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*The Role of Strategic Planning in Enhancing Efficiency
and Effectiveness in the Public Sector in Zanzibar*

Farashuu Juma Moh'd
Dr. George Nyaronga

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The Role of Strategic Planning in Enhancing Efficiency and Effectiveness in the Public Sector in Zanzibar

By: Farashuu Juma Moh'd¹ and George Nyaronga (PhD)²

Abstract

This study investigates the role of strategic planning in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector, with a specific focus on Zanzibar. The study examined how strategic planning practices such as institutional capacity, leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, interdepartmental coordination, and resource allocation contribute to organizational efficiency and service delivery. A quantitative approach was employed, using an explanatory quantitative design, structured questionnaires were administered to 160 public-sector officials. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' perceptions, while multiple linear regression tested the association between the five strategic-planning dimensions and institutional efficiency and effectiveness. Findings revealed that the five variables together explained 52.1% of the variance in efficiency and effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.521$). At the variable level, Leadership Commitment was the strongest predictor ($B = 0.28, p < 0.001$), followed by Institutional Capacity ($B = 0.24, p < 0.01$) and Interdepartmental Coordination ($B = 0.20, p < 0.01$). Stakeholder Engagement also contributed positively, though with a smaller effect ($B = 0.14, p < 0.05$). By contrast, Resource Allocation showed a weaker and statistically non-significant effect ($B = 0.07, p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that, beyond the mere presence of resources, strengthening institutional capacities, leadership commitment, and interdepartmental coordination are the key drivers of public-sector performance in Zanzibar. The study concludes that strategic planning serves not only as a managerial tool but also as a governance mechanism that fosters accountability, resource optimization, and citizen-centered service delivery in Zanzibar. Policy implications call for prioritizing capacity building, evidence-based resource alignment and mechanisms to enhance interdepartmental coordination to improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: *Strategic Planning, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Public sector, Institutional Capacity, Interdepartmental Coordination, Stakeholder Engagement, Leadership Commitment and Resource Allocation*

Introduction

Strategic planning has become a cornerstone for driving socio-economic development and improving service delivery within the public sector. In Zanzibar, as in many developing contexts, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in government operations is fundamental to achieving national development objectives. Strategic planning serves as a guiding framework through which public organizations define their priorities, align resources with long-term goals, and establish

¹Associate Professor in Microfinance and Management, Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship & Management, The Open University of Tanzania, Email: joseph.magali@out.ac.tz/Josephmagali@yahoo.com

²Associate Professor in Microfinance and Management, Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship & Management, The Open University of Tanzania, Email: joseph.magali@out.ac.tz/Josephmagali@yahoo.com

mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. Unlike routine administrative practices, it provides a forward-looking approach that enables institutions to anticipate challenges, adapt to changing environments, and respond more effectively to the needs of citizens. (Steiner, 1979).

Inclusive and participatory approaches to strategic planning have been recognized as critical for institutional success. Engaging multiple stakeholders ranging from government departments and civil society to the private sector and development partners helps build consensus, strengthens ownership of strategic objectives and improves coordination across different levels of government. Such collaboration also ensures that resources are allocated more effectively and that the benefits of planned interventions reach intended beneficiaries in a timely manner. (Andrews et al., 2009).

Empirical evidence suggests that well-structured strategic planning contributes to improved organizational performance, accountability, and service delivery. When strategies are clear, actionable, and aligned with institutional capacities, they help reduce inefficiencies, enhance resource utilization and support informed decision-making. However, challenges remain in many developing contexts, including Zanzibar, where weak analytical capacity, limited use of data in planning, poorly defined key performance indicators and inadequate monitoring mechanisms often reduce the impact of strategic planning initiatives. Additionally, over-reliance on external influence or insufficient stakeholder engagement can compromise the relevance and sustainability of strategic plan (Poister et al., 2010).

Despite these challenges, the government of Zanzibar emphasizes strategic planning as a vital mechanism for improving public sector performance. National development frameworks highlight the importance of structured planning, evidence-based decision-making and multi-stakeholder participation. Yet, there remains a scarcity of localized studies assessing how strategic planning directly influences efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery outcomes in Zanzibar, pointing to a significant research gap.

Although strategic planning frameworks exist within Zanzibar's public sector, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how key dimensions of strategic planning such as institutional capacity, leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, interdepartmental coordination and resource

allocation influence efficiency and effectiveness. This lack of clarity limits the ability of public institutions to strengthen planning processes and achieve consistent performance outcomes. The research problem, therefore, lies in the absence of concrete evidence on the relative contribution of these strategic planning dimensions to public sector efficiency and effectiveness in Zanzibar.

This study seeks to address that gap by examining the role of strategic planning in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in Zanzibar's public sector. Specifically, it explores how strategic planning shapes organizational performance, resource utilization and service delivery, while identifying the key obstacles and enablers influencing its successful implementation.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of strategic planning in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness within Zanzibar's public sector institutions.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (a) Assess how institutional capacity, leadership commitment, stakeholder engagement, interdepartmental coordination and resource allocation influence efficiency and effectiveness in public institutions.
- (b) Determine which strategic planning dimensions have the strongest effect on organizational performance in Zanzibar.
- (c) Explore the key challenges affecting the implementation of strategic planning processes within public institutions.
- (d) Provide recommendations for strengthening strategic planning practices to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and overall service delivery in Zanzibar.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV), advanced by Barney (1991), posits that organizations achieve superior performance by leveraging unique and valuable resources that are difficult for competitors to imitate. In the public sector context, these resources include human capital, financial resources, institutional capabilities, and technological infrastructure.

The RBV theory highlights how strategic planning enables government institutions to allocate scarce resources more efficiently while building internal capacities. By prioritizing resource alignment with strategic objectives, institutions can reduce wastage, enhance operational efficiency and deliver services more effectively. Thus, RBV provides a strong theoretical lens to examine how strategic planning fosters efficiency and effectiveness in resource-constrained public sectors.

Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-Setting Theory, developed by Locke and Latham (1990), emphasizes that specific, measurable, and challenging goals enhance organizational performance by increasing employee motivation and commitment. The theory suggests that clearly defined objectives create a sense of direction, facilitate accountability, and improve coordination across different organizational levels. Strategic planning operationalizes this theory by translating national development priorities into actionable objectives for ministries, departments and agencies. Through the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), institutions can track progress, motivate staff and improve service delivery outcomes. Goal-setting thus strengthens both efficiency by minimizing duplication of effort and effectiveness by ensuring that objectives are aligned with citizens' needs.

Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Framework

The Balanced Scorecard, introduced by Kaplan and Norton (1996), provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating organizational performance across four perspectives: financial, customer (citizens), internal processes, and learning and growth. Unlike traditional performance measurement systems that focus solely on financial outcomes, the BSC integrates both tangible and intangible aspects of performance.

The BSC is particularly relevant because it enables institutions to assess not only how efficiently resources are utilized (financial perspective) but also how effectively services meet citizens' expectations (customer perspective). Moreover, by focusing on internal processes and organizational learning, the BSC promotes innovation, continuous improvement and long-term sustainability of reforms. This multidimensional approach is critical in assessing the real impact of strategic planning on public sector efficiency and effectiveness.

Conceptual Review

Strategic Planning in Public Administration

Strategic Planning involves long term goal setting, policy development, and performance assessment (Bryson, 2018). It provides a roadmap for governments to achieve sustainable development and operational efficiency.

Leadership Commitment

Leadership commitment has been widely recognized as a critical factor influencing the success of strategic planning in public institutions. According to Northouse (2018), effective leadership provides vision, motivation, and accountability mechanisms necessary for translating plans into action. In the public sector, committed leaders ensure that strategic priorities are consistently monitored, coordinated, and adjusted to align with citizen needs and institutional goals. Empirical evidence by Obong'o (2019) in Kenya revealed that ministries with strong leadership commitment were more successful in implementing strategic plans and achieving service delivery targets compared to those with weak leadership engagement. Similarly, Bryson (2018) emphasizes that strategic planning frameworks must be supported by leaders who champion change and mobilize institutional resources to realize intended objectives.

Resource Allocation

Resource allocation is another essential dimension of strategic planning, as it ensures that financial, human, and technological resources are aligned with institutional priorities. According to Andrews et al. (2009), inadequate resource allocation often undermines the implementation of well-designed strategies, resulting in inefficiencies and poor service outcomes. In a study conducted in South Africa, Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017) noted that while many government institutions had robust strategic plans, their execution was limited by insufficient financial and human resources. Likewise, Wamalwa and James (2019) in Kenya found that disciplined budget allocation significantly enhanced the efficiency of public programs by reducing wastage and duplication of efforts. For Zanzibar, resource allocation plays a pivotal role in ensuring that planned initiatives are adequately funded and that institutions possess the capacity to implement reforms. Effective and transparent allocation of resources is therefore indispensable for enhancing public sector efficiency and effectiveness.

Empirical Review

Case studies from **Europe and the United States** demonstrate that structured strategic planning significantly enhances accountability, transparency, and citizen trust in public institutions. According to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), governments that adopt systematic planning frameworks are better able to align institutional goals with national priorities, monitor performance and provide timely feedback to stakeholders. This not only improves efficiency but also ensures that scarce resources are utilized more effectively. These findings suggest that strategic planning provides a governance tool that strengthens institutional credibility and responsiveness in advanced economies.

In the **African context**, empirical studies highlight mixed results. Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017) argue that while strategic planning has been widely adopted across African public institutions, its effectiveness is often constrained by financial limitations, weak institutional capacity and political interference. For instance, studies conducted in South Africa reveal that although strategic planning frameworks exist, their practical implementation is frequently undermined by inadequate resources and shifting political priorities. This demonstrates that without addressing structural and governance challenges, the transformative potential of strategic planning remains limited.

Other African studies reinforce these observations. A study by Wamalwa and James (2019) in Kenya found that strategic planning significantly contributed to improved efficiency in governments by enhancing budgetary discipline and ensuring service delivery targets were met. However, the study also noted challenges in stakeholder engagement, which sometimes limited inclusivity in planning processes. Similarly, Ayee (2020) in Ghana highlighted that strategic planning facilitated better coordination among ministries and agencies, yet its impact on service delivery was diluted by weak monitoring and evaluation systems.

In **Tanzania**, Mnyampala (2018) reported that strategic planning in mainland (Tanzania) ministries improved institutional efficiency by clarifying performance indicators and reducing overlaps in government programs. However, the study also noted that the lack of continuous capacity building and weak data systems hindered the full realization of intended outcomes. This experience parallels the Zanzibar context, where despite having strategic planning frameworks,

challenges such as limited analytical capacity, resource constraints and fragmented feedback loops persist.

Specifically, much of the reviewed literature is either project-specific, organization-specific or focused on broader regional contexts. Given that the existing literature does not specifically address strategic planning practices within the Zanzibar public sector, there may be unique administrative dynamics, institutional frameworks and contextual factors that influence how strategic planning operates. Therefore, conducting research that directly explores the role of strategic planning in Zanzibar's public institutions and its influence on efficiency, effectiveness and service delivery would help bridge this gap. The outcomes of this study could provide valuable insights for policymakers, public managers, and institutional actors in Zanzibar. These insights can inform the development of context-specific planning strategies, policies and institutional mechanisms that strengthen long-term public sector performance. A localized understanding of these planning dynamics is essential for designing sustainable reforms in the Zanzibar public sector.

Conceptual Frame work

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the relationship between strategic planning and public sector efficiency and effectiveness. In this framework, **strategic planning is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct operationalized through five independent variables including; institutional capacity, interdepartmental coordination, stakeholder engagement, leadership commitment and resource allocation.** These five dimensions capture the main components through which strategic planning influences institutional outcomes. While efficiency and effectiveness (measured through service delivery, organizational performance and resource utilization) is the dependent variable. Strategic planning provides the foundation by setting clear goals, aligning resources, and defining performance targets. Its impact is realized more fully when institutions possess adequate capacity, when coordination across departments is strong, when leadership is committed, and when stakeholders are actively engaged in both planning and implementation processes. Therefore, the framework demonstrates how strategic planning influences public sector efficiency and effectiveness directly, through each of its five

dimensions, and indirectly, by reinforcing governance and institutional mechanisms that determine the success of implementation in the Zanzibar context.

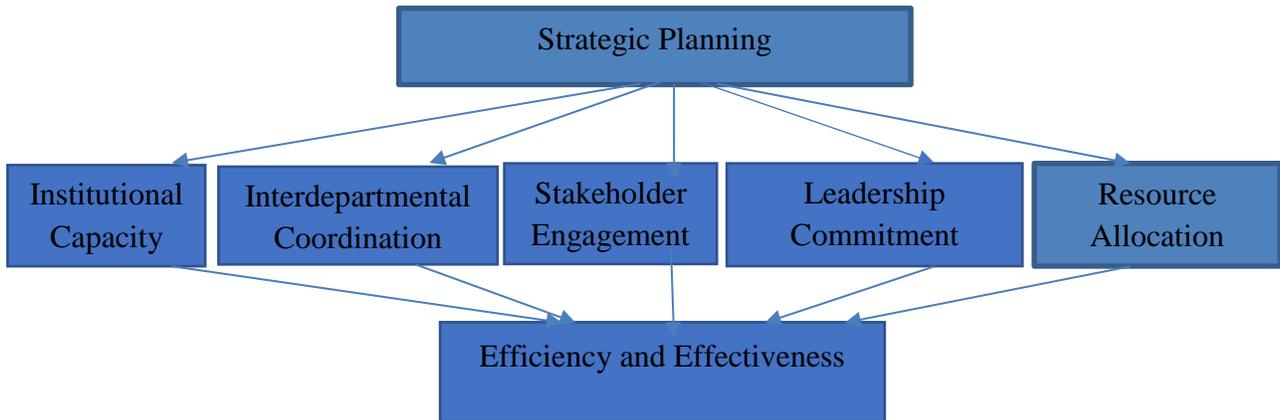


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

Research Methodology

This study employed an explanatory causal research design and followed a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between strategic planning and the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions in Zanzibar. A deductive reasoning approach was applied, enabling the formulation of testable hypotheses and the precise measurement of variables. This method was appropriate for the study as it supports accurate prediction testing and allows for the replication of findings with new data sets to verify results.

The research was conducted in Zanzibar, focusing on public institutions responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring strategic planning activities under national development frameworks. The study population consisted of **160 officials' public sectors (drawn from selected Ministries and Government institutions) in Zanzibar** that are directly involved in the formulation, coordination, and implementation of strategic planning activities under national development frameworks. The population was categorized into three strata based on their functional levels: policy and decision-making level, coordination and supervisory level, and implementation and operational level.

Yamane's formula (Israel, 1992) was applied to determine the sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{267}{1 + 267(0.05)^2} = 160$$

Where:

- n = sample size (160)
- N = population size (267)
- e = margin of error (0.05)

Primary data was collected through a structured, self-administered questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale to gauge perceptions and responses on various dimensions of strategic planning and its influence on efficiency and effectiveness. The data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Regression Model

$$EE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IC + \beta_2 IDC + \beta_3 SE + \beta_4 LC + \beta_5 RA + \varepsilon_i$$

Where:

- EE = Efficiency and Effectiveness score for respondent
- IC = Institutional Capacity;
- IDC = Interdepartmental Coordination;
- SE = Stakeholder Engagement;
- LC = Leadership Commitment;
- RA = Resource Allocation;
- β_0 = Intercept;
- $\beta_1 \dots \beta_5$ = Coefficients showing the marginal effect of each independent variable;
- ε_i = error term accounting for model variability

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 160 respondents participated in this study, drawn from different ministries, departments, and agencies within the public sector of Zanzibar. The demographic profile of respondents was analyzed based on gender, marital status, education level, type of organization, and position held.

Gender: Out of the 160 respondents, 94 (58.8%) were male and 66 (41.2%) were female. This indicates that although men were slightly more represented, there was also a significant female participation, reflecting increasing gender balance within public institutions in Zanzibar.

Age: The age distribution of respondents shows that 28 (17.5%) were between 20–29 years, 64 (40.0%) were between 30–39 years, 46 (28.8%) were between 40–49 years, and 22 (13.7%) were 50 years and above. This suggests that the majority of public servants are in the productive age bracket of 30–49 years, implying an active and experienced workforce involved in strategic planning processes.

Marital Status: The findings reveal that 149 respondents (93.1%) were married, while 11 respondents (6.9%) were single. This suggests that the majority of public servants are individuals with family responsibilities, which may influence their perspectives on institutional planning and service delivery.

Education Level: In terms of educational attainment, a small group (15 respondents, 9.4%) held secondary education, while 18 respondents (11.2%) had a diploma, 92 respondents (57.5%) held a bachelor's degree, and 35 respondents (21.9%) had a master's degree. These results highlight that the majority of public officers in Zanzibar possess at least undergraduate-level education, a factor that may positively influence their understanding and application of strategic planning.

Types of Organization: Respondents were drawn from a variety of government institutions. 42 respondents (26.3%) came from Ministries, 56 (35.0%) from Government departments, and 62 (38.7%) from semi-autonomous agencies and public authorities. This demonstrates a wide representation of organizational types involved in strategic planning in Zanzibar.

Position: Regarding positions held, 20 respondents (12.5%) were directors or managers, 46 (28.7%) were mid-level managers/supervisors, 72 (45.0%) were officers, and 22 (13.8%) were support staff. This distribution ensured representation from different functional levels of the public sector, reflecting varied perspectives on strategic planning practices.

Table 4.1: Sample Respondents Characteristics

Variables	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	94	58.8
	Female	66	41.2
Age	20-29	28	17.5
	30-39	64	40.0
	40-49	46	28.7
	50 and above	22	13.8
Marital Status	Married	149	93.1
	Single	11	6.9
Education Level	Secondary	15	9.4
	Diploma	18	11.2
	Bachelor's Degree	92	57.5
	Master's and above	35	21.9
Types of Organization	Ministries	42	26.2
	Departments	56	35.0
	Agencies/Authorities	62	38.8
Position	Directors/Senior Managers	20	12.5
	Mid-level Managers	46	28.7
	Officers	72	45.0
	Support Staff	22	13.8

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the responses of the 160 participants regarding key dimensions of strategic planning and its influence on efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector. The analysis generated measures of central tendency (mean) and dispersion (standard deviation) for each construct. As presented in Table 4.2, the mean scores for the five dimensions of strategic planning were all above the mid-point of the scale ($M > 3.5$), indicating that respondents generally agreed on the importance of strategic planning practices. The standard deviations, which ranged between 0.65 and 0.89, suggest moderate variation in perceptions across institutions. These results imply that while there is broad consensus on the relevance of strategic planning, experiences differ across ministries, departments, and agencies in Zanzibar.

Stakeholder Participation: The results revealed a moderate-to-high mean score ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.81$), indicating that while stakeholder engagement is practiced in several institutions, the level of

inclusivity is not uniform across all agencies. The standard deviation shows variability, pointing to inconsistencies in participatory approaches.

Resource Allocation: Respondents rated resource alignment in strategic planning at a moderate level ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.92$). The higher standard deviation suggests that while some institutions allocate resources effectively, others still face challenges such as budgetary constraints and competing priorities.

Effectiveness in Service Delivery: A mean score of ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.69$) indicates that respondents generally perceive strategic planning as contributing positively to service delivery outcomes. The relatively low standard deviation implies that responses were consistent across different categories of participants.

Overall Strategic Planning Effectiveness: The aggregate mean score across all dimensions was ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.72$), suggesting that strategic planning is perceived as an important driver of efficiency and effectiveness in the Zanzibar public sector, though implementation challenges remain.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics Results

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Public officials are aware of the importance of strategic planning in guiding institutional performance	4.12	0.76	1	5
Stakeholder participation is adequately considered during the formulation of strategic plans	3.85	0.81	1	5
Resources are effectively aligned with institutional priorities through strategic planning	3.64	0.92	1	5
Strategic planning contributes to improved efficiency in institutional operations	3.95	0.71	1	5
Strategic planning enhances effectiveness in public service delivery	4.01	0.69	1	5
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are integrated into strategic planning processes	3.72	0.88	1	5

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Leadership commitment strengthens the implementation of strategic plans	3.98	0.79	1	5
Strategic planning improves interdepartmental coordination and collaboration	3.87	0.84	1	5
Overall, strategic planning positively influences efficiency and effectiveness in the Zanzibar public sector	3.90	0.72	1	5

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between strategic planning practices and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions in Zanzibar. The model examined five dimensions of strategic planning: **institutional capacity, interdepartmental coordination, stakeholder engagement, leadership commitment, and resource allocation**, and how each contributes to organizational outcomes.

The regression model indicated that these five dimensions collectively explained **52.1% of the variance** in efficiency and effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.521$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.517$), confirming a strong influence of strategic planning practices on public sector performance (Table 4.3). However, as presented in the coefficients results (Table 4.5), the effect of each variable varied: leadership commitment, institutional capacity, and interdepartmental coordination showed the strongest and statistically significant contributions, stakeholder engagement had a smaller but significant effect, while resource allocation exhibited a weak and non-significant influence.

Table 4.3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.722 ^a	.521	.517	.49312

a. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Capacity, Stakeholder Engagement, Interdepartmental Coordination, Leadership Commitment, Resource Allocation

The regression model was statistically significant as shown by the ANOVA results: $F(5, 154) = 34.74$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the five strategic planning dimensions (Institutional Capacity, Interdepartmental Coordination, Stakeholder Engagement, Leadership Commitment, and

Resource Allocation) jointly contribute significantly to explaining the variation in efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions in Zanzibar, as presented in **Table 4.4**.

Table 4.4: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	42.816	5	8.563	34.74	.000b
Residual	39.516	154	0.257		
Total	82.332	159			

a. Dependent Variable: Efficiency and Effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Capacity, Interdepartmental Coordination, Stakeholder Engagement, Leadership Commitment, Resource Allocation

The regression coefficients (Table 4.5) show that the independent variables contributed differently to institutional efficiency and effectiveness. **Leadership Commitment** had the strongest positive effect ($B = 0.28, p < 0.001$), followed by **Institutional Capacity** ($B = 0.24, p = 0.001$) and **Interdepartmental Coordination** ($B = 0.20, p = 0.002$). **Stakeholder Engagement** also showed a positive but smaller effect ($B = 0.14, p = 0.028$). In contrast, **Resource Allocation** had a weak and statistically non-significant effect ($B = 0.07, p = 0.272$). These findings suggest that institutional efficiency and effectiveness in Zanzibar’s public sector are driven mainly by strong leadership, institutional capacity, and effective coordination across departments, while resource allocation alone does not significantly explain performance outcomes.

Table 4.5: Regression Coefficients Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.874	0.188		9.96	.000
Institutional Capacity	0.24	0.07	0.26	3.43	.001
Interdepartmental Coordination	0.20	0.06	0.22	3.25	.002
Stakeholder Engagement	0.14	0.06	0.15	2.22	.028
Leadership Commitment	0.28	0.07	0.30	4.00	.000
Resource Allocation	0.07	0.06	0.08	1.10	.272

Linearity Test

The Normal P–P Plot of regression standardized residuals (Figure 4.2) shows that the plotted points closely follow the diagonal line, indicating that the assumption of linearity and normality of residuals is satisfied. This suggests that the five independent variables have linear relationship with the dependent variable (efficiency and effectiveness).

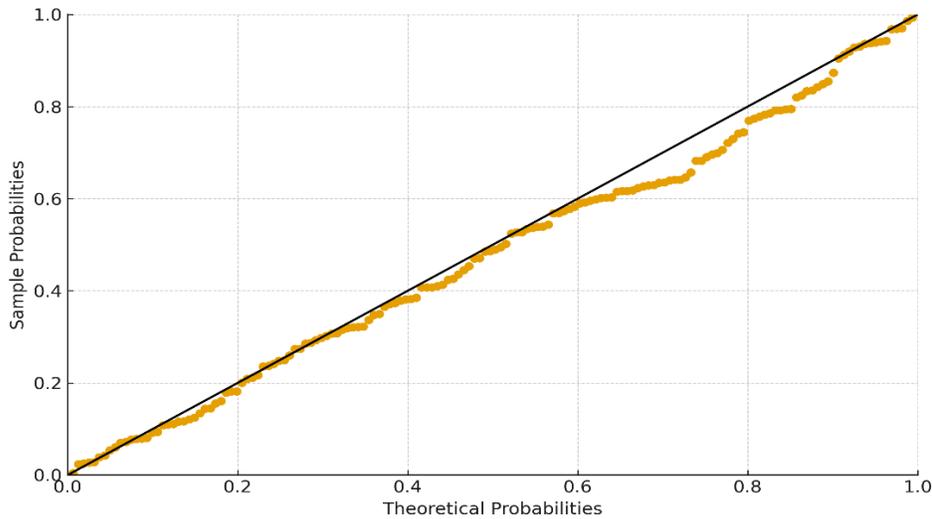


Figure 4.2: Normal P–P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals

Discussion of Findings

The findings from descriptive and inferential analyses provide important insights into how strategic planning influences institutional performance outcomes.

The study indicated that respondents generally agreed that strategic planning is an essential tool for guiding institutional performance. High mean scores for awareness ($M = 4.12$) and service delivery effectiveness ($M = 4.01$) suggest that public officials recognize the importance of structured planning in aligning resources, setting priorities and improving service outcomes. These findings resonate with Locke and Latham’s (1990) Goal-Setting Theory, which posits that clearly defined objectives enhance organizational performance by improving focus, motivation and accountability.

However, the stakeholder participation emerged as a moderately strong dimension of strategic planning ($M = 3.85$). While this reflects efforts by the government to involve multiple actors including ministries, departments, civil society and development partners, variability in responses ($SD = 0.81$) suggests that inclusivity is not uniform across all institutions. This aligns with Kaplan and Norton's (1996) Balanced Scorecard framework which emphasizes that institutional performance must be assessed not only through financial perspectives but also through stakeholder engagement, internal processes and learning dimensions. The implication is that greater stakeholder ownership could strengthen the sustainability and effectiveness of strategic plans in Zanzibar.

In addition to that the empirical results showed that the five dimensions of strategic planning collectively explained 52.1% of the variance in efficiency and effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.521$, $p < 0.001$). However, the contribution of each variable differed. Leadership Commitment was the strongest predictor ($B = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that visionary and accountable leaders are essential for translating plans into action and driving institutional performance (Obong'o, 2019; Northouse, 2018). Institutional Capacity also had a significant effect ($B = 0.24$, $p = 0.001$), underscoring the role of skilled personnel, systems, and resources in achieving performance outcomes, consistent with the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991). Interdepartmental Coordination positively influenced efficiency and effectiveness ($B = 0.20$, $p = 0.002$), reflecting the importance of collaboration across ministries and departments in reducing duplication and improving accountability (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Stakeholder Engagement, although weaker, was statistically significant ($B = 0.14$, $p = 0.028$), supporting the argument by Andrews et al. (2009) that participatory approaches enhance the legitimacy and sustainability of reforms. In contrast, Resource Allocation showed a weak and non-significant effect ($B = 0.07$, $p = 0.272$), echoing Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017), who noted that in African contexts, limited budgets and competing priorities often undermine the execution of strategic plans.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior empirical evidence. For instance, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017) argue that structured planning frameworks enhance transparency and accountability in European public sectors. Similarly, Fourie and Poggenpoel (2017) highlight that in African contexts, the main challenges in planning often relate to resource limitations and

political interference, rather than the irrelevance of planning itself. The current study adds to this literature by providing localized evidence from Zanzibar, showing that while strategic planning is valued and widely applied, challenges remain in achieving consistency in stakeholder participation and in strengthening data-driven monitoring mechanisms.

Overall, the study establishes that strategic planning plays a decisive role in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the Zanzibar public sector. However, the variability in implementation highlights the need for stronger institutional capacity-building, improved monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and continuous stakeholder involvement to ensure that strategic plans translate into tangible improvements in service delivery and organizational efficiency.

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusions

This study set out to examine the role of strategic planning in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector in Zanzibar. The findings confirm that strategic planning significantly contributes to improved institutional performance, particularly through clear goal-setting, strong leadership commitment, institutional capacity, and interdepartmental coordination. The regression analysis showed that strategic planning dimensions collectively explained over half of the variance (52.1%) in efficiency and effectiveness, underscoring the centrality of structured planning in driving organizational outcomes.

The study further revealed that while public officials generally recognize the importance of strategic planning, challenges persist in ensuring consistent stakeholder engagement and in integrating robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Although resource allocation remains an important managerial concern, the regression analysis indicated that by itself it was not a statistically significant predictor of efficiency and effectiveness when compared to other dimensions. These limitations suggest that while strategic planning is valued, its implementation is not always uniform or effective across institutions.

Overall, the study concludes that strategic planning is not only a managerial tool but also a critical governance mechanism for promoting accountability, resource optimization and citizen-centered service delivery in Zanzibar's public sector.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study underscore the importance of leadership commitment in ensuring the success of strategic planning within the public sector. Strong leadership provides both direction and accountability, which are crucial in translating plans into action. In Zanzibar, greater emphasis should be placed on cultivating visionary leadership that consistently monitors the implementation of strategic priorities and mobilizes institutional actors toward achieving long-term development goals. Without strong leadership commitment, strategic plans risk remaining as documents with limited impact on organizational outcomes.

Another key implication is the need to strengthen institutional capacity and interdepartmental coordination. Skilled personnel, adequate systems and effective collaboration across ministries and agencies are essential for ensuring that strategic objectives are translated into operational results. This calls for sustained investments in human capital development and mechanisms that foster cross-agency communication and coordination.

The study also highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement in the strategic planning process. Inclusive participation by civil society, private sector actors, and academia and development partners enhances ownership and legitimacy of strategic plans. When stakeholders feel involved, they are more likely to support and contribute to the realization of institutional goals. In the context of Zanzibar, broadening the space for dialogue and collaboration in planning cycles could also help bridge gaps between government institutions and citizens, leading to more responsive and citizen-centered service delivery.

Resource allocation emerged as a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving efficiency and effectiveness. The results suggest that resources, while important, do not significantly influence performance outcomes unless combined with strong leadership, institutional capacity, and coordination. This implies that policymakers must not only ensure availability of financial,

human and technological resources but also strategically deploy them in ways that align with institutional priorities. Establishing transparent and evidence-based mechanisms for resource allocation will help public institutions achieve their goals while minimizing wastage and duplication.

Equally important is the integration of monitoring and evaluation systems into the strategic planning framework. Feedback mechanisms enable institutions to assess progress, identify weaknesses and make timely adjustments. The study indicates that weak data utilization and underdeveloped feedback loops remain challenges in Zanzibar's public sector. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation not only supports evidence-based decision-making but also promotes transparency and accountability, which are vital for building public trust in government institutions.

Finally, the sustainability of strategic plans is a major concern that policymakers must address. Plans often risk being disrupted by political transitions or external influences, which undermines their long-term effectiveness. To counter this, strategic planning in Zanzibar should be institutionalized in ways that safeguard continuity beyond electoral cycles. Ensuring that plans are rooted in legal and institutional frameworks will enhance their resilience and guarantee that development priorities are pursued consistently over time.

Areas for Further Study

Although this study has highlighted the critical role of strategic planning in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness within the public sector in Zanzibar, it also opens up several avenues for further investigation. One important area for future research is the exploration of sector-specific strategic planning practices. Different sectors—such as health, education and infrastructure—may face unique challenges and opportunities in applying strategic planning frameworks. A comparative study across these sectors would provide deeper insights into how context influences the effectiveness of strategic planning.

A further important area is the long-term impact of strategic planning on service delivery outcomes. Since this study focused on current practices and perceptions, longitudinal research could examine whether the adoption of structured strategic plans leads to sustained improvements

in efficiency, effectiveness, and citizen satisfaction over time. Such studies would help to determine the durability and sustainability of strategic planning outcomes in the Zanzibar context. Future research could also investigate the role of digital transformation in strengthening strategic planning processes. With the increasing use of information and communication technologies in public administration, it is important to understand how digital tools, such as e-planning platforms and data analytics systems, can enhance planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Examining the integration of technology into planning cycles would provide valuable insights for modernizing Zanzibar's public sector.

Additionally, more research is needed on the political and cultural factors that shape the implementation of strategic plans. Strategic planning does not operate in isolation from broader governance dynamics. Understanding how political will, institutional culture, and societal values influence planning outcomes would help to explain why some institutions achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness than others, even under similar frameworks.

Finally, a comparative regional study between Zanzibar and other developing economies could be undertaken to situate Zanzibar's experiences within a broader context. Such cross-country research would allow for the identification of best practices, transferable lessons, and context-specific strategies that can strengthen public sector planning and performance.

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