



STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND COMPETITIVENESS OF SAVINGS AND CREDIT COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA

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Accepted: April 5, 2025

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v12i1.3205>

ABSTRACT

This research established the effect of strategic planning, strategic resource, strategic innovation, and strategic control management practices on competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. The study employed a descriptive design because it permitted the researcher to break down associations among a substantial number of factors in a study. The study targeted 70 respondents, comprising of finance managers, operation managers, sales and marketing managers, chief executive officers, credit managers, heads of accounts and heads of internal audit and risk management from 13 deposit taking Saccos in Kisii County, Kenya. The study used primary data. To measure the reliability, Cronbach Alpha technique was employed. The study assessed content validity. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Data was analyzed using the SPSS 26 software. The study established that strategic planning practices, strategic resource management practices, strategic innovation practices and strategic control practices had significant positive influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. This implies that improvement in strategic management would enhance competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The study concluded that that strategic management practices have significant influence on competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. To enhance strategic planning practices, Saccos should improve communication and engagement to ensure all employees understand and contribute to strategic objectives. Saccos should optimize financial and human resource allocation by addressing inefficiencies in budgeting and workforce planning. Strengthening investment in staff development and ensuring equitable distribution of material resources will improve overall competitiveness. Saccos should foster a culture of innovation by empowering employees to participate in idea generation. Saccos should strengthen performance evaluation mechanisms by ensuring metrics translate into actionable improvements.

Key Words: Strategic Planning, Strategic Resource Management, Strategic Innovation, Strategic Control

CITATION: Alphonc, J. M., Otinga, H., & Miroga, J. (2025). Strategic management practices and competitiveness of savings and credit cooperative societies in Kisii County, Kenya. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 12 (2), 141 – 164. <http://dx.doi.org/10.61426/sjbcm.v12i1.3205>

INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and increasingly dynamic market environments, strategic management practices have emerged as a critical driver of organizational competitiveness. Strategic management, defined as the process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions to achieve organizational objectives (David & David, 2023), serves as the foundation for firms to navigate complexity, capitalize on opportunities, and sustain competitive advantage. The interplay between strategic management practices and competitiveness has garnered significant attention in recent years, as businesses strive to adapt to disruptive innovations, shifting consumer preferences, and intensifying global competition (Hitt, 2022).

Competitiveness, the ability of an organization to outperform its rivals in terms of market share, profitability, and innovation, is increasingly contingent on the adoption of robust strategic management frameworks. These frameworks encompass strategic planning, resource allocation, performance monitoring, and continuous adaptation to external and internal environments (Johnson, 2023). Recent studies emphasize the role of strategic agility—the capacity to rapidly reconfigure strategies and resources in response to changing conditions—as a key determinant of competitiveness in volatile markets (Teece, 2023). Furthermore, the integration of digital transformation initiatives into strategic management practices has been identified as a pivotal factor in enhancing organizational resilience and competitive positioning (Kane, 2023).

Empirical studies in strategic management and competitiveness highlight decision-making styles, strategic change models, and institutional pressures as key determinants of organizational success. For example, Acciarini et al. (2021) found that decision-making styles, including intuitive and rational approaches, significantly influence competitive advantage and performance. Organizations that

utilize strategic intuition in uncertain environments tend to outperform those that rely solely on data-driven approaches (Giermindl et al., 2022). Furthermore, a study on inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) by Wang et al. (2022) emphasized that institutional pressures play a crucial role in shaping strategic change and competitiveness. IGOs, such as United Nations agencies, face complex challenges in implementing strategic models initially designed for private sector entities, highlighting the need for tailored strategic approaches.

A comparative study on African enterprises by Peng et al. (2021) highlighted that SMEs in emerging economies struggle with strategic planning due to financial and infrastructural limitations. However, those that implement well-structured strategic management frameworks experience higher performance and resilience. Additionally, empirical findings from South Africa and Nigeria suggest that firms adopting corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of their strategic management practices achieve long-term competitiveness, attracting investors and fostering customer loyalty.

In Kenya, several organizations have successfully implemented strategic management practices to enhance competitiveness. The Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Group, for instance, has leveraged digital transformation and customer-centric strategies to maintain its market leadership. Studies on KCB indicate that its strategic focus on technology, financial inclusion, and regional expansion has significantly improved its competitive edge in the banking sector. Similarly, Safaricom, Kenya's leading telecommunications company, has adopted innovation-driven strategies such as mobile money (M-Pesa) and big data analytics to maintain dominance in the industry. A report on Safaricom's strategic initiatives showed that integrating digital platforms and customer relationship management has contributed to its sustained market competitiveness. Other notable organizations, such as Equity Bank and Kenya

Airways, have also adopted strategic alliances, leadership

The competitiveness of Deposit-Taking Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (DT-SACCOs) in Kenya has been significantly shaped by regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, and market dynamics. As of 2023, there were 176 licensed DT-SACCOs regulated by the SACCO Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA). These institutions play a vital role in Kenya's financial ecosystem, contributing 6.43% of the national nominal GDP. The sector has witnessed substantial growth, with total assets increasing by 9.17% to Kes 971.96 billion, while deposits grew by 9.95% to Kes 682.19 billion. This reflects strong consumer confidence in SACCOs as alternative financial service providers, particularly for low- and middle-income earners. Moreover, 53 SACCOs control over 73% of the total assets in the industry, highlighting a concentration of market power among a few dominant players. The increased adoption of digital services, enhanced regulatory compliance, and diversification into microloans and asset financing have further contributed to SACCO competitiveness.

Despite this growth, DT-SACCOs face challenges such as increasing competition from commercial banks, FinTech firms, and mobile money services. Additionally, liquidity constraints, governance issues, and defaulting loans threaten financial stability. Regulatory requirements, such as risk-based supervision by SASRA, have also increased operational costs, limiting the ability of smaller SACCOs to compete effectively. However, strategic partnerships with financial technology firms and expansion into underserved rural areas have provided SACCOs with avenues for sustainable growth. The push for innovation, including mobile banking services and improved customer experience, continues to shape the sector's competitiveness in the Kenyan financial landscape.

Kisii County hosts several active deposit-taking SACCOs, which serve as critical financial institutions for local businesses and households. The county's

SACCOs have played a crucial role in financial inclusion, particularly for farmers, traders, and small-scale entrepreneurs. Their competitiveness is driven by factors such as customer-centric services, affordable credit options, and community-based membership structures. In recent years, SACCOs in Kisii have embraced digital transformation, with many offering mobile banking and USSD-based transaction platforms to improve accessibility for their members. This digital shift has enhanced operational efficiency and member satisfaction, boosting the county's SACCO sector.

However, Kisii County's DT-SACCOs also face challenges that threaten their competitive edge. Key among them are limited capital reserves, loan repayment defaults, and governance inefficiencies. The increasing presence of commercial banks and mobile lenders has also intensified competition, pressuring SACCOs to innovate and improve service delivery. To remain competitive, SACCOs in Kisii are focusing on diversifying financial products, strengthening risk management practices, and leveraging digital financial services to attract and retain members. Furthermore, enhanced regulatory oversight by SASRA ensures that these SACCOs maintain financial stability and compliance with industry best practices.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, competitiveness of Saccos in Kisii County, Kenya, has faced significant challenges. Over the past five years, market share has declined from approximately 35% in 2018 to around 28% by 2022—a nearly 20% drop. This contraction is primarily due to increased competition from traditional banks and emerging fintech institutions, evolving consumer preferences, and regulatory pressures (CBK, 2023, SASRA, 2024). Interest on deposit rates have also fluctuated, rising from about 6.0% in 2018 to 6.5% in 2019, stabilizing near 6.0% in 2020–2021, and then dropping to roughly 5.8% in 2023 (SASRA, 2024). Similarly, dividend per share initially increased from Kes 1.20 in 2018 to Kes 1.35 in 2019, but later fell to around Kes 1.10 by 2023 (SASRA, 2024). These trends indicate

mounting competitive pressures, urging Saccos to revise their strategic approaches.

DT-SACCOs are facing intense competition from various financial institutions, including commercial banks, microfinance banks, and non-deposit-taking SACCOs but also from unregulated SACCOs and informal financial groups. According to the SASRA report (2023), the number of regulated DT-SACCOs in Kenya has stagnated, with competition leading to financial strain in several SACCOs, particularly those in Kisii County. The emergence of FinTech solutions, aggressive expansion by commercial banks into rural markets, and increased marketing by microfinance institutions have further eroded SACCOs' market share (Owino, Kariuki, & Wamitu, 2024). Additionally, banks are leveraging mobile banking and agency banking services to penetrate SACCO-dominated areas, offering competitive loan products that attract SACCO members. The increased competition has forced SACCOs to revise their loan terms, offer higher interest on deposits, and enhance digital banking services, which requires significant capital investment (Wambui, 2023).

Despite the growing body of research on SACCO performance, significant knowledge gaps remain regarding their competitiveness in the evolving financial landscape. While previous studies have explored SACCO financial performance (Wambui, 2023; Mong'are, 2023), limited empirical research has been conducted on the strategic responses of DT-SACCOs to competition from commercial banks and digital financial service providers. Moreover, there is inadequate research focusing on Kisii County, where SACCOs face stiff competition from formal and informal financial institutions (Standard Media, 2024). There is a need for comprehensive research on strategic management practices that SACCOs can adopt to enhance their competitiveness, improve member retention, and adapt to the changing financial sector dynamics in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To establish the effect of strategic planning practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- To determine the effect of strategic resource management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- To examine the effect of strategic innovation management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- To assess the effect of strategic control practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

The research hypotheses were;

- **H₀₁:** Strategic planning practices do not have an effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- **H₀₂:** Strategic resource management practices do not have an effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- **H₀₃:** Strategic innovation management practices do not have an effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.
- **H₀₄:** Strategic control practices do not have an effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory was propounded by Barney (1991) and has since been

refined by scholars such as Barney and Clark (2007) and Peteraf and Barney (2003). The theory asserts that an organization's sustainable competitive advantage is derived from its ability to effectively acquire, develop, and utilize valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. These resources include human capital, technological infrastructure, financial assets, and organizational culture.

RBV assumes that firms operate in heterogeneous markets where internal capabilities, rather than external factors, dictate competitive success (Barney, 2018). The theory argues that firms can maintain their market position by strategically leveraging and continuously improving internal resources. However, critics argue that RBV overemphasizes internal factors while underestimating the impact of dynamic external environments (Knott, 2015).

This theory is highly relevant to the objective of establishing the effect of strategic planning practices on competitiveness in SACCOs. Effective strategic planning ensures that SACCOs in Kisii County align their resource base such as trained personnel, efficient financial management, and customer-centric services with long-term goals. Given increasing competition from banks and microfinance institutions, SACCOs must strategically allocate resources to areas such as technological innovation and member service excellence (Mokaya, 2021).

Resource Dependence Theory (RDT)

The Resource Dependence Theory (RDT), developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), posits that organizations must obtain critical resources from external actors to survive and maintain competitiveness. According to RDT, firms do not operate in isolation but rather depend on networks of suppliers, financiers, and regulatory bodies to secure their operational sustainability. The theory emphasizes managing resource constraints by diversifying funding sources, forming strategic partnerships, and maintaining a favorable regulatory relationship (Drees & Heugens, 2013).

In the context of SACCOs, RDT is relevant to determining the effect of strategic resource management practices on competitiveness. Given that SACCOs face funding limitations compared to commercial banks, their ability to secure stable capital, attract deposits, and maintain regulatory compliance significantly affects their competitiveness. SACCOs in Kisii County must build strong financial reserves, leverage digital banking technologies, and develop human capital to sustain their competitive advantage (Ndung'u & Muturi, 2022).

Schumpeter's Innovation Theory

The Innovation Theory, proposed by Joseph Schumpeter (1934), suggests that economic development and firm competitiveness are driven by innovation. Schumpeter identified five key areas of innovation: new products, new methods of production, new sources of supply, new market structures, and new organizational forms. He argued that firms gain a competitive edge by continuously introducing groundbreaking innovations that disrupt existing markets (Schumpeter, 1942).

Schumpeter's theory is critical in examining the effect of strategic innovation management practices on SACCO competitiveness. As financial institutions, SACCOs in Kisii County must innovate in areas such as digital banking, mobile money services, and customer relationship management to attract and retain members. The rise of FinTech services and mobile lending apps has heightened the need for SACCOs to modernize their operations to remain relevant (Muthoni & Wanjohi, 2023).

Agency Theory

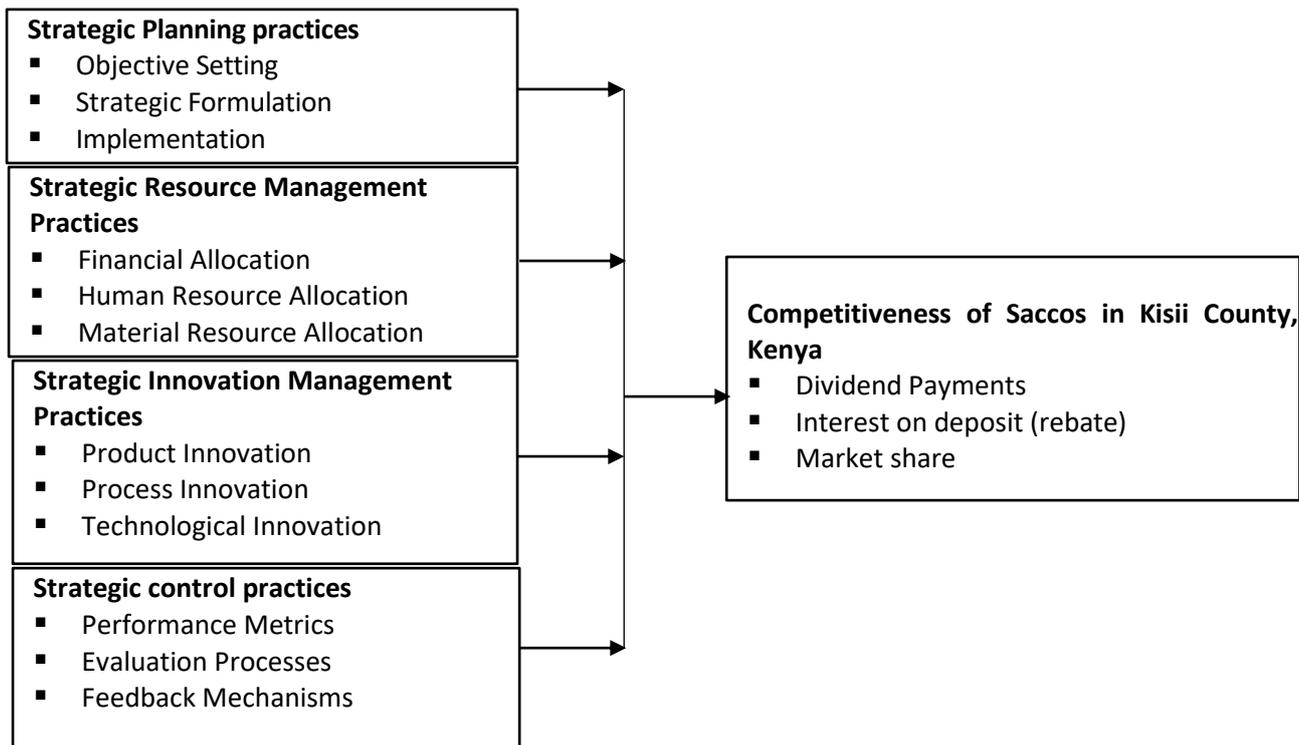
The Agency Theory, introduced by Jensen and Meckling (1976), explores the relationship between principals (owners or shareholders) and agents (managers or executives). It argues that conflicts arise when agents prioritize personal gains over organizational objectives. The theory suggests that strategic control mechanisms such as performance monitoring, transparent governance, and risk management practices are necessary to align the

interests of stakeholders with those of decision-makers (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This theory is particularly relevant in assessing the effect of strategic control practices on SACCO competitiveness. SACCOs in Kisii County face governance challenges, with some struggling with financial mismanagement, fraud, and member

dissatisfaction. Strategic control mechanisms, such as financial audits, performance appraisals, and board oversight, are crucial for ensuring efficiency and accountability. Proper governance structures enhance SACCO credibility, attracting more members and boosting overall competitiveness (Kipkoech & Njeru, 2021).

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review of Literature

Strategic planning practices and Competitiveness

Mousa et al. (2024) investigated the influence of strategic planning on organizational competitiveness in Iraq’s manufacturing sector. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, surveying 360 senior managers through structured questionnaires. Multiple regression analysis revealed that firms with well-defined strategic planning frameworks exhibited higher financial performance, operational efficiency, and market adaptability. Environmental scanning, scenario planning, and strategic goal setting were identified

as key determinants of competitiveness. The study also found that organizations that continuously revised their strategic plans in response to market trends outperformed their competitors. The findings concluded that structured strategic planning enables organizations to proactively respond to uncertainties, ensuring long-term sustainability. The study recommended that firms incorporate digital tools for strategic forecasting and strengthen strategic implementation practices to remain competitive in an evolving business environment.

Strategic resource management practices and Competitiveness

Mutai et al. (2021) explored the effect of strategic financial resource management on the competitiveness of SACCOs in Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey design, targeting 50 deposit-taking SACCOs, with data collected from managers through structured questionnaires. Using multiple regression analysis, the study assessed the impact of financial resource allocation, investment decisions, and risk management on competitiveness. Findings revealed that SACCOs with well-structured financial management practices achieved higher profitability, increased member retention, and enhanced service delivery, positioning them competitively against commercial banks. The study concluded that financial prudence and strategic capital investment directly contribute to SACCO sustainability. The authors recommended that SACCOs adopt modern financial technologies, improve capital allocation strategies, and enhance risk mitigation frameworks to remain competitive. These findings underscore the importance of financial resource optimization in cooperative institutions, reinforcing the role of financial management as a critical determinant of competitive success in the rapidly evolving financial sector.

Strategic innovation management practices and Competitiveness

Kamau and Wainaina (2024) investigated the impact of strategic innovation management on the competitiveness of Deposit-Taking SACCOs in Kenya. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, surveying 60 SACCO managers and conducting 10 in-depth interviews. The results indicated that SACCOs that adopted mobile banking, automated loan processing, and digital member services reported a 23% improvement in efficiency and a 19% increase in customer satisfaction. However, the study noted that limited financial resources hindered innovation adoption among smaller SACCOs. The researchers concluded that integrating technological and financial

innovations is essential for SACCOs to enhance their competitiveness in Kenya's increasingly digital financial sector.

Strategic control practices and Competitiveness

Mutuku and Waweru (2023) conducted a study to examine how financial control mechanisms impact the competitiveness of deposit-taking SACCOs in Kenya. Using a descriptive survey design, the study targeted 125 SACCO managers, collecting primary data through structured questionnaires. Findings revealed that budget monitoring, cost control, and strategic resource management practices mechanisms significantly enhanced SACCOs' operational efficiency. SACCOs with stringent financial controls experienced better liquidity management, reducing financial risks and improving customer confidence. The study concluded that implementing financial control mechanisms strengthens SACCO stability, enhances competitiveness, and attracts more members. It recommended that SACCOs adopt modern strategic resource management practices tools and automated accounting systems to improve financial transparency and efficiency.

Kimani and Otieno (2024) investigated the role of risk control strategies in improving competitiveness among SACCOs in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews from 50 SACCOs. The research found that institutions with strong risk mitigation frameworks experienced lower default rates and higher member retention. Key risk management practices such as credit risk analysis, fraud detection systems, and loan portfolio monitoring were found to significantly reduce financial losses. The study concluded that proactive risk management enhances SACCOs' financial health and competitiveness. The researchers recommended that SACCOs invest in real-time risk monitoring technologies and continuous staff training on risk assessment methodologies.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive research design. The research was centered on 13 deposit-taking SACCOs in Kisii County, as indicated by SASRA (2023). The study targeted 91 respondents, comprising of finance managers, operation managers, sales & marketing managers, credit managers, human resource managers, heads of accounts and heads of internal audit & risk management. Sampling frame consisted of finance managers, operation managers, sales and marketing managers, chief executive officers, credit managers, heads of accounts and heads of internal audit and risk management. This study took the entire population of the 91 respondents using census technique.

The collection of primary data was facilitated through the administration of a self-administered structured questionnaire. A pilot study was undertaken on a sample of 9 respondents, representing 10% of the total sample size (91), as advocated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), in Kisii County. The piloted respondents were omitted from the primary study sample. Expert judgment of content was sought from supervisors and other knowledgeable individuals affiliated within the industry via content validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed from the respondents' responses using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to evaluate reliability.

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages was used to present quantitative data in form of tables and graphs while inferential analysis included; correlational analysis and multiple regression were utilized. Statistical analysis

was conducted using SPSS 26, with the results presented in tables, models, and charts. The data analysis process was aligned closely with the study objectives, ensuring that the findings address the research questions effectively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

In this study, a total of 91 questionnaires were administered to the sampled respondents, 68 were successfully completed by the respondents which is a response rate of 74.7% of the total questionnaires. Richard (2005) observed that the Australian Vice Chancellors' committee and graduate careers council of Australia (2001) regarded an overall institutional response rate for the course experience questionnaire of at least 70% to be both desirable and achievable. The response rate of 74.7% which was attained during this study is acceptable because it is above the 60%.

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive analysis for this section used percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation to show the response from the respondents as shown in the tables below for each variable. The respondents were required to state their level of agreement on various statements on each variable. The level of agreement ranged from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-fairly agreed, 4-agree and 5- strongly agree. The results are as follows.

Strategic planning practices and Performance

The sampled respondents were provided with 6 statements related to Strategic planning practices. Percentages are in parenthesis (). The results are as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategic planning practices

No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Our Sacco clearly defines both short-term and long-term objectives that guide its operations.	0 (0)	2 (2.9)	16 (23.5)	34 (50)	16 (23.5)	3.91
2	The objectives set by our Sacco are well aligned with its overall mission and vision.	2 (2.9)	2 (2.9)	11 (16.2)	37 (54.4)	16 (23.5)	3.93
3	Employees understand and actively support the objectives established through our strategic planning.	0 (0)	4 (5.9)	24 (35.3)	20 (29.4)	20 (29.4)	3.82
4	The strategy formulation process in our Sacco involves contributions from various departments.	0 (0)	6 (8.8)	20 (29.4)	30 (44.1)	12 (17.6)	3.71
5	The strategies developed effectively address current competitive challenges in the market.	0 (0)	1 (2.9)	21 (30.9)	35 (51.5)	10 (14.7)	3.78
6	The strategic plans are implemented effectively throughout our organization.	2 (2.9)	4 (5.9)	31 (45.6)	21 (30.9)	10 (14.7)	3.49

From Table 1, a significant majority of respondents (73.5%) affirmed that the SACCO clearly defines both short-term and long-term objectives, with a mean score of 3.91. This indicates that strategic direction is well-communicated, reducing ambiguity in operational priorities. Furthermore, 77.9% agreed that these objectives align with the SACCO's mission and vision (mean = 3.93), reinforcing strategic coherence. This alignment is crucial for ensuring that all organizational efforts contribute meaningfully toward long-term goals, minimizing resource misallocation.

While 58.8% of employees reported understanding and supporting the established objectives (mean = 3.82), a notable 35.3% remained neutral. This suggests that while most employees are on board, a substantial segment may lack full engagement or clarity regarding strategic priorities. Since successful strategy implementation depends on workforce commitment, the SACCO may benefit from enhanced internal communication, training, or participatory goal-setting processes to foster greater buy-in.

The involvement of multiple departments in strategy development received moderate

agreement (mean = 3.71), with 61.7% acknowledging cross-functional contributions. However, 29.4% expressed neutrality, and 8.8% disagreed, implying that some departments may feel excluded from the planning process. Inclusive strategic planning not only enhances the quality of decisions by incorporating diverse perspectives but also strengthens organizational cohesion. Addressing this gap could improve both strategy formulation and implementation.

A strong majority (66.2%) agreed that the SACCO's strategies effectively address competitive market challenges (mean = 3.78). However, 30.9% were neutral, indicating that some employees may perceive a disconnect between strategic plans and real-world competitive pressures. Given the dynamic nature of financial services, continuous environmental scanning and adaptive strategy reviews may be necessary to maintain a competitive edge.

The lowest mean score (3.49) was recorded for the effective implementation of strategic plans, with 45.6% of respondents neutral and 8.8% in disagreement. This is concerning, as even the best-formulated strategies fail without proper execution.

Possible explanations include inadequate resource allocation, weak accountability mechanisms, or poor middle-management engagement.

The sampled respondents were provided with 6 statements related to Strategic resource management practices. The pertinent results are as shown in Table 2.

Strategic resource management practices and Performance

Table 2: Strategic resource management practices

No	Strategic Resource Management	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Financial resources are allocated efficiently to support our strategic goals.	1 (1.5)	13 (19.1)	10 (14.7)	27 (39.7)	17 (25)	3.68
2	Budgeting decisions are consistently made in line with our Sacco's strategic priorities.	3 (4.4)	4 (5.9)	19 (27.9)	29 (42.6)	13 (19.1)	3.66
3	Human resource allocation is well aligned with the strategic needs of the organization.	2 (2.9)	22 (32.4)	16 (23.5)	16 (23.5)	12 (17.6)	3.21
4	Our Sacco invests adequately in the professional development of its staff to support strategic objectives.	0 (0)	0 (0)	31 (45.6)	27 (39.7)	10 (14.7)	3.69
5	Material resources (such as technology and infrastructure) are readily available to support our strategic initiatives.	3 (4.4)	9 (13.2)	12 (17.6)	31 (45.6)	13 (19.1)	3.62
6	There is a systematic approach to managing and allocating material resources in our Sacco.	0 (0)	3 (4.4)	18 (26.5)	24 (35.3)	23 (33.8)	3.99

The results in Table 2, the study findings indicate that financial resources are generally allocated efficiently to support the Sacco's strategic goals, with a mean score of 3.68. A significant proportion of respondents (64.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that financial resources are aligned with strategic objectives, while 14.7% remained neutral and 20.6% disagreed, suggesting some room for improvement in resource allocation effectiveness. Budgeting decisions were found to be largely consistent with the Sacco's strategic priorities, as reflected by a mean score of 3.66. The majority of respondents (61.7%) affirmed this alignment, while 27.9% remained neutral, and a smaller proportion (10.3%) disagreed, indicating a need for further reinforcement of strategic budgeting practices.

Regarding human resource allocation, the study found a relatively lower level of agreement, with a

mean score of 3.21. While 41.1% of respondents believed that HR allocation is well aligned with strategic needs, a significant proportion (32.4%) disagreed, highlighting a potential gap in aligning human capital with organizational objectives. Investment in staff professional development to support strategic objectives was positively rated, achieving a mean score of 3.69. Notably, 84.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their Sacco invests adequately in employee development, while 14.7% remained neutral. No respondents disagreed, reinforcing the importance placed on continuous professional growth.

The availability of material resources, such as technology and infrastructure, to support strategic initiatives received a mean score of 3.62. While 64.7% of respondents affirmed the sufficiency of these resources, 17.6% remained neutral, and 17.6% disagreed, indicating some concerns about

resource accessibility. Lastly, the study found that the Sacco employs a systematic approach to managing and allocating material resources, with the highest mean score of 3.99. A substantial 69.1% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while 26.5% remained neutral and only

4.4% disagreed, demonstrating strong confidence in the Sacco's resource management strategies.

Strategic Innovation Management

The sampled respondents were provided with 6 statements related to Strategic Innovation Management. The relevant results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Strategic Innovation Management

No	Strategic Innovation Management	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Our Sacco continuously develops and introduces new products to meet evolving customer needs.	4 (5.9)	8 (11.8)	21 (30.9)	31 (45.6)	4 (5.9)	3.34
2	Employees are encouraged to propose innovative ideas for new product development.	1 (1.5)	6 (8.8)	23 (33.8)	16 (23.5)	22 (32.4)	3.76
3	Our Sacco regularly implements process improvements to enhance service delivery.	0 (0)	9 (13.2)	21 (30.9)	23 (33.8)	15 (22.1)	3.65
4	Innovative process changes are quickly adopted to remain competitive in the market.	0 (0)	20 (29.4)	20 (29.4)	24 (35.3)	4 (5.9)	3.18
5	The Sacco invests significantly in new technologies to improve its operational efficiency.	1 (1.5)	13 (19.1)	22 (32.4)	28 (41.2)	4 (5.9)	3.31
6	Technological innovations are seamlessly integrated into our strategic planning and daily operations.	0 (0)	6 (8.8)	15 (22.1)	30 (44.1)	17 (25)	3.85

From Table 3, the study findings on strategic innovation management indicate that the Sacco engages in continuous product development, albeit with moderate effectiveness. The mean score of 3.34 suggests that while 51.5% of respondents acknowledged the introduction of new products to meet evolving customer needs, a notable 30.9% remained neutral, and 17.7% expressed dissatisfaction. This implies that innovation efforts may not be consistent or sufficiently aggressive to meet changing market demands. Encouraging employee participation in innovation scored a mean of 3.76, with 56% of respondents agreeing that employees are empowered to propose new ideas. This indicates a positive culture of innovation within the Sacco, though the remaining 44% either remained neutral or disagreed, pointing to

potential gaps in fostering a fully participative innovation environment.

Regular process improvements to enhance service delivery were acknowledged by 55.9% of respondents, yielding a mean score of 3.65. However, 13.2% disagreed, and 30.9% were neutral, suggesting that while improvements occur, their impact or visibility may not be sufficient across all operational areas. The speed of adopting innovative processes to maintain competitiveness scored the lowest among the innovation metrics, with a mean score of 3.18. A significant 29.4% of respondents were neutral, while another 29.4% disagreed, indicating that delays or resistance to adopting process changes may hinder the Sacco's ability to stay ahead in the market.

Investment in new technologies to improve operational efficiency was rated moderately, with a mean score of 3.31. While 47.1% of respondents agreed that the Sacco invests in technology, 32.4% were neutral, and 20.6% disagreed. This suggests that while there is some commitment to technological advancement, it may not be substantial or well-communicated. Lastly, the seamless integration of technological innovations into strategic planning and daily operations received the highest rating in this category, with a

mean score of 3.85. A majority (69.1%) of respondents acknowledged that technological advancements are effectively incorporated into Sacco operations, reinforcing the importance of aligning innovation efforts with strategic objectives to enhance overall performance.

Strategic control practices

The sampled respondents were provided with 6 statements related to Strategic control practices. The relevant results are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Strategic control practices

No	Strategic control Management Practices	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	Our performance metrics accurately reflect the strategic goals of the Sacco.	0 (0)	4 (5.9)	9 (13.2)	41 (60.3)	14 (20.6)	3.96
2	Performance metrics are reviewed regularly to track progress towards strategic objectives.	0 (0)	4 (5.9)	28 (41.2)	25 (36.8)	11 (16.2)	3.63
3	There are systematic evaluation processes in place to assess the effectiveness of our strategies.	0 (0)	2 (2.9)	22 (32.4)	33 (48.5)	11 (16.2)	3.78
4	Evaluation processes are designed to directly support our strategic objectives.	0 (0)	10 (14.7)	8 (11.8)	40 (58.8)	10 (14.7)	3.74
5	Feedback mechanisms are effective in capturing insights from all levels of the organization.	0 (0)	6 (8.8)	22 (32.4)	28 (41.2)	12 (17.6)	3.68
6	Our Sacco uses stakeholder feedback to make timely adjustments to its strategies.	0 (0)	6 (8.8)	16 (23.5)	36 (52.9)	10 (14.7)	3.74

From Table 4, the study revealed that performance metrics within the Sacco effectively align with its strategic goals. A significant majority of respondents (80.9%) agreed that their performance measurement systems accurately reflect strategic objectives, resulting in a high mean score of 3.96. This indicates that performance tracking is well-integrated into the Sacco's strategic management framework. Additionally, the regular review of performance metrics to track progress towards strategic objectives received a mean score of 3.63. While most respondents acknowledged the importance of periodic performance evaluations, a notable portion (47.1%) rated it between neutral

and slightly effective, indicating the need for more rigorous review mechanisms.

The presence of systematic evaluation processes for assessing the effectiveness of strategies was strongly supported, with a mean score of 3.78. A majority (64.7%) of respondents agreed that structured assessments were in place, demonstrating a proactive approach to strategic control. However, some gaps remain in ensuring that evaluations consistently translate into actionable insights. Moreover, the alignment of evaluation processes with strategic objectives received a mean score of 3.74. While 73.5% of respondents agreed that these processes supported

the Sacco's broader strategic aims, a small portion (26.5%) expressed concerns, suggesting room for improvement in ensuring direct applicability.

The effectiveness of feedback mechanisms in capturing insights across all levels of the organization was another key area of focus, yielding a mean score of 3.68. While a majority (58.8%) found the feedback channels useful, nearly a third (41.2%) believed they could be enhanced, highlighting the need for more inclusive and responsive communication structures. Finally, the study found that stakeholder feedback plays a crucial role in strategy adjustments, with a mean

score of 3.74. A substantial portion (67.6%) of respondents agreed that the Sacco leverages external and internal feedback to refine its strategic direction. However, 32.3% rated this aspect as neutral or below, indicating a potential need for more structured stakeholder engagement practices.

Competitiveness

The sampled respondents were provided with 6 statements related to competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The relevant results are as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Competitiveness

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
Our Sacco consistently distributes dividends to its members as per the established schedule.	6 (8.8)	6 (8.8)	21 (30.9)	23 (33.8)	12 (17.6)	3.43
The process and criteria for dividend payments are transparent and well communicated to members.	7 (10.3)	21 (30.9)	22 (32.4)	14 (20.6)	4 (5.9)	2.81
Our Sacco offers competitive interest rates on deposits compared to other financial institutions in the region.	4 (5.9)	13 (19.1)	17 (25)	30 (44.1)	4 (5.9)	3.25
Interest on deposits is calculated fairly and reflects the competitiveness of the Sacco.	1 (1.5)	11 (16.2)	13 (19.1)	33 (48.5)	10 (14.7)	3.59
The interest rebate provided on deposits is a key factor in attracting and retaining members.	1 (1.5)	13 (19.1)	14 (20.6)	28 (41.2)	12 (17.6)	3.54
The size of our market share demonstrates our Sacco's strong competitive position in the local market.	3 (4.4)	14 (20.6)	25 (36.8)	22 (32.4)	4 (5.9)	3.15

From Table 5, the study found that the Sacco consistently distributes dividends to its members, though with some variability in adherence to the established schedule. With a mean score of 3.43, a majority (51.4%) of respondents agreed that dividend payments were generally timely, while a notable portion (30.9%) remained neutral, suggesting occasional inconsistencies. Transparency in the process and criteria for dividend payments emerged as a weaker area, with a mean score of 2.81. Over 40% of respondents expressed concerns about the clarity of dividend communication, indicating the need for improved disclosure practices to enhance trust and member satisfaction.

Regarding interest rates on deposits, the Sacco was perceived as moderately competitive, scoring a mean of 3.25. While 50% of respondents agreed that the rates were attractive compared to other financial institutions in the region, 25% were neutral, and 25% disagreed, highlighting potential areas for improvement in interest rate structuring. Fair calculation of interest on deposits received a relatively high mean score of 3.59, with 63.2% of respondents agreeing that the Sacco applies fair and competitive interest calculations. However, 19.1% remained neutral, suggesting a need for

greater transparency and member education on interest rate policies.

The importance of interest rebates in attracting and retaining members was also evident, with a mean score of 3.54. A significant portion (58.8%) of respondents acknowledged that rebates played a key role in membership retention, reinforcing the importance of financial incentives in maintaining competitiveness. Lastly, the Sacco's market share as an indicator of competitiveness received a moderate mean score of 3.15. While 39.7% of

respondents viewed the Sacco's market position favorably, 25% remained neutral, and 25% disagreed, indicating that more efforts are needed to strengthen its presence and competitive edge within the local financial sector.

Inferential Analyses

Inferential analyses comprised on Pearson correlation, simple linear regression and multiple linear regressions. The analyses were carried out at 95.0% confidence level. The results are as follows

Multi-Collinearity

Table 6: Multi-Collinearity

Independent variable	Tolerance	VIF
Strategic planning practices	.584	1.713
Strategic resource management practices	.511	1.958
Strategic Innovation Management	.612	1.635
Strategic control practices	.598	1.671

Multicollinearity problem cause ability to define any variable to diminish owing to their interrelationship. According to Besley 1980 as sighted in (Jingyu li, 2003) researchers have used VIF= 10 as critical value rule of thumb to determine whether there is too much correlation. The VIF value in the table 6, are less than 10 so there is no multi-Collinearity problem in study variables.

Pearson Correlation Results

The correlation coefficient (r) results are presented as shown in Table 7 using Pearson correlation analysis, which computes the direction (Positive/negative) and the strength (Ranges from - 1 to +1) of the relationship between two continues or ratio/scale variables.

Table 7: Multiple Correlation Matrix

		SPP	SRP	SIM	SCP
SPP: Strategic planning practices	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
SRP: Strategic resources practices	N	68			
	Pearson Correlation	.553**	1		
SIM Strategic Innovation Management	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	68	68		
SCP: Strategic control practices	Pearson Correlation	.539**	.486**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
Competitiveness	N	68	68	68	
	Pearson Correlation	.398**	.468**	.615**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000	
	N	68	68	68	68
	Pearson Correlation	.651**	.604**	.656**	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	68	68	68	68

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation Table 7, The findings indicate that strategic planning practices have a significant positive correlation with competitiveness, with a coefficient of 0.651 at a 99% confidence level. This suggests that as strategic planning practices improve, the competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) in Kisii County also increases. These results align with the findings of Ansoff (2021), who emphasized that organizations with well-defined strategic plans are better positioned to adapt to market changes, optimize resources, and gain a competitive edge. Similarly, Mintzberg (2024) argued that strategic planning provides a structured approach for organizations to anticipate challenges and opportunities, ultimately enhancing their market position. However, these findings contradict Mintzberg's later critiques (2020), where he contended that excessive formal planning could reduce organizational flexibility, thereby limiting competitiveness.

Similarly, the study found a significant positive relationship between strategic resource management practices and competitiveness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.604 ($p = 0.000$). This implies that effective allocation and utilization of resources contribute to a SACCO's ability to compete effectively in the financial sector. These results concur with the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory by Barney (2021), which asserts that organizations with valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources can achieve sustained competitive advantage. Additionally, studies by Penrose (2019) and Grant (2024) support the notion that firms that manage their financial, human, and material resources efficiently tend to outperform competitors. However, opposing views from Eisenhardt and Martin (2020) suggest that while strategic resource management is essential, dynamic capabilities—such as adaptability and agility—are equally crucial for sustaining competitiveness, challenging the idea that resource management alone drives success.

Strategic innovation management was also found to have a strong positive correlation with

competitiveness, with a coefficient of 0.656 ($p < 0.01$). This finding aligns with Schumpeter's (1934) theory of innovation, which posits that organizations that continuously innovate in products, processes, and business models tend to maintain a competitive advantage. Empirical studies by Christensen (2017) and Tushman & O'Reilly (2020) further reinforce that organizations embracing innovation are more likely to succeed in competitive environments. However, these findings are contradicted by Hannan and Freeman's (2014) structural inertia theory, which argues that excessive innovation can disrupt organizational stability, making it difficult for firms to sustain long-term competitiveness.

Lastly, the correlation coefficient of 0.594 ($p = 0.000$) confirmed a significant positive relationship between strategic control practices and competitiveness. This implies that SACCOs that implement systematic performance evaluation, feedback mechanisms, and strategic adjustments are more competitive. These findings align with studies by Kaplan and Norton (2020), which highlight the role of performance measurement systems like the Balanced Scorecard in enhancing competitiveness. Additionally, Simons (2018) emphasizes that effective strategic control enables organizations to monitor progress, identify inefficiencies, and adjust strategies to maintain a competitive edge. However, scholars like Goold & Quinn (2020) caution that excessive control can stifle creativity and innovation, thereby limiting an organization's ability to respond to market dynamics effectively.

Influence of Strategic planning practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of strategic planning practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. This objective sought to test first null hypothesis which posits H_{01} : There is no significant influence of strategic planning practices on competitiveness of Saving

and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Regression analysis was used to tell the amount of variance accounted for by one variable in predicting another variable. Regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the

dependent variable (competitiveness) which can be predicted from the independent variable (Strategic planning practices). Table 8 shows the analysis results.

Table 8: Regression Results of Strategic planning practices and Competitiveness

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.651 ^a	.424	.415	.568249		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic planning practices						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression		15.659	1	15.659	48.493	.000
Residual		21.312	66	.323		
Total		36.971	67			
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic planning practices						
Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	.268	.457			.588	.559
1 Strategic planning practices	.838	.120	.651		6.964	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						

From the Table 8 above the value of R square was 0.424 this shows that Strategic planning practices explains 42.4% of variance in competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. From the ANOVA table significance of the model has a value $F(1,67) = 48.493$, $P < 0.01$ this shows that it's significant at 99% confidence level hence the model is significant. This implies that Strategic planning practices is a useful predictor of competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County.

The simple linear regression equation is as shown below

$$Y = 0.268 + 0.838 \text{ Strategic planning practices}$$

The unstandardized regression coefficient value of Strategic planning practices was 0.838 and significance level of $p < .001$. This indicated that a unit change in Strategic planning practices would

result to significant change in competitiveness by 0.838

Influence of Strategic resource management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

The second objective of the study was to investigate the influence of strategic resource management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. This objective sought to test second null hypothesis which posits H_{02} : There is no significant influence of strategic resource management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the dependent variable (competitiveness) which can be predicted from the independent variable (Strategic resource

management practices). Table 9 shows the analysis results.

Table 9: Regression Results of Strategic resource management practices and Competitiveness

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.604 ^a	.365	.355	.596424		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic resource management practices						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.493	1	13.493	37.931	.000 ^b
	Residual	23.478	66	.356		
	Total	36.971	67			
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic resource management practices						
Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	.731	.441			1.656	.103
1 SRM	.738	.120	.604		6.159	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness, SRM-Strategic resource management practices						

From the table 9 above the value of R square was 0.365 which implies that up to 36.5% change in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya is significantly accounted for by Strategic resource management practices. From the ANOVA result, the significance of the model has a value $F(1,67) = 37.931$, $P < 0.01$ which shows that the model is significant 99.0% confidence level. This postulates that Strategic resource management practices is a useful predictor of competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The simple linear regression equation is as shown below $Y = 0.731 + 0.738$ Strategic resource management practices

The unstandardized regression coefficient value of Strategic resource management practices was 0.738 and significance level of $p < .001$. This implies that a unit change in strategic resource

management practices would result to significant change in competitiveness by 0.738 in the same direction.

Influence of Strategic Innovation Management on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

The third objective of the study was to establish the influence of strategic innovation management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. This objective sought to test third null hypothesis which posits H_{03} : There is no significant influence of strategic innovation management practices on competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. Regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the dependent variable (competitiveness) which can be predicted from the independent variable (Strategic Innovation Management). Table 10 shows the analysis results.

Table 10: Regression Results of Strategic Innovation Management and Competitiveness

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.656 ^a	.431	.422	.564705		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Innovation Management						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.924	1	15.924	49.935	.000 ^b
	Residual	21.047	66	.319		
	Total	36.971	67			
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic Innovation Management						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
	(Constant)	.675	.393		1.716	.091
1	Strategic Innovation Management	.794	.112	.656	7.066	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						

From the table 10 above the value of R square was 0.431 this shows that Strategic Innovation Management explains 43.1% of variance in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. From the ANOVA table significance of the model has a value $F(1,67) = 49.935$, $P < 0.01$ this shows that it's significant at 99% confidence level hence the model is feasible. This implies that Strategic Innovation Management is a useful predictor of competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The simple linear regression equation is as shown below

$$Y_{pf} = 0.675 + 0.794 \text{ Strategic Innovation Management}$$

The unstandardized regression coefficient value of Strategic Innovation Management was 0.794 and significance level of $p < .001$. This indicated that a unit change in Strategic Innovation Management

would result to significant change in competitiveness by 0.794.

Influence of Strategic control practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

The fourth objective of the study was to establish the influence of strategic control practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. This objective sought to test fourth null hypothesis which posits H_{04} : There is no significant influence of strategic control practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Regression analysis was conducted to find the proportion in the dependent variable (competitiveness) which can be predicted from the independent variable (Strategic control practices). Table 11 shows the analysis results.

Table 11: Regression Results of Strategic control practices and Competitiveness

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.594 ^a	.353	.343	.601947		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic control practices						
ANOVA ^a						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Regression	13.056	1	13.056	36.033	.000	
Residual	23.914	66	.362			
Total	36.971	67				
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic control practices						
Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.453	.334		4.346	.000	
1 Strategic control practices	.553	.092	.594	6.003	.000	
a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness						

From the Table 11 above the value of R square was 0.353 which suggests that up to 35.3% variation in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya is significantly accounted for by Strategic control practices. From the ANOVA result, the significance of the model has a value $F(1,67) = 36.033$, $P < 0.01$ which shows that the model is significant 99.0% confidence level. This postulates that Strategic control practices is a useful predictor of competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The simple linear regression equation is as shown below

$$Y_{pf} = 1.453 + 0.553 \text{ Strategic control practices}$$

The unstandardized regression coefficient value of Strategic control practices was 0.553 at 0.01 significance level. This implies that a unit change in

Strategic control practices would result to significant change in competitiveness by 0.553 in the same direction.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Objective of this study sought objective of the study was to determine the influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. This was achieved by carrying out standard multiple regression. The study was interested in knowing the effect of each of the Strategic Management constructs on competitiveness when all these constructs were entered as a block on the model. The results of multiple linear regression analysis were presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Sq Change	F Change	df	Sig. F Change
1	.790 ^a	.624	.600	.469689	.624	26.146	4,63	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic control practices, Strategic planning practices, Strategic resource management practices, Strategic Innovation Management

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.072	4	5.768	26.146	.000 ^b
	Residual	13.898	63	.221		
	Total	36.971	67			

a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic control practices, Strategic planning practices, Strategic resource management practices, Strategic Innovation Management

The results from the model summary in Table 12 give us information on the overall summary of the model. Looking at the R square column, we can deduce that Strategic management practices accounted for 62.4% significant variance in competitiveness (R square =.624, P=0.000) implying that 37.6% of the variance in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya is accounted for by other variables not captured in this model. In order to assess the significance of the model, simply whether the study model is a better significant predictor of the competitiveness rather than using mean score which is considered as a guess, the study resorted to F Ratio. From the findings, the F value is more than one, as indicated by a value of 47.332, which means that enhancement as a result of model fitting is much larger than the model errors/inaccuracies that were not used in the model (F (4,67) = 26.146, P=0.000). This implies that the final study model has significant improvement in its prediction ability of competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

Hypothesis testing

First, **study hypothesis one (H₀₁)** stated that there is no significant influence of strategic planning practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit

Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Multiple regression results indicate that Strategic planning practices has significant influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.404$ (0.129) at $p < 0.01$). **Hypothesis one is therefore rejected.** The results indicate that a single improvement in Strategic planning practices will lead to 0.404-unit improvement in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

Secondly, **study hypothesis two (H₀₂)** stated that there is no significant influence of strategic resource management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Multiple regression results indicate that Strategic resources practices have significant influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya ($\beta = 0.251$ (0.121) at $p < 0.05$). **Hypothesis two is therefore rejected.** The results indicate that a single improvement in Strategic resources practices will lead to 0.251unit improvement in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

Thirdly, **study hypothesis three (H₀₃)** stated there is no significant influence of strategic innovation management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii

County, Kenya. Multiple regression results indicate that Strategic Innovation Management has significant influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. ($\beta = 0.307$ (0.131) at $p < 0.05$). **Hypothesis three is therefore rejected.** The results indicate that a single improvement in Strategic Innovation Management will lead to 0.307-unit improvement in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

Fourthly, **study hypothesis four (H_{04})** stated that there is no significant influence of strategic control practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Multiple regression results indicate that Strategic control practices has significant influence on competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County ($\beta = 0.202$ (0.094) at $p < 0.05$). **Hypothesis four is therefore rejected.** The results indicate that a single improvement in Strategic control practices will lead to 0.202-unit improvement in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that Strategic planning practices has significant influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. An increase in Strategic planning practices would results to significant increase in competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. The presence of well-defined objectives supports strategic coherence, but gaps in communication and employee engagement limit full effectiveness.

The study concluded that Strategic resource management practices have significant influence on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Therefore, Strategic resource management practices is a useful predictor of competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Strategic resource management practices

contribute to competitiveness by ensuring financial, human, and material resources align with strategic goals. However, inefficiencies in budgeting and human resource allocation affect optimal utilization.

From the linear and multiple regression results, the study concluded that strategic innovation Management has significant effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. An increase in Strategic innovation Management would results to significant increase in competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Strategic innovation management influences competitiveness through product development, process improvements, and technological integration. However, moderate effectiveness in implementation and resistance to change hinder its full impact.

The study concluded that Strategic control practices have significant effect on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County, Kenya. Hence, Strategic control practices is a significant predictor of competitiveness of Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. Strategic control practices shape competitiveness by ensuring alignment between performance metrics and organizational goals. However, gaps in evaluation processes and stakeholder engagement limit effectiveness.

The following recommendations have been made based on the study conclusions as shown below.

To enhance strategic planning practices, Saccos should improve communication and engagement to ensure all employees understand and contribute to strategic objectives. Inclusive strategy formulation will increase employee buy-in, while strengthening implementation frameworks will address resource allocation challenges. Regular strategy reviews and accountability mechanisms should be reinforced to enhance effectiveness and adaptability in a competitive environment.

For strategic resource management, Saccos should optimize financial and human resource allocation by addressing inefficiencies in budgeting and workforce planning. Strengthening investment in staff development and ensuring equitable distribution of material resources will improve overall competitiveness. Implementing transparent and data-driven resource management frameworks will enhance alignment with strategic goals and operational efficiency.

To improve strategic innovation management, Saccos should foster a culture of innovation by empowering employees to participate in idea generation. Increasing investment in technology and accelerating adoption of innovative processes will enhance service delivery and competitiveness. Establishing clear communication on innovation goals and ensuring continuous product development will drive sustainable growth and market differentiation.

For strategic control practices, Saccos should strengthen performance evaluation mechanisms by ensuring metrics translate into actionable improvements. Enhancing stakeholder feedback systems and fostering inclusivity in decision-making will improve strategic realignment. Regular and structured performance reviews should be enforced to monitor competitiveness and ensure timely corrective measures. Improving transparency in strategic control will enhance accountability and long-term sustainability.

Suggestion for Further Studies

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The current study focused on the influence of strategic management practices specifically Strategic management practices on competitiveness of Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies in Kisii County. The examined Strategic planning practices, strategic resource management practices, Strategic Innovation Management and Strategic control practices. Other factors such as government policy and organizational resources may have mediated, moderating or intervening effect on the relationship between Strategic management practices and competitiveness, therefore, further studies should focus on these factors to examine how they influence the relationship between Strategic management practices and competitiveness.

This study focused on Saccos in Kisii County; future research should explore deposit-taking Saccos in other regions across the country to provide comparative insights. Additionally, this study was limited to four strategic management practices: strategic planning, strategic resource management, strategic innovation management, and strategic control. Further studies should examine other strategic practices such as leadership strategies, risk management, and customer relationship management. Lastly, since this research was conducted among Saccos, future studies should consider other financial institutions such as banks and microfinance banks to broaden the understanding of strategic competitiveness in the financial sector.

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