guerass-Martin, 2014).

On the other hand, approaches that focus on individual or group behavior e.g., behavioral strategy have emerged that maintains a close relationship with the RBV but focusing on factors of success at a different level of analysis within the firm (Guerass-Martin, 2014). In addition, the limitation of RBV via a new concept of "resource orchestration" has emerged which addresses the issue of how to create valuable capabilities and resources through the actions undertaken by a firm's own management.

More recently, the line of research on micro foundations and behavioral strategy places emphasis on why firms differ from one another (assumption of heterogeneity) or how organizational competencies and capabilities can be built up or generated on the basis of individual human resources. Further, the frontier of strategy research is explored by addressing topics of special significance and growing interest in recent years including multinational enterprises (MNEs) and the global context and the relationship between a firm and its environment. The application of bibliometric techniques has been also been experienced for analyzing the discipline of SM along with other new theoretical perspectives approach and the firm's agility on the basis of their competitiveness shifting the focus away from industry position or the possession of resources giving advantage to firms that possess fewer resources to compete favorably (Guerass-Martin, 2014).

Similarly, new studies that show new perspectives of integrating micro and macro aspects within

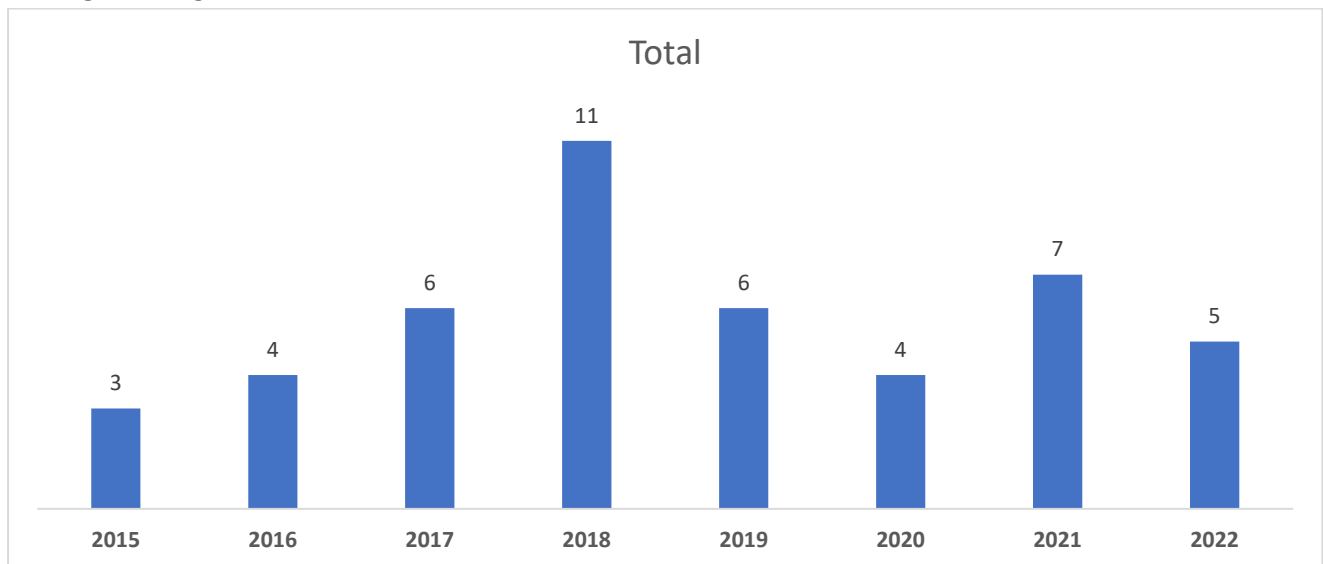
strategy research using multilevel methodologies to explain the heterogeneity of firms based on the differences between individuals. Other recent studies have also shed light on the role played by institutions providing a detailed analysis of the main metrics used in SM research from the institutional perspective and corporate social responsibility which seeks to verify whether there is a relationship between the components of the environmental responsibility of firms and their reporting mechanisms (Guerass-Martin, 2014)

Particularly in the context of MNEs new perspectives have emerged, for instance recent studies link human capital and knowledge and provides supports for co-evolutionary theory which involves the simultaneous development of arguments from different theories. In addition, strategy’s contextual dependence theory suggests that different contexts require diverse approaches. Therefore, recent research supports fully valid approaches that focus their attention both at macro

level and at micro level, and within both the internal and external domains of firms (Guerass-Martin et al., 2014).

Research shows that current research in the SM field is focused on the performance of companies, the development of capabilities, and possibilities to drive innovations to remain competitive (Schonberger, et al., 2018). Currently, conventional and unconventional tools are utilized by firms to effectively engage in strategic planning process to achieve objectiveness and specificity to replace vagueness in performing strategic planning and generate novel ideas how companies can operate and achieve their strategic position (Schonberger, et al., 2018, Grant, 2001). Conclusively, strategic management remains to be the most prominent and relevant areas in the management field (Schonberger, et al., 2018) mainly due to the rapid change and increasing competition around the globe (Tuncay, 2015).

**Strategic Management Article Distribution over the last 8 Years**



**Figure 2 : Article Distribution**

Source: Author, 2023

The analysis in Figure 2. spanning a time of 8 years from 2015-2022, indicates that articles on SM grew gradually with the highest publication in 2018, after

which the publication reduced by a half in 2022. The drastic growth can be attributed to several factors. For instance, there has been a marked



increase in the range of topics addressed in research e.g. SHRM and SKM. The use of quantitative tools and other complex scientific analysis also can be attributed to the same. Additionally, due to the development of the SM field globally resulting in the less ambiguity of the concept of SM and its definition/generic dimensions can be attributed to its popularity in recent years.

However, its popularity declined in subsequent years because SM as a concept is a highly diverse and multidisciplinary perspective with an evolving nature, especially with respect to its dimensions, theoretically, empirically and, methodologically, to incorporate emerging and dynamic complex variables in today's business environment.

### Journal Distribution in Strategic Research

**Table 1 : Journal Distribution**

Journal	Record
African Journal of Emerging Issues	1
Eastern Africa Journal of Contemporary Research	1
European Journal of Business and Innovation Research	1
European Journal of Business and Management	1
European Journal of Management Issues	1
European Scientific Journal	1
International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration	9
International Journal for Innovation Education and Research	1
International Journal of Advanced Research and Review	1
International Journal of Business & Law Research	1
International Journal Of Core Engineering & Management	1
International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management	1
International Journal of Education and Research	1
International Journal of Management and Commerce Innovations	1
International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences	1
International Journal of Recent Research in Commerce Economics and Management	2
International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities	1
International Journal of Social Sciences and Information Technology	4
International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship	2
International Journal of Supply Chain and Logistics	1
Journal of Agriculture	1
Journal of Business and Strategic Management	1
Journal of human Resource & Leadership	1
Journal of International Business and Management	1
Journal of International Business, Innovation and Strategic Management	3
Journal of Strategic Management	3
Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)	1
Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management	1
The International Journal of Business & Management	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>

Source: Author, 2023

An analysis of the journals in Table 1. reveals that the top tier strategic research journals include; International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, International Journal

of Recent Research in Commerce Economics and Management, International Journal of Social Sciences and Information Technology, International Journal of Social Sciences Management and

Entrepreneurship, Journal of International Business, Innovation and Strategic Management, Journal of Strategic Management, and The International Journal of Business and Management, which

contributed a total of 25 quality articles, which is equal to 53% of the total articles (47) analyzed and consequently included in the study.

### Methodology Distribution

**Table 2 : Methodology Distrubution**

Methodology	Record
Descriptive Research Design	41
Exploratory Research Design	1
Literature Review	3
Mixed Method Design	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>

*Source: Author, 2023*

As discussed in the article distribution earlier, the methodological distribution Table 2 depicts the widespread use of quantitative research tools to study the complex variables that are likely to show the relationship between SMP and other relevant variables depending on the studies. From the review, the use of descriptive research design was

the dominant methodology employed by most researchers. This is because many of the studies seemingly sought to describe this concept accurately and systematically by answering the what, when and, where questions using quantitative tools and techniques.

### Segment Distribution

**Table 3 : Segment Distrubution**

Segment	Record
Audit Firms	1
Automobile	1
Commercial Banks	1
Commercial Buildings Project	1
Construction Companies	5
County Government	4
Farmers	2
Government Ministries	1
Hotel Industry	1
Manufacturing Industries	3
NGO	1
Parastatals	6
Parliamentary Commission	1
Private Universities	2
Public Health Institutions	1
Public Secondary Schools	2
Public Universities	2
SACCOS	5
State Corporation	1
SUPERMARKETS	2
Vocational & Technical	3
Water Companies	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>46</b>

*Source: Author. 2023*

The above segment distribution Table 3. extracted from the literature depicts the wide array of industry contributions and the high academic community interest in strategic management research. These multidisciplinary studies and many similar ones globally have contributed to strategic management accumulating a reasonably large body of knowledge theoretically, empirically and methodologically. Notably is the contribution of parastals evidently so because strategic management practices are taken to be a useful predictor variables of performance (Wanyama & Aila, 2022) in parastals. This testifies to the evolving nature of this discipline from diverse fields in social sciences which in essence represents its strength and virtue.

### **Strategic Management Constructs**

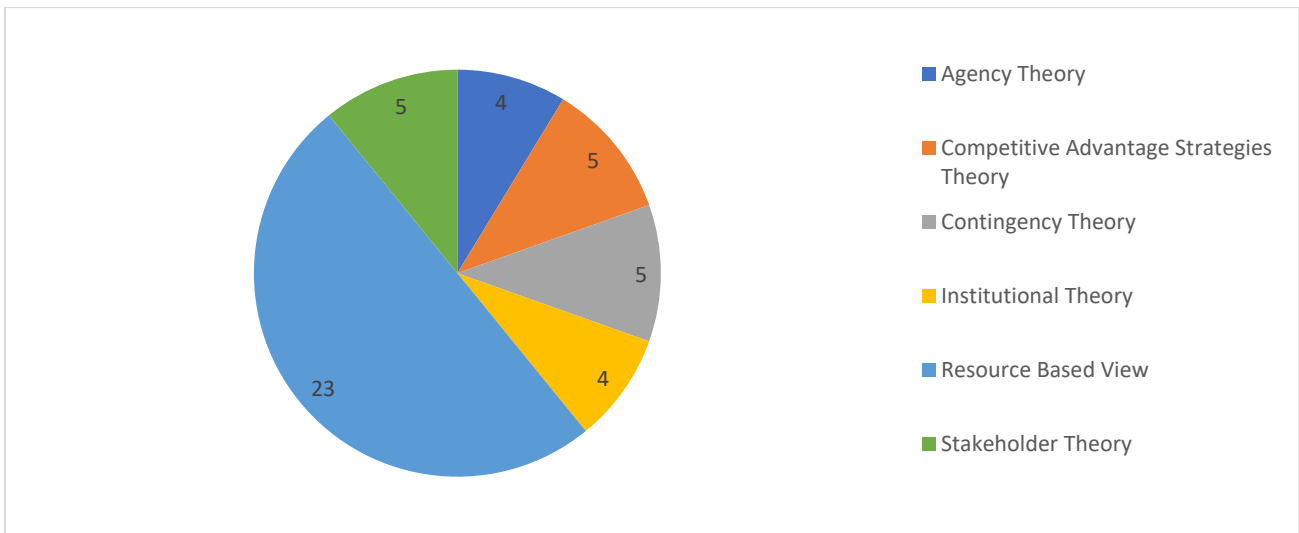
In the analysis of the stream of the reviewed literature, the concept of strategic management practices at the empirical level was measured using a combination of several related concepts giving a co-occurrence of broad multi-dimensional constructs (i.e., it consists of multiple underlying concepts). In multi-dimensional constructs, a higher order abstraction is called a construct and the lower order abstractions are called concepts (Bhattacharjee, 2023). In other words, the vast majority of the studies used multiple concepts to measure the independent variable and multiple dimensional constructs to measure a single concept of the dependent variable with no control, moderating or mediating variables included (*full details shown in Table 4*). Further, the literature revealed the constructs of strategic management practices of different firms were tested for construct validity and reliability with twenty studies (20) 43% reporting by use of factor analysis, conbach's alpha, test retest validity, construct and

content validity and pilot testing. This indicates progress in the precise measurement of strategic management constructs leading to avoidance of attenuation and type II errors thereby reinforcing the *raison d'être* of management research and its practical relevancy (Ghosal, 2006).

This study therefore identified, mapped and grouped industry wide constructs through an integral multidimensional framework to improve the strategic management model. Consequently, eight (8) broad high impact multi-dimensional constructs were identified namely: (i) Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership; (ii) Strategic Management Process; (iii) Organization Structure & Culture; (iv) Technology, Innovation & Change Management; (v) Quality Management; (vi) Strategic Human Resource Management; (vii) Stakeholder Management and (viii) Communications Strategy. Boyd et al., (2013) points out that to confidently draw implications for underlying theories, assessment of six assessment components is critical for all variables in a model. The six components include content validity, dimensionality, reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and predictive validity.

### **Strategic Management Popular Theories**

With respect to popular theories, overall authors had used a total of 102 theories ranging from using one theory to five theories in one study. However, this study mapped 6 popular theories that was used by the authors with a frequency of four and above. Any theory that was below this threshold was left out. From the literature reviewed the Resource Based View dominated the popularity with 50% of the studies while Contingency Theory, Institutional Theory and Competitive Strategies Theory followed distantly. Figure 2 below shows the number of times each theory was used as per the literature.



**Figure 3: Strategic Management Popular Theories**

Source: Author, 2023

### Strategic Management Practices and Performance

In this section, the researcher will identify studies from five segments with higher frequencies basing on its recency, bigger sample size and different contexts for inter-industry comparisons and report their findings. Thus SACCOS, Parastatals, County Government, Construction and Manufacturing industries have been selected.

Sora and Omwenga (2018) demonstrated SMP and retention of Sacco members in Kenya. Using case study research of Cosmopolitan Sacco Limited and a sample size of 124 respondents the study conceptualized SMP as product management practices, customer care management practices and organization leadership capacity. The study revealed that product management practices, customer care management practices and organization leadership capacity significantly and positively influenced retention of Sacco members in Kenya. The study underscored the significance of administration effectiveness and corporate governance structure. With respect to all the independent variables, the study reports that product management practices had a greater impact on the dependent variable thus recommending the need for Saccos to engage in product diversification portfolios for competitiveness.

Similarly, Langat and Wainaina (2019) conducted a study on deposit taking Saccos in Kericho focusing on SMP and Sacco Performance. This study used a descriptive research design employing 80 respondents drawn from eight (8) Saccos in Kericho County. In their conceptualizing efforts of SMP, they looked at employee competency and organization structure dimensions, reporting a positive and significant correlation between the variables. The study recommended improved human resource management and organization structure. These two studies focused on Saccos applying different methodologies, different constructs, using different sample size and having different dependent variables although both are relevant to this particular study. Moreover, the later study brought a contemporary SMP dimension of strategic leadership but both of them touched on organization structural aspect.

Wanyama and Aila (2022) studied SMP and performance of parastatals in Kenya. The study employed exploratory research design and qualitative data collected from 14 parastatals targeting 75 respondents. The findings show that environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation and evaluation are significant predictors of the dependent variable as indicated by multiple regression analysis yielding a

coefficient of  $R^2$  of 71.4% variation in performance explained by strategic management practices. However, strategy implementation had the highest impact on performance relative to the other predictor variables with the least being strategy evaluation. The study emphasized on parastatals charting strategic management process fully to have a positive impact on performance suggesting analysis of the external and internal environment being the key. This study however, used a small sample size of 14 parastatals making it limited for industry wide application and generalization.

To analyze a bigger sample of 170 respondents in similar context, we look at the study by Sasaka et al., (2015) using similar methodology but with different conceptualization of SMP and different outcome variable (CSR performance). The study revealed that strategic competitive practice (SCP), strategic corporate governance practice (SCGP), strategic planning practice (SPP) and strategic total quality management practice (STQM) had a significant effect on the performance of CSR. Further, variables SCP and STQMP had a positive significant effect on the performance of CSR whereas variables SCGP and SPP had a negative effect on the outcome variable but all of the variables were significant. These results are in contrast with Sora and Omwenga (2018) and Wanyama and Aila (2022) which emphasised on corporate governance effectiveness and strategic planning/formulation to achieve organization performance.

With respect to county government segment, Vita and Genga (2018) looked at SMP implementation of projects in Makueni county government in Kenya. The findings show that strategic planning, strategy formulation and strategy evaluation has a significant effect on implementation of projects in Makueni county. The study recommends that county governments in Kenya should adopt strategic management practices at higher levels. These findings concur with Wanyama and Aila (2022) but contradicts the study by Sasaka et al., (2015) with respect to strategic planning influence

on performance. Meanwhile, a study by Nyambane et. al., (2022) focusing on strategic change management practices on service quality in ten counties in western Kenya using a correlation research design targeting 380 respondents found that strategic change management practices is a significant positive predictor of service quality in county governments in western Kenya. Specifically, communication, participation and management direction towards change were all influencing the service quality in those counties. This study however, delved into a relevant and new dimension of SM involving change management which is a different perspective from the previous studies covered so far thus not possible for comparisons however much relevant.

Nkararo and Gitari (2017) studied strategic knowledge management practices and organizational innovation in the context of large-scale manufacturing industries in Nakuru county, Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design using 75 respondents from 15 large scale manufacturing firms revealing knowledge transfer, knowledge application and knowledge management policy having a statistically significant positive influence on organizational innovation with knowledge organization showing insignificant positive influence. Mutiso and Gitonga (2017) investigated SMP and organization competitiveness in the same industry focusing on product differentiation, product modification and product innovation using a descriptive survey design and a sample size of 59 respondents. The study concluded that all the variables had a positive significant effect on organizational competitiveness. These two studies cover different dimensions of SMP and used different dependent variables and different methodologies within the same industry. The former focusing on knowledge management while the latter focusing on product management issues both of which are important and relevant in any industry. Interesting to note is that the former study focused on innovation while the later focused

on competitiveness as independent variables one being a means and the other the end.

Kanyora and Okello (2015) looked at SMP and performance of construction firms in Kenya using descriptive research design targeting 52 respondents. Conceptualizing SMP as goal setting, competitive strategies and portfolio analysis, the findings of the study revealed that goal setting (strategic planning) and formulating competitive strategies enhances performance of construction firms in Kenya. This study coincides with previous studies in this regard. However, portfolio analysis had a weak positive correlation with performance which is in contrast with Sora and Omwega (2018) whose study highlighted portfolio management as an indicator for firm competitiveness. Similarly, in the same year Catherine and Waiganjo (2015) conducted a similar study targeting all registered 67 construction firms in Nairobi County with a sample size of 335 respondents using a cross-sectional survey design to be able to generalize findings to a larger population.

The findings show that strategic CRM, strategic technical skills and performance were positively significantly correlated emphasizing on the importance of CRM and skills development as a strategy to create superior value and overall productivity. Recently, Mwangi and Samson (2022) shed more light on a similar study although focusing specifically on road construction projects in Kisii County. With a sample size of 73 respondents employing descriptive research design, the findings indicate that staff competency, management support, stakeholder's involvement and project planning positively affects implementation of road projects in Kisii County. This is in tandem with the studies by Catherine and Waiganjo (2015), Langat and Wainaina (2019) Nyambane et al., (2022), Vita and Genga (2018), Wanyama and Aila (2022) Kanyora and Okello (2015) and Sasaka et al., (2015).

## Discussion

This study aimed to present a review of the literature between 2015 to 2022 on the empirical

studies that have focused on SMP within firms in Kenya. Using the PRISMA framework, the study accessed google scholar, research gate and science direct databases as the sources of information.

The literature reveals that the focal lens in SM will continue to explore both the internal and external sphere with growing interest on external considerations by incorporating new environmental variables using multilevel methodologies to explain the heterogeneity of firms and other relevant metrics in SM research. Current research in SM field is focused on performance, development of capabilities and innovation for competitiveness and relevance. Therefore, both conventional and unconventional tools will be highly utilized by firms to engage in strategic planning process.

Based on the literature, findings also show considerable empirical contributions relying on quantitative tools and statistical analysis from diverse research industries. This confirms the critical role that SM processes has in today's business environment. This may be so due to the fact that many of the studies seemingly sought to describe this concept accurately and systematically by answering the what, when and where questions using quantitative tools based on complex econometric techniques, multilevel analysis and hybrid methodologies to mention but a few. Undoubtedly from its inception to date, strategic management as a concept has been widely accepted as a tool, techniques and procedures that drive firms in all industries to can achieve competitiveness. Thus, most researchers adopted this mechanistic approach to test and measure data by understanding the relationships that exist between different variables using complex statistical analysis methods to generate reproducible knowledge.

The results also indicates that parastatals, Saccos, county government, manufacturing and construction industries taking the lead in SM research among other industries attributed to the fact that SM has proved to be a useful indicator of firm performance (Wanyama & Aila, 2022).

Literature also reveals that empirical studies carried in this field of study continues to grow gradually with the highest number (11) recorded in 2018 although with access to multiple sources of databases, the number would expectedly been bigger. However, a decline of publications was seen in the consecutive years pointing towards emerging variables in the environment such as rapid technological advancement and changing business environment, forcing firms to adjust to survive and remain competitive. Consequently, firms will require to continuously redefine its norms, tools and techniques to cope with these inevitable dynamics. Hence, future SM research is likely to produce other dimensions in this field. Notably, the use of decision matrices such as QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) for evaluating strategy fit and competitiveness remains contextually limited.

The review similarly indicates that strategic management consensual meaning will remain diverse much as its theories and constructs evidenced by the industrial contexts. Essentially because its subject of interest overlaps with many other scientific fields culminating into an interdisciplinary synergy making it a highly paced scientific research field. For instance, the neostrategic management concept addresses firm's strategy, innovation and technological processes as well as its challenges. Thus, the literature review depicts that the critical area of interest in SM is seen to dwell on the following multidimensional constructs; knowledge management, Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership; Strategic Management Process; Organization Structure & Culture; Technology, Innovation & Change Management; Quality Management; Strategic Human Resource Management; Stakeholder Management and Communications Strategy for different industries and contexts.

Additionally, from the literature the most popular theories are resource-based view followed distantly by contingency theory, competitive advantage theory, stakeholder theory, agency and institutional

theory. The RBV approach proved to be the popular theory pointing towards the idea that possession of strategically valuable resources and capabilities is a fundamental source of a firm's competitive advantage. However, this approach is challenged by current scholars deeming it insufficient and the real question is how to achieve competitive advantage (Guerass-Martin et al., 2014). From the foregoing literature, findings also reveals positive significant impact of SMP application and processes on organizational performance in Kenya.

The limitation of this literature review is in the selection of literature from limited databases among the several published papers and the omission of considerably large number of thesis research. Future research should explore these and other critical avenues to obtain a holistic view of the research area.

However, despite these limitations, the review of existing literature and remarking future research opportunities are expected to contribute to the development of future research on strategic management practices in the Kenyan.

#### **Research Gap**

Contextually, the use of new emerging quantitative tools and decision matrices such as QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) for evaluating strategy fit and competitiveness remains limited. Further, there were no studies that employed improved theories such as the improved RBV (resource orchestration), improved SWOT analysis, co-evolutionary theories or the use of strategy contextual dependence theory among other new adjusted theories. Similarly, studies that shift the focal lens of competitiveness from advantage to opportunities such as the behavioral strategy and entrepreneurial knowledge are yet to be explored.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The extant literature in respect to the research questions reveal the following :

- With respect to recent trends on strategic management, the focal lens of SM as a field will continue to explore on both the internal sphere and external factors with greater interest on external considerations using conventional and unconventional tools. Firms will require to continuously redefine its current norms, tools and techniques to cope with emerging business dynamics. The findings also shows parastatals, Saccos, county government, manufacturing and construction industries taking the lead in SM research in Kenya with 2018 being the year with the highest publication recorded proving that SMP has proved to be a useful predictor of organization performance. New perspectives of integrating micro and macro aspects using a wide range of complex quantitative tools in research methods and other main metrics in SM research will be the norm in modern business. Thus, future SM research is likely to produce other diverse dimensions
- In regard to the varied strategic management constructs, its consensual meaning remains as diverse much as its dimensions and theories because its subject of interest overlaps with many other scientific fields and adaptation to adaptation to the business environment. Consequently, current research in SM is focused on knowledge management, Corporate Governance & Strategic Leadership; Strategic Management Process; Organization Structure & Culture; Technology, Innovation & Change Management; Quality Management; Strategic Human Resource Management; Stakeholder Management and Communications Strategy in a rapid changing business environment.
- The popular strategic management theories used by scholars in Kenya was the are resource-based view followed distantly by contingency theory, competitive advantage theory, stakeholder theory, agency and institutional theory.
- Regarding the influence of strategic management practices on performance, research reveals positive significant impact of SM application and processes on organizational performance.
- The use of new emerging quantitative tools and decision matrices for evaluating strategy fit and competitiveness remains contextually limited. Further, there were no studies that employed improved theories such as the improved RBV (resource orchestration), improved SWOT analysis, co-evolutionary theories or the use of strategy contextual dependence theory among other new adjusted theories. Similarly, studies that shift the focal lens of competitiveness from advantage to opportunities such as the behavioral strategy and entrepreneurial knowledge are yet to be explored.

#### **Future Research Agenda**

Future research directions should explore new theoretical perspectives using new methodologies and application of quantitative tools to address emerging business conditions. Future research in this area should also incorporate the wider level of analysis by utilizing decision matrices for assessing the relative attractiveness of various strategy fit. Similar studies should consider thesis studies in their literature review and explore wider access to obtain more relevant literature using other scientific databases for a more conclusive and comprehensive findings.



**Table 4. Significant Empirical Studies between 2015-2022 from Published Journals on Strategic Management Practices in Kenya**

*(Based on title, construct relevance and theory)*

Author	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable Multi-dimensional Constructs	Theory
Sasaka & Peter 2014	Strategic Management Practices	CSR Performance	Strategic Competitive Practices, Strategic Corporate Governance, Strategic Planning, Strategic Total Quality Management	Resource Based View Structural Contingency Theory Social Contract Theory Stakeholder Theory
Gichohi & Paul 2015	Strategic Management Practices	Academic Libraries	Strategic Behaviour, Information Management, Management Systems, Change Management, Library Strategy	N/A
Waweru & Paul 2015	Strategic Management Practices	Firm Performance	Goal Setting, Competitive Strategies & Portfolio Analysis	Goal Setting Theory Competitive Strategies Theory Portfolio Theory
Catherine & Waiganjo 2015	Strategic Management Practices	Organizational Performance	Strategic Customer Care Management, Strategic Technical Skills, Strategic Planning, Strategic Financial Management	N/A
E. Mwando 2016	Strategic Management Practices	Change Implementation	Leadership styles, Communication Styles, Employee Skills	Ricky Griffin's Model, Lewin's Change Management Models McKinsey 7S Theory
Rasugu & Ogamba 2016	Strategic Management Practices	University Enrolment	Product Innovation, Market Intelligence, Market Orientation	Theory of Push Pull Customer Service Marketing Mix Theory Theory of Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Kinyanjui & James 2016	Strategic Management Practices	Financial Performance	Marketing, Planning, Human Resource Management & Cost Management	N/A
Chiuri & Beatrice 2016	Strategic Management Practices	Technical Training Institutions	Strategic Planning, Strategy Implementation & Strategic Evaluation & Control	N/A
Issack & Ibrahim 2017	Strategic Management Practices	Performance of Public Health Institutions	Environmental Analysis, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategy Evaluation	Resource Based View Configurational Theory
Makanga & Rodah 2017	Strategic Management Practices	Parastal Performance	e-procurement & Strategic Planning	Resource Based View Strategic Management Theory
David et	Strategic	Corporation	Organization Policies,	Resource Based View

al., 2017	Management Practices	Productivity	Organization Strategies & Leadership Styles	Goal Setting Theory The Expectancy Theory
Kande et al., 2017	Strategic Management Practices	University Growth	Distributed Leadership, Strategic Innovativeness, Quality Management	Distributed Leadership Theory Resource Based View Knowledge Based View Quality Management Models Total Quality Management 5P's Model
Nyongesa et al., 2017	Strategic Management Practices	Organizational Performance	Strategic Leadership, Organizational Culture & Employee Empowerment	N/A
Japheth & Esther 2017	Strategic Management Practices	Organization Competitiveness	Product Differentiation, Product Modification & Product Innovation	Porter's Theory of Competitive Advantage Resource Based View Ansoff's Theory
Farah, M A 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Procurement Performance	Strategic Planning, Strategic Leadership, Strategic Supplier Management, Strategic Training	Planning Theory, Contingency Theory Game Theory
Vita & Carolyne 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Project Implementation	Strategic Planning, Strategic Formulation, Strategic Implementation & Strategic Evaluation	Resource Based View Actor Network Theory
Mark & Mukuccia 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Sustainable Performance	Corporate Vision, Strategic Resources, Competitive Positioning, Strategic Synergy	Resource Dependency Theory, Competitive Advantage Theory Organizational Growth Theory
Daudi A 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Sacco Performance	Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategy Evaluation	Stakeholder Theory Resource Based View Theory of Business
Nkararo N. 2018	Strategic Knowledge Management	Organization Innovation	Knowledge Management, Knowledge Generation, Knowledge Organization, Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Application	Resource Based View Organization Learning Theory Competency Based Theory Unified Model of dynamic knowledge creation
Njihia, P 2018	Strategic Planning Practices	Performance of Water Management	Goal Setting, Strategic Resource Allocation, Strategic Collaboration & Strategic Monitoring	Scientific Management Theory Contingency Theory Resource Based View
Sora & Muda 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Sacco Members Retention	Product Management, Customer Care Management, Organization Leadership Capacity	Resource Based View Institutional Perspective Theory Agency Theory
Mwakio & Everlyne 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Food Products Quality	Proactive Quality Management System, Measurement of Quality	Push Goal Theory Contingency Theory

			Performance, Staff Compliance & Innovation	
Murugi & Njue 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Change Implementation	Strategic Leadership, Organizational Culture & Employee Empowerment	Kurt Lewis theory McKinsey 7S Model.
Waweru 2018	Strategic Management Practices	Sacco Performance	Organization Restructuring, Strategic Culture, Employee Involvement, Stakeholder Involvement	Administrative Theory Cultural Dimension Theory Lewin's 3 Step Model Change Theory Stakeholder Theory
Dahir & Samson 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Organizational Performance	Strategic Human Resource Management, Strategic Technology & Innovation, Strategic Leadership & Strategic Outsourcing Management	Resource Based View Innovation Diffusion Theory Theory of Constraints
Langat & Michael 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Organization Performance	Organization Structure, Employee Competency	Complexity Theory Resource Based View
Ndung'u & Njoki 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Three Star Hotel Performance	Strategic Planning, Strategic Formulation, Strategic Performance & Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation	Resource Based View Knowledge Based View
Ngutu & Fredrick 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Performance of Public Secondary School	Technology, Culture Change, Restructuring e & Business Process Re-engineering	Resource Based View Institutional Theory Stakeholder Theory
Gachuhi & Lucy 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Agribusiness Sustainability	Strategic Human Resource, Technological Strategies, Strategic Supply Chain Management & Financial Management	Modern Portfolio Theory Agency Theory Resource Based View
Kiriago & Atambo 2019	Strategic Management Practices	Parastal Performance	Strategic Decision Making, Strategic Planning, Strategic Marketing	Theory of Competitive Advantage Resource Based View
Kanano & Jane 2020	Strategic Management Practices	Supermarket Performance	Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategy Evaluation	Strategic Choice Theory Open Systems Theory Agency Theory
Oduk & Mary 2020	Strategic Management Practices	Organization Performance	Strategic Controls, Strategic Innovation, Strategic Direction & Strategic Positioning	Theory of Management by Objective Strategic Leadership Theory Resource Based View
Momanyi & Charles 2020	Sustainable Strategic Management Practices	Performance of Technical Training and Vocational Education	Strategy Planning, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategy Monitoring & Evaluation	Balanced Scorecard Model Theory of Change
Waithaka & Shadrack	Management Practices	Strategic Plans Execution	Strategic Planning, Employee Empowerment, Leadership, Communication	Resource Based View Contingency Theory Strategy Fit Theory

2020				Dynamic Capabilities Theory
Shaban & Naomi 2021	Strategic Management Practices	CDF Projects Performance	Situation Analysis, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation & Strategy Evaluation	Balanced Score Card Theory The Resource Based View
Odhiambo & Njuguna 2021	Strategic Management Practices	NGO Performance	Strategy Planning, Strategy Evaluation & Monitoring	Ansoff's Strategic Success Theory Stakeholder Theory
Nduati et al., 2021	Sustainable Strategic Management Practices	Performance of Construction Company	Competitive Advantage, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation, Strategy Monitoring & Evaluation	Porter's Generic Competitive Strategies
Lemuna & Stephen 2021	Strategic Planning Practices	Performance of Parliamentary Service Commission	Environmental Scanning, Objective Setting, Stakeholder Involvement & Communication	Resource Based View Dynamic Capability Balance Score Card Institutional Theory
Nyambura & Kungu 2021	Strategic Management Practices	Performance of National Government Affirmative Fund	Situation Analysis, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation & Strategy Evaluation	Agency Theory Resource Based View Resource Dependency Theory
Marube & Kepha 2021	Strategic Management Practices	Performance of Commercial Building Projects	Information Technology, Strategic Partnerships, Customer Care Management & Team Management	Innovation Diffusion Theory
Kinyili & Jacinta 2021	Strategic Management Practices	Academic Performance	Vision Setting, Strategic Leadership	N/A
Ongongo & Leonidah 2022	Strategic Management Practices	Commercial Bank Performance	Strategy Evaluation	McKinsey's 7S Framework Model
Nyambane & David 2022	Strategic Change Management Practices	Service Quality	Strategic Change Management	N/A
Muriithi S. N 2022	Strategic Management Practices	Agribusiness Sustainability	Total Quality Management, Resource Management Strategic Positioning, & Technological Innovation	Resource Based View Stewardship Theory Contingency Theory Social Construction of Technology Theory
Mwangi & Nyang'au 2022	Strategic Management Practices	Project Implementation	Staff Competency & Management Support	N/A
Wanyama & Aila 2022	Strategic Management Practices	Parastal Performance	Environmental Scanning, Strategy Formulation, Strategy Implementation & Strategy Evaluation	Strategy Fit Theory

Source: Author, 2023

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