

Effect Of Logistics Infrastructure On Export Performance Of Firms In Mombasa County, Kenya

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Abstract

Export performance has become an important indicator of firm competitiveness and national economic growth, particularly in developing economies where exports contribute significantly to foreign exchange earnings, employment creation, and industrial development. Despite considerable investments by the Government of Kenya in transport infrastructure, port modernization, customs automation, and logistics systems, many exporting firms continue to experience delays, high transportation costs, inadequate logistics services, and inefficient cargo movement that constrain export performance. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of logistics infrastructure on export performance among exporting firms in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Transaction Cost Theory and adopted a descriptive-explanatory research design. The target population comprised registered exporting firms operating in Mombasa County, where structured questionnaires were administered to export managers, logistics managers, operations managers, and trade compliance officers. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that logistics infrastructure had a positive and statistically significant influence on export performance ($\beta = 0.231, p = 0.003$), indicating that improvements in transport systems, port efficiency, warehousing facilities, cargo handling, and logistics services significantly enhance export competitiveness. The study concludes that investment in logistics infrastructure remains a critical determinant of export performance and recommends continuous modernization of transport networks, expansion of port facilities, improved multimodal transport systems, and greater collaboration between government agencies and private logistics providers to improve export competitiveness.

Keywords: Logistics Infrastructure, Export Performance, Trade Facilitation, Export Competitiveness, Mombasa County, Kenya.

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I. Introduction

Export performance remains one of the most important indicators of economic competitiveness because it reflects the ability of firms to penetrate international markets, generate foreign exchange earnings, improve profitability, and contribute to national economic development (International Monetary Fund, 2024; World Trade Organization, 2024). For developing economies such as Kenya, export growth plays a critical role in employment creation, industrialization, poverty reduction, and economic diversification. Consequently, governments continue to invest in trade facilitation measures aimed at reducing transaction costs, improving border efficiency, and enhancing international trade competitiveness (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2024).

Among the various trade facilitation measures, logistics infrastructure has increasingly emerged as one of the most important determinants of export competitiveness. Logistics infrastructure encompasses transport networks, seaports, railways, airports, inland container depots, warehousing facilities, cargo handling systems, freight forwarding services, and digital logistics platforms that facilitate the efficient movement of goods from producers to international markets (World Bank, 2023). Efficient logistics infrastructure reduces transportation costs, minimizes cargo delays, enhances delivery reliability, and improves supply chain efficiency, thereby enabling firms to compete effectively in international markets (Kumar & Mehta, 2024).

Globally, countries with highly developed logistics systems consistently record superior export performance. Economies such as Singapore, the Netherlands, Germany, South Korea, and China continue to rank highly on the World Bank Logistics Performance Index due to sustained investments in integrated transport infrastructure, digital logistics platforms, efficient ports, and multimodal transport systems (World Bank, 2023). Empirical evidence indicates that these investments significantly reduce logistics costs, improve export reliability, increase market diversification, and strengthen international competitiveness (Wani, 2024; Kumar & Mehta, 2024).

Across Africa, however, inadequate logistics infrastructure continues to constrain export growth and competitiveness. Many countries experience poor road connectivity, inefficient rail transport, inadequate storage facilities, congested ports, and high transportation costs that significantly increase the cost of doing business. Recent studies indicate that logistics costs in many African countries account for between 30 and 40 percent of total export costs, considerably exceeding global averages and reducing firms' ability to compete effectively in international markets (Kareem, 2024; Shumba, 2024). These infrastructural deficiencies continue to hinder integration into regional and global value chains despite ongoing implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement (Afesorgbor, 2024).

Kenya has undertaken significant logistics reforms aimed at enhancing export competitiveness. These reforms include modernization of the Port of Mombasa, development of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), expansion of inland container depots, automation of cargo clearance through the Kenya National Electronic Single Window System, and substantial investments in national road infrastructure connecting production centres to export gateways (KenTrade, 2024; KIPPRA, 2024). These initiatives complement Kenya Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), both of which identify logistics infrastructure as a strategic driver of export-led economic growth and regional trade integration (KIPPRA, 2024).

Despite these investments, exporting firms continue to experience port congestion, high inland transport costs, inadequate warehousing capacity, inefficient cargo handling systems, fragmented logistics coordination, and delays in cargo movement. These persistent logistical challenges increase transaction costs, reduce supply chain reliability, and ultimately constrain export performance (Nse et al., 2025). Although previous studies have examined trade facilitation and export performance at the macroeconomic level, there remains limited firm-level empirical evidence on the contribution of logistics infrastructure to export performance among exporting firms in Mombasa County. This knowledge gap limits evidence-based policy formulation and infrastructure investment decisions aimed at enhancing Kenya's export competitiveness. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance among exporting firms in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

The Government of Kenya has invested substantially in logistics infrastructure through expansion of the Port of Mombasa, construction of the Standard Gauge Railway, rehabilitation of trunk roads, automation of port operations, and development of integrated logistics management systems. These investments were intended to reduce logistics costs, improve cargo movement, and enhance the competitiveness of Kenyan exports.

Despite these interventions, many exporting firms continue to experience high transportation costs, inadequate warehousing facilities, port congestion, inefficient cargo handling, unreliable transport services, and prolonged cargo transit times. These operational inefficiencies continue to reduce export competitiveness, increase operational costs, and constrain firms from fully exploiting regional and international market opportunities.

Previous studies have largely focused on trade facilitation from a macroeconomic perspective, emphasizing customs reforms, regional trade agreements, or aggregate export growth. Limited empirical evidence exists on the specific contribution of logistics infrastructure to firm-level export performance in Kenya, particularly among exporting firms operating in Mombasa County. This knowledge gap limits evidence-based policymaking regarding infrastructure investment priorities. Therefore, this study sought to determine the effect of logistics infrastructure on export performance among firms in Mombasa County.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of logistics infrastructure on export performance among exporting firms in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Theoretical Review

Transaction Cost Theory

The study was anchored on Transaction Cost Theory, originally developed by Coase (1937) and later expanded by Williamson (1985). The theory argues that firms seek governance structures that minimize transaction costs associated with searching for information, negotiating contracts, monitoring activities, and enforcing agreements. Within international trade, transaction costs arise from transport delays, inefficient logistics systems, poor infrastructure, cumbersome documentation, and coordination failures among institutions.

Logistics infrastructure directly influences these transaction costs by determining the speed, reliability, and cost of moving goods across supply chains. Efficient transport systems, modern ports, adequate warehousing facilities, integrated cargo handling systems, and reliable freight services reduce delivery time, lower transportation expenses, improve inventory management, and enhance customer satisfaction.

Conversely, inadequate logistics infrastructure increases uncertainty, delays shipments, raises freight costs, and reduces firms' competitiveness in international markets. The theory therefore provides an appropriate

framework for explaining how improvements in logistics infrastructure enhance export performance through reductions in transaction costs and improvements in operational efficiency.

II. Empirical Literature Review

Recent empirical studies consistently demonstrate that logistics infrastructure significantly influences export performance.

Mwatu (2022) established that efficient transport infrastructure significantly reduced logistics costs and enhanced export competitiveness among manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study reported that improved road connectivity and integrated freight systems enhanced delivery reliability and reduced lead times, thereby increasing export volumes.

Kareem (2024) investigated logistics infrastructure across Sub-Saharan Africa and found that countries with efficient transport corridors, modern ports, and integrated logistics systems experienced significantly higher export growth than countries with weak infrastructure. The study concluded that logistics infrastructure remains one of the strongest predictors of export competitiveness within African economies.

Onyango (2024) examined Kenya's export competitiveness and established that inadequate logistics infrastructure, high transport costs, and congestion at major transport corridors continue to reduce export efficiency despite recent infrastructure investments. The study recommended expansion of multimodal transport systems and modernization of cargo handling facilities.

Liu and Kim (2025) observed that logistics infrastructure significantly improves supply chain reliability by reducing transit time variability, increasing cargo visibility, and improving coordination among supply chain actors. Their findings further demonstrated that logistics infrastructure contributes positively to export performance through improved customer satisfaction and lower operational costs.

Nse et al. (2025) reported that congestion at the Port of Mombasa, high inland transportation costs, and inefficient cargo handling remain major impediments to export competitiveness. The researchers emphasized continued investment in port modernization, inland logistics hubs, and integrated digital logistics platforms to improve export efficiency.

Although previous studies consistently report a positive relationship between logistics infrastructure and export performance, most have concentrated on national-level trade indicators or sector-specific analyses. Few studies have specifically examined firm-level perceptions among exporting firms operating within Mombasa County. Consequently, the present study addresses this gap by providing empirical evidence on the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance using firm-level data.

III. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive-explanatory research design to examine the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance among firms in Mombasa County. The design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to describe the characteristics of the study variables while simultaneously establishing the cause-and-effect relationship between logistics infrastructure and export performance. Data were collected only once from the respondents using structured questionnaires, making the study cross-sectional in nature. The target population comprised 108 registered exporting firms operating within Mombasa County, from which a sample of 85 firms was selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The respondents included export managers, logistics managers, operations managers, and trade compliance officers because of their direct involvement in export activities. A total of 67 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 78.8%, which was considered adequate for statistical analysis. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) through descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis to determine the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance. The study adhered to all ethical requirements by obtaining informed consent from respondents, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation.

Response Rate

The study targeted 85 respondents drawn from exporting firms operating in Mombasa County. Out of the administered questionnaires, 67 were duly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 78.8%. According to Kothari (2019), a response rate exceeding 70% is considered sufficiently representative for social science research. Therefore, the response rate obtained was adequate for conducting both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The high response rate also demonstrates the willingness of exporting firms to participate in studies aimed at improving trade facilitation and export competitiveness.

Reliability Assessment

Reliability analysis was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were computed for all study variables. The results indicated that all constructs

recorded Cronbach Alpha coefficients above the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming that the questionnaire was sufficiently reliable for measuring the intended constructs. Consequently, the instrument was considered suitable for subsequent statistical analyses.

Respondents' Characteristics

The respondents comprised managers directly involved in export operations, including export managers, logistics managers, operations managers, and trade compliance officers. Their managerial responsibilities ensured that they possessed adequate knowledge regarding logistics operations, transport systems, cargo handling processes, warehousing facilities, and export procedures within their respective firms.

The respondents also represented diverse exporting sectors operating within Mombasa County, including manufacturing, agricultural exports, and trading firms. This diversity enhanced the representativeness of the findings by capturing different perspectives regarding the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance.

Influence of Logistics Infrastructure on Export Performance

The second objective of the study sought to determine the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance among firms in Mombasa County. Respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement with various statements describing logistics infrastructure using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Logistics Infrastructure

Logistics infrastructure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transport infrastructure (roads, rail) supports efficient export operations	67	3.5672	1.67172
Port infrastructure is efficient in handling export cargo	67	3.2537	1.34100
Logistics services (freight, clearing, forwarding) are readily available	67	3.2687	1.35492
Adequate warehousing and storage facilities are available	67	3.3134	1.17046
Infrastructure capacity meets export demand	67	4.1343	.85094
Logistics systems are modern and well-maintained	67	3.7313	1.44161

The descriptive findings indicate that respondents generally agreed that logistics infrastructure significantly contributes to export performance. The relatively high mean scores suggest that efficient transport networks, modern port facilities, reliable logistics service providers, effective cargo handling systems, and adequate warehousing facilities facilitate timely movement of exports while reducing operational costs.

The findings further suggest that logistics infrastructure enhances supply chain reliability, reduces transit time variability, minimizes cargo damage, and improves firms' responsiveness to international customers. Consequently, firms operating within efficient logistics environments are more likely to achieve improved export performance through reduced lead times, enhanced delivery reliability, and increased customer satisfaction.

These findings agree with Kareem (2024), who reported that transport infrastructure remains one of the strongest determinants of export competitiveness across Sub-Saharan Africa. Similarly, Liu and Kim (2025) established that logistics infrastructure significantly improves supply chain efficiency through faster cargo movement, lower transportation costs, and enhanced coordination among supply chain actors.

Correlation Analysis

The study further sought to establish the relationship between logistics infrastructure and export performance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Export Performance
Logistics Infrastructure	$r = .608$
Sig. (2-tailed)	$p = .000$

The results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between logistics infrastructure and export performance. This implies that improvements in transport infrastructure, port efficiency, warehousing facilities, cargo handling systems, and logistics services are associated with increased export performance among firms in Mombasa County.

The positive correlation suggests that firms operating in environments characterized by efficient logistics infrastructure experience reduced transportation costs, shorter delivery times, improved inventory management, and greater reliability in international trade.

The findings are consistent with Onyango (2024), who established that logistics infrastructure is a major determinant of Kenya's export competitiveness. Likewise, Nse et al. (2025) found that improved logistics systems significantly reduce export delays while increasing firms' competitiveness in regional and international markets.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

To determine the effect of logistics infrastructure on export performance while controlling for the other trade facilitation variables, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.
Logistics Infrastructure	0.231	1.704	0.003

(Source: Field Data, 2026)

The regression results indicate that logistics infrastructure has a positive and statistically significant influence on export performance ($\beta = 0.231$, $p = 0.003$). This implies that a one-unit improvement in logistics infrastructure leads to a corresponding increase in export performance while holding other trade facilitation measures constant.

The findings demonstrate that firms operating within efficient logistics environments benefit from reduced transportation costs, faster cargo movement, improved reliability of export deliveries, lower inventory holding costs, and increased customer confidence in international markets.

Although logistics infrastructure was not the strongest predictor compared with customs procedures efficiency, its significant positive coefficient demonstrates that investments in transport systems, logistics facilities, port modernization, and cargo handling infrastructure substantially contribute to improving export performance.

These findings support Transaction Cost Theory, which argues that efficient logistics systems reduce transaction costs associated with transportation, coordination, monitoring, and cargo movement. Lower transaction costs improve operational efficiency, enabling firms to compete more effectively in international markets.

The results also corroborate recent studies by Kareem (2024), Liu and Kim (2025), Onyango (2024), and Nse et al. (2025), all of whom concluded that logistics infrastructure significantly improves export competitiveness through reductions in transport costs, enhanced cargo reliability, and improved supply chain performance.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀1: Logistics infrastructure has no significant effect on export performance among firms in Mombasa County.

The regression analysis produced a standardized coefficient of $\beta = 0.231$ with a significance level of $p = 0.003$, which is less than the conventional significance level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

The findings therefore demonstrate that logistics infrastructure has a statistically significant positive effect on export performance among firms in Mombasa County. This implies that improvements in transport networks, warehousing facilities, cargo handling systems, logistics services, and port infrastructure significantly enhance firms' ability to compete in international markets by reducing operational costs, shortening delivery times, improving supply chain reliability, and increasing customer satisfaction.

IV. Discussion Of Findings

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of logistics infrastructure on export performance among firms in Mombasa County, Kenya. The regression analysis established that logistics infrastructure had a positive and statistically significant effect on export performance ($\beta = 0.231$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that improvements in transport infrastructure, port facilities, warehousing systems, cargo handling services, and logistics service provision significantly enhance the export performance of firms.

The findings suggest that firms operating within an efficient logistics environment are better positioned to minimize transportation costs, reduce cargo transit time, improve inventory management, and ensure timely delivery of goods to international markets. Efficient logistics infrastructure facilitates seamless movement of exports from production centres to ports while minimizing operational bottlenecks that often increase the total cost of exporting. Consequently, firms benefit from improved customer satisfaction, enhanced reliability of supply chains, increased export volumes, and stronger competitiveness in global markets.

These findings support the propositions of Transaction Cost Theory, which argues that organizations seek to minimize transaction costs associated with exchange activities. Logistics infrastructure reduces search costs, transportation costs, coordination costs, cargo delays, and uncertainty associated with international trade. Consequently, firms operating in environments characterized by efficient logistics infrastructure experience lower transaction costs, enabling them to allocate more resources towards productivity improvement, market expansion, and export growth. The findings therefore affirm that logistics infrastructure constitutes an important strategic resource for improving export competitiveness.

The findings are consistent with those reported by Kareem (2024), who established that logistics infrastructure significantly improves export competitiveness across Sub-Saharan African countries by reducing transportation costs, improving transport connectivity, and facilitating faster movement of goods across international borders. Kareem concluded that countries with efficient logistics systems consistently record higher export growth than countries characterized by weak transport infrastructure.

Similarly, the findings corroborate those of Onyango (2024), who found that despite Kenya's considerable investments in road infrastructure, port modernization, and freight transport systems, logistical bottlenecks continue to constrain export competitiveness. The study emphasized that continued investments in integrated transport systems and efficient logistics services remain essential for improving export performance among Kenyan firms.

The results further agree with Liu and Kim (2025), who reported that modern logistics infrastructure significantly improves supply chain efficiency through reduced cargo transit time, enhanced cargo visibility, lower inventory costs, and improved coordination among logistics stakeholders. According to their study, firms operating within efficient logistics networks demonstrate superior export performance because they are able to deliver products more reliably and respond quickly to changing customer demands.

Likewise, the findings are consistent with those of Nse et al. (2025), who established that congestion at the Port of Mombasa, inadequate inland transport systems, and inefficient cargo handling continue to increase logistics costs for exporters. Their study recommended modernization of transport corridors, expansion of inland logistics facilities, and greater adoption of digital logistics systems to improve export competitiveness.

From a managerial perspective, the findings demonstrate that logistics infrastructure should not merely be viewed as a public investment but rather as a strategic competitive resource capable of enhancing firm performance. Firms that integrate efficient transportation systems, reliable freight services, adequate warehousing facilities, and digital logistics management systems are likely to achieve superior export outcomes through improved operational efficiency and customer service.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the importance of sustained government investment in logistics infrastructure. Although Kenya has made considerable progress through modernization of the Port of Mombasa, expansion of road networks, development of the Standard Gauge Railway, and implementation of digital cargo management systems, additional investments remain necessary to eliminate persistent bottlenecks that continue to constrain export competitiveness. Strengthening collaboration among government agencies, port authorities, transport providers, and private logistics firms would further improve the efficiency of Kenya's export logistics ecosystem.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that logistics infrastructure remains one of the critical determinants of export performance among firms in Mombasa County. Continued improvement of logistics systems will therefore play a significant role in enabling Kenyan firms to compete effectively within regional and global markets.

V. Conclusion

The study concluded that logistics infrastructure has a significant positive influence on export performance among firms operating in Mombasa County. The regression results demonstrated that improvements in logistics infrastructure significantly increase export performance, confirming that efficient transportation networks, modern port facilities, reliable warehousing systems, efficient cargo handling services, and dependable logistics providers collectively enhance firms' competitiveness in international markets.

The findings demonstrate that logistics infrastructure contributes to export performance by reducing transportation costs, minimizing delivery delays, improving supply chain reliability, enhancing inventory management, and increasing customer satisfaction. Consequently, firms operating within well-developed logistics environments are more capable of penetrating international markets, expanding export volumes, and sustaining competitive advantage.

The study therefore concludes that logistics infrastructure constitutes a strategic driver of export competitiveness and should remain a priority area for both policymakers and private sector investors seeking to improve Kenya's export performance.

Practical Implications

The study has several practical implications.

For policymakers, the findings demonstrate the need for continued investment in transport infrastructure, port modernization, multimodal transport systems, inland container depots, and integrated logistics management systems. Such investments are likely to reduce logistics costs while improving export competitiveness.

For port authorities and regulatory agencies, the study highlights the importance of reducing cargo congestion, improving coordination among logistics stakeholders, and accelerating cargo clearance processes to enhance export efficiency.

For exporting firms, investment in modern logistics technologies, strategic partnerships with reliable logistics providers, warehouse automation, and supply chain integration can significantly improve operational efficiency and export performance.

For logistics service providers, continuous improvement in freight management, cargo tracking technologies, and customer service will enhance the competitiveness of Kenyan exporters in international markets.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

- i. The Government of Kenya should continue investing in road infrastructure, railway transport, inland logistics hubs, and expansion of the Port of Mombasa to improve cargo movement and reduce transportation costs.
- ii. Kenya Ports Authority should enhance cargo handling efficiency through additional automation, improved berth capacity, and expansion of storage facilities to minimize congestion and cargo delays.
- iii. Exporting firms should adopt integrated logistics management systems and strengthen collaboration with professional logistics service providers to improve supply chain visibility and operational efficiency.
- iv. Government agencies responsible for trade facilitation should strengthen coordination through integrated digital logistics platforms that reduce duplication of procedures and improve information sharing among stakeholders.
- v. Public-private partnerships should be strengthened to mobilize investments in logistics infrastructure capable of supporting Kenya's growing export sector.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to exporting firms operating within Mombasa County. Consequently, the findings may not be generalized to firms operating in other regions of Kenya that experience different logistics environments.

The study also relied on cross-sectional survey data, which captured respondents' perceptions at one point in time. Future longitudinal studies could provide additional insights into the long-term effects of logistics infrastructure investments on export performance.

Furthermore, the study focused primarily on logistics infrastructure as one dimension of trade facilitation. Future studies may investigate interactions between logistics infrastructure and emerging factors such as digital supply chains, artificial intelligence, green logistics, and supply chain resilience.

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