

**LAPSSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AND ECONOMIC SECURITY
STABILIZATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA REGION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND
DIPLOMACY OF RIARA UNIVERSITY**

JUNE 2026

DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

This thesis is my original work and it has never been presented for an award of a degree in any other University or institution of higher learning.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my rock, Yeshua HaMashiach, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the Sovereign Living GOD for HIS authentic presence in my life, and throughout the conceptualization, writing, presentation and publication of this thesis.

I wish to acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. James Moronge and Dr. Alfred Makotsi, for believing in my academic adeptness. Their transformational stewardship and insightful mentorship throughout this journey are engraved in my heart. I also thank the Riara University camaraderie for the fond memories and learning experiences we share.

My special appreciation to; the Laikipia University Institutional Ethics Review Committee (LUIERC), the School of International Relations & Diplomacy of Riara University, and the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for appraising my thesis on substance and ethical considerations. I'm also grateful to the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, and all the national and devolved government institutions who allowed me to interview their technical personnel. I am also grateful to all the targeted respondents for allowing me to interview them.

Finally, I sincerely thank my family for their; love, loyalty, honesty, respect, trust and confidence which they have in me - especially my son, Israel Ogal. Israel, my success is your victory.

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ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	: African Development Bank
APRM	: African Peer Review Mechanism
AUDA	: African Union Development Agency
ECA	: Economic Commission for Africa
FDGs	: Focus Discussion Groups
FDI	: Foreign Direct Investments
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
HoA	: Horn of Africa
HoAI	: Horn of Africa Initiative
HSGOC	: Heads of States and Government Orientation Committee
IGAD	: Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IS	: Islamic State
LAPSSET Initiative	: Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopian Transport Initiative
NEPAD	: New Partnership for Africa's Development
PICI	: Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative
PIDA	: Program for Infrastructure Development
PMI	: Project Management Institute
RBI	: Road and Belt Initiative
RECs	: Regional Economic Communities
RSC	: Regional Security Complex
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

Located in the Horn of Africa (HoA), the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) infrastructural initiative was conceived in 1975 as a strategic resource for spurring economic growth and stabilization of a region historically riddled by both ecological fragility and ideological conflict. However, for several decades the initiative remained lull, until 2012, when it was revamped with the mandate of: decongesting the port of Mombasa and the Northern Transport Corridor in Kenya; and spurring regional integration between Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia, through infrastructure development and trade. Despite its strategic importance, the initiative has encountered persistent obstacles, including; inadequate institutional coordination, limited regional inclusivity, and uneven implementation across participating states. From the lenses of regionalism, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was conceptualized as a narrow plan, aimed at integrating only the tripartite states of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, as opposed to a multifaceted approach for integrating the greater Horn of Africa - a geostrategic region plagued with infrastructure deficits, violent conflicts, humanitarian crises, economic shocks and instabilities. This study, therefore, investigated the effect of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. The general objective was to investigate the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. Specifically, the study sought: (i) to evaluate the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region; (ii) to examine the effect of the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region; and (iii) to assess the effect of the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. The study was anchored on the theories of regionalism and complex interdependence. A descriptive research design was adopted. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using the semi-structured questionnaire, which was administered to 15 LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya. Qualitative data was targeted from selected border community representatives in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, as well as from key informants from the Ethiopian and South Sudan Embassies in Kenya, using moderated focus group discussions and open-ended key informants interview schedules, respectively. Additional key informants were also targeted through the LAPSSET cooperating facility in Kenya. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, with multiple regression analysis used to determine relationships among variables. The findings revealed that all three components significantly influence economic security stabilization. The regional coordination mechanism had the strongest positive effect ($B = 0.476$, $p < 0.001$), followed by conceptual design ($B = 0.412$, $p < 0.001$) and economic security imperatives ($B = 0.363$, $p < 0.001$). However, the results also indicated persistent weaknesses in institutional coordination, implementation capacity, and regional policy alignment. This study concluded that, while the LAPSSET has considerable potentials for bolstering economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa, its effectiveness is constrained by governance and coordination shortcomings. Therefore, refining the conceptual design of the LAPSSET, improving institutional integration, and strengthening of regional coordination frameworks, are critical for maximizing the initiatives stabilizing impact.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	The LAPSSET infrastructural initiative refers to a regional flagship transport and economic corridor project designed to enhance connectivity, trade facilitation, and regional integration between Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. It involves the development of the following key infrastructures; a sea port, transnational highways, transnational railways, airports, resort cities, transnational crude and product oil pipelines, and a high-grand falls dam, aimed at promoting regional economic transformation and integration within the Horn of Africa region.
Conceptual Design of LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	The conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative refers to the strategic and structural blueprint that guides the planning and implementation of the initiative. It encompasses the strategic conceptualization of the initiative as a regional integration instrument, the scope and extent of regional inclusivity in its design and implementation, and the anticipated implications of the project for economic stabilization within the region. In this study, the conceptual design of the LAPSSET reflects how the foundational planning of LAPSSET influences its effectiveness in promoting regional economic security and stability.
Economic Security	The economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural

Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	initiative refer to the core economic objectives embedded within the LAPSSET initiative, that are intended to enhance regional economic security. These include infrastructure-driven investments that contribute to economic stabilization, the creation of employment opportunities that reduce regional unemployment, and the stimulation of regional economic growth and output through improved connectivity, trade expansion, and enhanced productivity across participating states.
Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	The regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative refers to the institutional and governance arrangements established to oversee, harmonize, and implement the project across participating countries. It involves the existence and operationalization of coordination structures, stakeholder engagement and community inclusion processes, and mechanisms that promote regional integration and economic interdependence through policy alignment and cross-border cooperation.
Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa	Economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa refers to the attainment of a stable, resilient, and integrated regional economic environment characterized by sustained economic growth and reduced vulnerability to economic shocks. It is reflected in this study through; the emergence of transnational special economic zones under the LAPSSET corridor, reduction in regional

unemployment, increased economic output as reflected in combined GDP growth within the Horn of Africa region, sustained regional economic growth, and the stabilization of macroeconomic cycles such as inflation and deflation across member states.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter builds a background to the problem under investigation. It also outlines the study objectives and research questions before presenting the assumptions of the study and the study rationale.

1.2 Background of the Study

Infrastructure, in the narrow sense, entails logistical and physical reconstruction aimed at restoring normalcy, peace, economic development, and geopolitical influence in fragile and conflict-affected settings. It has increasingly become a tool for stabilization worldwide. These infrastructural projects, often framed as physical assets, are designed to improve access to public services in fragile states (Brown, 2005). Undeniably, state-building enterprises materialize through ramifying networks of roads, bridges, electrification systems, and water infrastructure, which become embedded in processes of regional integration and peacebuilding (Bachmann & Schouten, 2018).

Globally, major infrastructures such as the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) in Europe, the Nord Stream gas pipeline between Russia and Germany, and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) demonstrate how states and regional blocs leverage infrastructure as systems for economic integration and geopolitical positioning. The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) represents integrated efforts by the European Union to connect member states through coordinated transport infrastructure, thereby enhancing mobility of people and cargo while simultaneously improving internal market efficiency through reduced transaction costs (European Commission, 2020). Similarly, China has leveraged the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

whose infrastructure spans Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America as a tool of economic diplomacy, with the strategic objective of expanding Chinese global economic influence through enhanced trade connectivity (Wang et al., 2022). In the energy sector, the Nord Stream transnational pipeline demonstrates how physical infrastructure can secure long-term energy supply chains while simultaneously creating interdependence between politically divergent regions (Ericson, 2021).

In Africa, mega-infrastructure projects also demonstrate how regional economic communities (RECs) are increasingly adopting infrastructure-led integration strategies. For instance, the Northern Corridor connects landlocked countries in East Africa including Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan, and Rwanda to the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, significantly enhancing regional trade flows (World Bank [WB], 2019). Similarly, the Maputo Development Corridor, through its rail and road connectivity, has facilitated industrial growth between Mozambique and South Africa, thereby stimulating investment flows in regional value chains (Fourie, 2006). In West Africa, the Abidjan–Lagos Corridor connects major urban and industrial hubs across multiple states, fostering labor mobility and strengthening regional trade integration (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2017).

The Horn of Africa is the fourth largest geostrategic peninsula in the world, located on the easternmost part of the African mainland, comprising Somalia (including the de facto independent Somaliland), Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan, and South Sudan (Asefa, 2003). Asefa (2003) described the Horn of Africa as one of the most unstable and conflict-ridden regions globally, owing to its geostrategic importance to the African and global economy, security, and trade especially because Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia are located at the entrance

of the Red Sea, one of the busiest maritime corridors with several harbors and ports linking the Indian and Arabian peninsulas.

The region is a pivotal space for power struggles between the West and the East. On one hand, the West, led by the United States of America (USA), has established military bases in Kenya (at Manda Bay in Lamu County) and Djibouti (Camp Lemonnier), ostensibly for security surveillance, while on the other hand, the region forms a strategic corridor for the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructural connectivity project (Wang et al., 2022). In this context, economic collaboration is fronted as the pathway for growth and stability (Belhaj, 2024). Terese and Tesfaye (2023) link the militarization of the Horn of Africa by competing global and regional powers to the exchange of economic benefits for friendly host regimes. Despite these economic and military engagements, the region continues to experience intermittent armed violence and insurgencies, mainly by non-state actors such as ethnic rebel groups, self-defense militias, and transnational organizations affiliated with Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS), which challenge the legitimacy of host governments.

The human security crisis in the Horn of Africa is a symptom of underlying fragility in the region (Pillai & Corral, 2022). Humanitarian crises in Ethiopia, military coups in Sudan, attacks on civilian populations by armed groups, and protracted cross-border political tensions and security challenges are among the issues linked to complex historical legacies. Ultimately, the region's susceptibility to armed conflict and insurgency exposes it to economic shocks and instability. It was against this background that regional leaders from South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya established the Lamu Port–South Sudan–Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) infrastructural initiative to decongest the Northern Corridor in Kenya and spur regional integration among the

tripartite states through infrastructure development and trade (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority [LCDA], 2023).

Located in the Horn of Africa (HoA), the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative brings together Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan and aims to decongest the Port of Mombasa and the Northern Transport Corridor. It is estimated that the initiative will open up 70% of Northern Kenya's land area to multilateral trade, technology transfer, and skills development, thereby creating thousands of jobs, investment opportunities, and trade prospects as envisioned in Kenya's Vision 2030 (LCDA, 2023). Beyond opening up Northern Kenya, the initiative seeks to strengthen regional integration among the tripartite states and provide a land bridge across the Great Lakes region from the eastern coast of Africa (Lamu) to the western coast (Douala), Cameroon (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority [LCDA], 2016).

As a strategy for promoting economic integration among the tripartite states, the LAPSSET initiative has overseen the completion of its initial three deep-sea berths at the new Lamu Port and commenced construction and operationalization of transnational highways. These developments are intended to interconnect the participating states and facilitate the movement of people and cargo between Lamu Port and Ethiopia through Garissa, Isiolo, and Moyale Counties, and to South Sudan through Isiolo and Turkana Counties. The primary LAPSSET roads include the Lamu Port Access Road, the Lamu–Witu–Garsen Road, the Lamu–Garissa–Isiolo Road, the Isiolo–Moyale–Hawassa Road, and the Isiolo–Lokichar–Nadapal–Torit–Juba Road. These highways are intended to facilitate free movement of people and goods, strengthen regional connectivity, and spur economic development through trade (Eng. R. Nyakech, personal communication, October 30, 2024).

Despite its potential, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative faces numerous challenges, including inadequate funding for project implementation, persistent political instability in some participating states, limited political goodwill, low demand for infrastructure services, weak institutional frameworks, and conflicting priorities among member countries (African Union Development Agency–NEPAD [AUDA-NEPAD], 2022). According to Okwany (2021), concerns have emerged regarding social contract issues associated with the initiative. The potential for structural inequality-driven conflict arises from the project’s vast coverage across historically conflict-prone communities in northwestern Kenya. Additionally, the discovery of geothermal resources and oil deposits, coupled with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons across Kenya’s porous northern borders, has been cited as a driver of persistent cultural conflict among the Turkana and Pokot communities.

In light of the foregoing, there is a critical need for stabilization not only of states in the Horn of Africa region but also for peaceful coexistence among communities along the LAPSSET corridor and beyond. As such, this study which assessed the viability of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative as a model of economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa was timely. The study critically interrogates the narrow physical infrastructure approach of the LAPSSET initiative an African Union Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) project and contributes new empirical literature for future research in African infrastructure development. It also provides policy-relevant insights for the governments of Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, as well as the economic cooperation and regional integration division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in assessing the feasibility of an expanded LAPSSET mandate as a mechanism for addressing economic inequalities, infrastructure deficits, and violent conflicts in the Horn of Africa. This aligns with the broader

African Union Agenda 2063 aspirations of regional integration, peace and security, and inclusive socioeconomic development.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

While the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has made notable progress towards integrating the tripartite states of Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia - through infrastructure development and trade – a critical review of institutional reports and scholarly literature on the LAPSSET revealed that the initiatives' existing mandate is mired by conceptual design obscurities, which implicates its implementation among the cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region. The initiatives' existing mandate was conceptualized by South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority Strategic Plan, 2023-2027), and thus, may have overlooked the Horn of Africa's broader need for peace and security, as well as the regions' wholesome economic security stabilization effect, which may accrue from a mega transnational infrastructure in the caliber of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. From the lenses of regionalism, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative may have been conceptualized as a narrow plan, aimed at integrating only the tripartite states of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan, as opposed to a multifaceted approach for integrating the greater Horn of Africa - a geostrategic region plagued with infrastructure deficits, violent armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, economic shocks and instabilities.

Moreover, the LAPSSET initiative was largely conceived as a physical infrastructure project, with insufficient integration of regional governance, institutional coordination, and security frameworks. Despite the mandates of regional bodies such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI) to promote coordinated regional integration, peace, and economic cooperation, there was limited empirical evidence linking

LAPSSET's conceptualization and implementation to these institutional mechanisms. Given the empirical evidence that well-designed and coordinated transport corridors significantly contribute to regional economic growth and stability, the absence of a clearly articulated regional coordination mechanism within LAPSSET constituted a critical knowledge and policy gap.

In the foregoing design related ambiguities – as currently adopted by the tripartite states - this study has investigated the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, focusing on the initiatives; conceptual design, economic security imperatives and regional coordination mechanism, with the objective of evaluating whether the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative provides for a common understanding of what collective regional cooperation entails.

1.4 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa Region.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

This study was directed by the following specific objectives:

- i. To evaluate the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.
- ii. To examine the effect of the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.
- iii. To assess the effect of the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

1.5 Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions:

- i. What is the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region?
- ii. What is the effect of the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region?
- iii. What is the effect of the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on contextual and methodological assumptions, which were vital in steering the research process. Firstly, it was assumed that the target respondents in this study had sufficient knowledge and understanding regarding the planning, coordination, sequencing and implementation facets of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. Secondly, it was assumed that the three research instruments used for data collection were objective, reliable and valid. Thirdly, it was assumed that the four variables selected for the study were appropriate for investigating the relationship between the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

Moreover, the study assumed that the analytical tools used, particularly inferential and descriptive statistics, were adequate for establishing meaningful relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Finally, it was assumed that the political and security environment in the republic of Kenya (research site) was stable throughout the period of the study, and thus, credible data collection and analysis.

1.7 Justification of the Study

The Horn of Africa region continues to experience persistent economic inequalities, transnational insecurity, and fragmented development challenges, which are partly attributed to unintegrated infrastructural systems in the region. While significant scholarly and policy attention have focused on security interventions, relatively less focus has been placed on how transnational infrastructure corridors may deliver economic security stabilization. Existing studies have mainly examined infrastructure projects from either a national development perspective or a technical implementation angle, with limited analytical focus on their broader economic integration and regional security capabilities (Biruk et al., 2024). This creates an academic gap, especially in understanding how mega infrastructural initiatives – like the LAPSSET - can be reconceptualized as strategic capitals for regional integration and economic stabilization, rather than purely physical infrastructure projects.

From the lenses of policy, responses to extremism and insurgency in the Horn of Africa region has overly relied on military operations, yet the persistence and spread of insurgency beyond the region remains unprecedented. Despite the substantial investments in defense and counterterrorism operations, insecurity remains persistent and, in some cases, increasingly cross-border in nature (Pillai & Corral, 2022). This suggests a policy gap in the effectiveness of security-led approaches in addressing the structural economic and developmental drivers of instability. In contrast, there is limited integration of human security and development-centered frameworks in the design and implementation of regional infrastructural projects. Consequently, this study was justified in its investigation of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative as a potential frontier for advancing a more comprehensive and preventive approach to the Horn of Africa's regional stabilization.

Moreover, while existing literature have interrogated the importance of infrastructure projects in fostering trade and economic growth, there is was deficiency of empirical evidences on how specific components of transnational infrastructure initiatives – like the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms - collectively influence economic security outcomes in volatile regions. This study, therefore, addressed this gap, having investigated the LAPSSET initiative beyond its physical infrastructure aspect, and placed it within the broader discourse of regional economic security stabilization. This study, has therefore, contributed both academically and policy-wise, by generating new insights and foresights, which may inform more integrated, preventive, and development-centered approaches to addressing insecurity and economic fragmentation in the Horn of Africa region.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its effect on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, with emphasis on Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan as the core participating states. The study specifically examined the conceptual design of the initiative, its economic security imperatives, and the regional coordination mechanism as the main explanatory variables influencing economic security stabilization outcomes within the region.

In terms of geographical scope, the study was conducted within Kenya, with particular focus on; the LAPSSET corridor counties in Kenya – Lamu, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Turkana, and Samburu - selected national-level institutions involved in the planning, coordination, sequencing and implementation of the LAPSSET initiative. Additional insights were drawn from key informants from South Sudan and Ethiopia, respectively, as well as from the border communities located along the Kenya–Ethiopia and Kenya–South Sudan frontiers, in-order to capture cross-

border perspectives on regional integration and economic security dynamics. With regard to time scope, the study was conducted between September 2025 and February 2026. This period was selected because it provided a sufficiently recent and relevant timeframe for capturing current perceptions, policy developments, and implementation dynamics of the initiative. The scope therefore ensured that the study reflected contemporary realities of the LAPSSET initiative and its evolving role in regional economic security stabilization.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized in five chapters, namely; introduction, literature review, research methodology, findings and discussions, and conclusions and recommendations. While the introductory chapter of this thesis discusses the; introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions of the study, justification of the study, and organization of the study. The second chapter (literature review) discusses the; empirical and theoretical literature relevant to the problem being inquired into, critique to the existing literature applicable to the study, research gaps, and a summary of the chapter. The third chapter (research methodology) discusses the; study site and units of analysis, study sample and selection procedures, data collection techniques; data analysis methods, ethical considerations, and the potential limitations of the study. The fourth chapter discusses the research findings and discussions from the analyzed data, and the final chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Provided in this chapter is an appraisal of empirical and theoretical literature. While theoretical review discussed the two theories which guided this study, empirical review section discussed relevant literature on preceding research work, which were aligned to the study objectives. Finally, this chapter critiqued the existing literature and presented the research gap which this study sought to bridge.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theories of regionalism and complex interdependence were applied, and they structured a theoretical inclination which directed this study in investigating the effect of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. The basis of these theories, their proponents, and arguments for or against the theories and how they apply to this study are discussed herein.

2.2.1 Regionalism Theory

Regionalism is a central theoretical framework in international relations that explains how and why geographically proximate states cooperated to achieve shared economic, political, and security objectives.

The early proposition of regionalism is strongly affiliated to Joseph Nye (1968), who described an international region as a finite group of states linked by a degree of mutual interdependence and by geographical relationships, and therefore, regionalism as the establishment of interstate groupings, on the basis of regions. Ethier (1998) described regional cooperation as the

expression of a common purpose and identity by a group of states, often associated with the establishment and operationalization of regional institutions which express such identity, and therefore shaping the collective action of participating states within a geographical region. Ethier (1998) noted the emergence of the theory of regionalism after the end of the second world war, and in the time of the cold war, where states within regional blocks often cooperated with the objectives of; increasing their political influence, increasing regional stability, and gaining economic stability. The foundational premise of regionalism is therefore that states voluntarily cooperate, and in some instances, cede limited aspects of their sovereignty to regional institutions, in order to achieve collective gains which would have been unattainable individually. The theory of regionalism evolved significantly beyond its initial European focus. The “new regionalism” scholarship, as advanced by Hettne (1999) and Söderbaum (2003), observed regionalism as a multidimensional process encompassing not only economic integration, but also social interactions, security cooperation, and political coordination. This viewpoint emphasized that regional integration was not only state-centric, but also involved non-state actors like; cross-border networks and regional institutions. In developing regions, regionalism was often linked to efforts in overcoming structural shortcomings like; economic fragmentation, weak infrastructure, and small domestic markets, (Söderbaum, 2003).

Despite its analytical strengths, regionalism has been critiqued by some scholars, who argued that in Africa, regional integration efforts were often constrained by multiple regional memberships by member states, political instability in individual member states, lack of committed political goodwill by member states, and weak regional institutional capacity (Hettne, 1999). These shortcomings constrained the effectiveness of regional frameworks in delivering their designed mandates. Additionally, critics observed that regionalism could be overly

optimistic in assuming that economic cooperation would automatically translate into conflict reduction.

The relevance of the theory of regionalism in this study, lay in its ability to explain the LAPSET infrastructural initiative as a regional integration initiative in the Horn of Africa region. The LAPSET initiative represented an attempt by Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan to bolster connectivity, trade, and shared economic development, through coordinated and sequenced infrastructure development. Regionalism, therefore, provided the analytical lens for evaluating how the conceptual design and scope of LAPSET initiative - particularly its' inclusivity and strategic orientation - promoted economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Accordingly, this theory was anchored on the first objective of the study, which examined the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

While the theory of regionalism has explained the political and institutional logic behind the LAPSET initiative as a regional integration initiative aimed at bolstering connectivity, and promoting collective economic development, it had limitations in fully capturing the dynamic interactions and functional relationships that emerge once integration processes begin. In particular, regionalism emphasized more on formal state-led cooperation and institutional arrangements, but insufficiently explained how non-state actors and multiple channels of interaction influence outcomes in practice. These limitations, therefore, necessitated the incorporation of a second theory - the complex interdependence theory.

2.2.2 Complex Interdependence Theory

Complex interdependence theory is an influential framework in international relations that explains the growing interconnectedness among states beyond traditional military and security concerns. The theory was developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in 1977 as a critique of realist perspectives, which emphasized state power and military dominance as the primary determinants of international relations (Keohane & Nye, 1977). In contrast, complex interdependence posited that states were linked through multiple channels - including economic, political, institutional, and social interactions - creating mutual dependence among them.

The theory was founded on three key premises. Firstly, complex interdependence theory assumed the existence of numerous avenues of interaction among states, including formal diplomatic ties as well as informal trans-national networks. Secondly, it argued that there was un-clear hierarchy of issues in international relations, meaning that economic and social concerns could be as important as military and security issues. Thirdly, complex interdependence argued that using military force was less effective in conflict resolution between sovereign states, especially, where strong economic and institutional capacities existed (Keohane & Nye, 1977).

Further developments of the complex interdependence theory increased its applicability in the international system, where financial integration, and institutional cooperation reinforced interdependence between sovereign countries (Keohane & Nye, 2001). Infrastructure systems, cross-border economic networks, and regional institutions were increasingly observed as mechanisms which facilitated interdependence, and thus, collective handling of problems. However, complex interdependence theory was not without criticism. Waltz (1979) criticized it by arguing that complex interdependence jeopardized the value of power asymmetries and state sovereignty, especially in volatile regions where military and security concerns are magnified.

The relevance of complex interdependence theory in this study, was its ability to deliver insights on how infrastructures like the LAPSSET initiative, bolstered economic linkages and mutual inter-dependence among cooperating states. Through bolstered connectivity, trade facilitation, and institutional coordination, the LAPSSET initiative has the potential to create interdependent economic systems, which can support regional stability in the greater Horn of Africa region. Therefore, complex interdependence theory provided a framework for analyzing how economic security imperatives and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET influenced economic security stabilization outcomes in the Horn of Africa region. Accordingly, complex interdependence theory was anchored on the second and third objectives of the study, which examined the effects of economic security imperatives and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

2.2.3 Complementarity and Integration of the Theoretical Frameworks

The application of regionalism and complex interdependence theories in this study was based on their complementary explanatory strengths in investigating the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa Region.

While regionalism explained the structural foundation and rationale for regional integration through infrastructure development, complex interdependence explained the operational dynamics and evolving relationships emerging from such integration processes. Together, they provided a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding how the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative could influence economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa by linking institutional design with real-world interdependence outcomes. Accordingly, regionalism was primarily anchored on the objective examining the conceptual design of LAPSSET, while

complex interdependence theory strengthened the analysis of the economic security imperatives and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET initiative, and thus, addressing both structural and functional aspects of the study.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section presents the empirical literature relating to: the independent variables - the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET initiative, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET initiative, and the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET; as well as the empirical literature relating to the dependent variable - economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

2.3.1 Conceptual Design of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative

According to Ogal (2019) – while studying Project Completion Constraints Amongst the LAPSSSET Corridor Projects: A Case of Berth 1 of the New Lamu Port - the conceptual phase of a project refers to the initial stage of the project where ideas and concepts are developed and evaluated, in-order to lay the foundations for the project and ensure its economic viability and its alignment with the goals and objectives of the contracting parties. It therefore follows that conceptual design is the initial stage of the design process, through which the broad outlines of function and form of a proposed project are comprehensively articulated. This entails; the design of interactions, experiences, processes, and strategies, and an understanding of people's needs and how to meet them with products, services, and processes.

Within the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, the conceptual design has been framed around the development of a multi-sectoral transport and economic corridor that links Kenya to the landlocked developing countries of South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Browne (2015) observed that the LAPSSET initiative, was originally conceived in 1975 as a strategic resource for spurring economic growth and stabilization of a region historically riddled by both ecological fragility and ideological conflict, but remained lull for several decades until 2012, when it was revamped with the mandate of; decongesting the port of Mombasa and the Northern Transport Corridor; opening up 70% of Northern Kenya's land space to multilateral trade, technology and skill, thereby creating thousands of jobs and investment opportunities in the tripartite states; and spurring economic growth and stabilization among the tripartite states. The conceptualization of LAPSSET therefore reflects a state-led infrastructure strategy aimed at unlocking economic potential in historically marginalized regions through large-scale capital investments in ports, highways, railways, airports, and energy infrastructure (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority Strategic Plan, 2023–2027).

Ogal (2019) further provided a detailed breakdown of the conceptual components of the LAPSSET infrastructural, highlighting the nine major infrastructural elements that define its design architecture. These included; the anchor project, a 23-deep sea berth port in Lamu; inter-regional highways and standard gauge railway lines to service the port of Lamu and the tripartite states; resort cities in Isiolo county, Lamu county and around Lake Turkana; international airports to service the three resort cities respectively; crude and product oil pipelines across the corridor; a special economic zone in the proposed Lamu port city; utility Infrastructure in water and power supply, fiber optics technology; and a high grand falls multipurpose dam - for the control of perennial flooding within the lower tana basin, power generation and water supply to the LAPSSET tripartite states. Collectively, these nine project components reflected an integrated development model which seeks to combine transport efficiency, industrialization, energy security, and regional trade facilitation within a single spatial framework (Kasuku, 2016).

Empirical assessments performed during the initial feasibility stages of the LAPSSET initiative in 2011, suggested that each of the nine LAPSSET project components registered high economic viability, with all of them registering economic internal rates of return, over and above the recommended industry minimum rate of 10% for capital budgeting purposes. As such, the governments of the tripartite states envisioned the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative as a unique venture, capable of; spurring economic integration, and championing peace and security initiatives between Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority Strategic Plan, 2023–2027). Kasuku (2016) similarly argued that the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was envisioned to deliver an integrated transport corridor, and thus, inter-connect South Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia, and ultimately deliver a land bridge across the Great Lakes region - connecting the Indian Ocean to Central and West Africa, and thus, positioning East Africa as a central logistics hub in continental trade systems.

Comparative analysis of global infrastructure corridors provided useful insights into the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative. For instance, the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) was designed as an integrated transport infrastructure, aimed at bolstering mobility and economic cohesion, and reducing trade barriers within the European Union (European Commission, 2020). Similarly, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) represents a global infrastructure strategy that integrates transport corridors, digital connectivity, and energy pipelines, aimed at bolstering economic integration across Asia, Oceania, Africa, Europe and Latin America (Wang et al., 2022). In the aforementioned cases, conceptual design extends beyond physical infrastructure to include geopolitical strategy, financing mechanisms, and institutional coordination, (Foster & Briceño-Garmendia, 2010).

Comparable infrastructures in Africa, like the Trans-Kalahari Corridor, the Abidjan–Lagos Corridor, the Northern Corridor, and Maputo Development Corridor, demonstrate varying degrees of conceptual sophistication. The Maputo Development Corridor, for instance, was conceptualized as a public-private partnership (PPP) model, with the mandate of integrating port modernization, industrial development, and road infrastructure between Mozambique and South Africa (Fourie, 2006). Similarly, the Northern Corridor in East Africa was conceptualized with the strategic objective of linking the East African landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) – Rwanda, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan - to the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, emphasizing on logistics efficiency and regional trade facilitation (World Bank, 2019). Similarly, the Abidjan–Lagos Corridor was conceptualized as a high-density economic zone, with the strategic objective of fostering urban-industrial integration across West Africa (UNECA, 2017). These three cases have demonstrated that the success of infrastructure corridors is pegged on clearly defined regional scope, multi-dimensional integration strategies, and strong institutional coordination.

Against this comparative background, scholarly debates about the LAPSET have identified both alignment and divergence with global best practices. On one hand, the LAPSET's emphasis on connectivity, regional integration and trade facilitation, makes it similar to other infrastructure corridors, which share similar aspirations (African Development Bank [ADB], 2018). On the other hand, several studies have suggested that its conceptual design remains narrowly framed, primarily focusing on the footprint countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan), as opposed to a multifaceted approach for integrating the greater Horn of Africa region - a geostrategic region plagued with infrastructure deficits, violent armed conflicts, humanitarian crises, economic shocks and instabilities (Okwany, 2021). This limitation is crucial considering that the Horn of

Africa region is characterized by economic fragmentation, and security challenges, which require more inclusive regional planning frameworks (Pillai & Corral, 2022). Existing empirical literature have also observed that, while the LAPSSET initiative was conceived as a transformative transport corridor, its implementation has been constrained by lack of political commitment by some partner states, lack of institutional harmonization, and governance fragmentation (AUDA-NEPAD, 2022). These shortcomings raise questions on whether the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative adequately accounts for the complexity of regional interdependencies in the Horn of Africa region.

A synthesis of these literature, therefore, revealed a major conceptual gap.

While most studies have focused on the technical viability of the individual LAPSSET project components, or its alignment with national development strategies like the Kenya's Vision 2030, less studies have investigated its broader regional integration logic within the Horn of Africa peace, security and economic discourse (ADB, 2018). Particularly, less attention has been given on how conceptual design of transnational infrastructures influences economic security stabilization outcomes across volatile regions, like the Horn of Africa region.

Moreover, comparative empirical literature on transnational infrastructures have suggested that successful transnational corridors are those which integrate physical infrastructure with strong supranational coordination mechanisms and inclusive regional frameworks. The TEN-T system in Europe and the BRI have demonstrated that conceptual design of transnational infrastructures are most effective when they incorporate long-term geopolitical strategy, institutional coherence, and broad spatial coverage, (Wang et al., 2022; European Commission [EC], 2020). In contrast, the LAPSSET initiative appears to remain largely anchored in a sub-regional framework, which

may limit its capacity to adequately address structural instability in the greater Horn of Africa region.

It is against this backdrop that this study critically evaluated the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa Region. By situating the LAPSSET initiative within the global and African comparative infrastructure experiences, the study moved beyond descriptive accounts and interrogated the strategic adequacy of its conceptual foundation in addressing regional instability and economic fragmentation, therefore, this approach contributes to filling the identified gap in literature regarding the relationship between infrastructure conceptualization, regional integration design, and economic security outcomes in fragile regional contexts.

2.3.2 Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

In recent years, transnational infrastructures have secured remarkable awareness, owing to their global and regional contributions in trade facilitation, and economic growth. In the foregoing, some scholars have investigated the various aspects of transnational transport and economic corridors, globally and regionally. Globally, transnational infrastructures are increasingly being used as instruments of economic security, which link physical connectivity to macroeconomic outcomes such as; increased GDP and reduction in unemployment. Comparative studies from Europe, Asia, and Africa have consistently pointed out the vital role of infrastructure-led integration, particularly in determining successful regional development (Foster & Briceño-Garmendia, 2010; WB, 2019).

Kasuku (2016) observed that the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was endorsed as a Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative (PICI) project during the African Union

Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee meeting in 2015. This endorsement elevated the LAPSET initiatives' continental legitimacy, and thus, secured its positioning within the African Union Agenda 2063 framework. Moreover, the LAPSET was placed into the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), and thus, bolstering its access to institutional support mechanisms for project preparation, financing facilitation, and investment mobilization through the African Union Commission and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) structures (African Union Commission [AUC], 2015; Kasuku, 2016). This continental recognition is significant, considering that infrastructure projects anchored on PIDA are typically prioritized for cross-border financing and regional coordination support.

Empirical evidences from comparable infrastructures reinforces the economic security logic underpinning such initiatives. Balbaa et al. (2023), in their study of the Cairo–Cape Town Trans-African Highway (TAH 4), observed that reductions in transport inefficiencies, border delays, and trade costs, significantly enhanced the gross domestic product (GDP) growth across participating countries. Similarly, Naz and Parveen (2022) observed that the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor benefited both countries with; trade, healthcare, self-efficacy, and social performance. These findings compliment earlier empirical work by Ouattara et al. (2018), who established a strong positive correlation between economic growth and infrastructure development in African economies, particularly through logistical efficacies and improved trade facilitation.

Additional comparative insights from global infrastructure literature highlights the role of transnational infrastructures in economic security. The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) – in the European Union - has been associated with enhanced mobility and integrated markets, and thus, the reduction of economic disparities, and increase in regional cohesion.

(European Commission, 2020). Similarly, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been associated with; increased foreign direct investment (FDI), and strengthened economic interdependence between the cooperating states and regions (Wang et al., 2022). These cases cumulatively underscore transnational infrastructures as strategic economic capitals, which surpass transport efficiencies, to include geopolitical influence, and macroeconomic stabilization.

In Africa, infrastructure-led developments have been observed as vital drivers of structural transformation. For instance, the African Development Bank (2018), observed transport infrastructure deficits as one of the main challenges to intra-African trade, and that transnational infrastructure developments were essential for unlocking regional value chains. The Maputo Development Corridor, the Abidjan–Lagos Corridor, and the Northern Corridor, further demonstrate how transnational infrastructures bolsters regional economic integration (UNECA, 2017; WB, 2019).

The LAPSET initiative was conceptualized as a transformative regional integration initiative, with significant economic security imperatives. Collier (2007) observed that infrastructure investments in landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and volatile regions are potential catalysts for economic growth, especially by reducing geographical disadvantages and improving market access. In the case of the LAPSET, Musungu (2023), noted that the initiative is expected to generate employment through the construction and operation of key infrastructure components, including the new Lamu port, transnational highways, special economic zones, energy pipelines railways, and the Grand Falls dam. These employment effects are particularly important in addressing structural unemployment - which is widely recognized as a key driver of conflict and insecurity - in fragile regions.

Musungu (2023) further observed that the economic opportunities generated by LAPSET initiative are more likely to enhance investment attractiveness, reduce poverty levels, and expand regional markets by connecting landlocked countries such as Ethiopia and South Sudan to global maritime trade routes through the new port of Lamu. This aligns with broader empirical evidences which have suggested that infrastructure development enhances economic resilience by increasing fiscal revenues, stimulating private sector investment, and improving productivity (Briceño-Garmendia & Foster, 2010; WB, 2019). In fragile contexts such as the Horn of Africa region, these economic effects are relevant, considering that they directly address structural vulnerabilities associated with economic exclusions, and underdevelopment (Corral & Pillai, 2022).

Despite these positive projections, comparative literature has also highlighted that infrastructure-led economic security outcomes are not automatic. Empirical literature of the Northern Corridor, and the Maputo Development Corridor observed that uneven implementation, governance weaknesses, and political fragmentation were the significant constraints limiting the developmental impact of these infrastructure projects (ADB, 2018; UNECA, 2017). Similarly, Balbaa et al. (2023) cautioned that without harmonized policies, and strong institutional coordination, the potential gains from transnational infrastructure corridors may be unevenly distributed amongst the cooperating states.

In the case of the LAPSET initiative, existing literature has focused more on its potentials for stimulating economic growth and trade among the footprint countries - Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Therefore, there is limited empirical engagement with its broader role as an infrastructure for economic security stabilization in the greater Horn of Africa region. Most studies have concentrated on project feasibility, national development alignment and component

analysis (Kasuku, 2016; LAPSET Corridor Development Authority Strategic Plan, 2023–2027), creating a gap in understanding its regional security and stabilization implications.

It is against this backdrop that this study critically examined the effect of the economic security imperatives of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa Region. By situating LAPSET within global and African comparative infrastructure experiences, the study addressed the existing gap in literature regarding the role of infrastructure corridors as instruments of economic security stabilization in geopolitically complex regions (Collier, 2007; Naz & Parveen 2022; Ouattara et al., 2018).

2.3.3 Regional Coordination Mechanism for LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative

While there is a deficiency of scholarly and institutional literature about the LAPSET regional coordination mechanism, Rwigema (2024) observed that regional integration is crucial for fostering peace and stability. Rwigema (2024) viewed the LAPSET as a potential for regional cooperation between Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, thereby enhancing diplomatic relations, stemming from collaboration between the LAPSET tripartite states.

Stewart (2008) observed that inter-regional infrastructure projects, like the LAPSET, have the ability to promote social cohesion by improving access to resources and services for marginalized communities. Hence; reduction in grievances, better access to education, healthcare, and other essential services, and thus, mitigating the risks of violent conflicts by aggrieved groups. Additionally, Stewart (2008) observed that inter-regional infrastructure projects in the caliber of the LAPSET, reduces tensions and bolsters social harmony, especially when the local communities are engaged in the planning and implementation phases of the infrastructure project.

From a liberal standpoint, such a cooperation – like the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative - has the potential for bolstering stronger political and economic ties for mutual interdependence, and thus, reducing the likelihood of interstate conflicts. However, with the current ambiguities on existence of a LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, such aspirations may remain a pipe dream. It is against this backdrop that the researcher analyzed the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

2.3.4 Economic Security

Economic security refers to the condition in which an economy is able to sustain stable growth, protect livelihoods, and withstand internal and external shocks that may disrupt development outcomes. According to Kurtz (2008), economic security is a state's ability to pursue its own developmental objectives for the good of its economy, and it is often explicitly linked to national security. Thus, economic security includes a number of issues related to; insured basic income, employment, private-public partnerships, the impacts of foreign investments on national markets, and balance of trade. Similarly, Korkmaz (2017) conceptualized economic security as the capacity of a state or region to ensure continuity in economic activities while safeguarding citizens from risks such as unemployment, inflation, and income instability.

From a more inclusive welfare perspective, Stiglitz (2015) defined economic security as the ability of governments to deliver social protection systems, which cushion their citizens from economic shocks. The scholar emphasized that economic stability was not only reflected in macroeconomic growth indicators – such as gross domestic product (GDP) - but also in equitable distribution of household incomes and access to opportunities. Similarly, Dreze and Sen (2013) observed economic security as being closely linked to human development outcomes, especially

the ability of individuals to access basic needs - such as shelter, clothing, employment, food, education and healthcare, and education - in a stable economic environment.

Li and Wu (2019), while analyzing economic security in Chinese provinces, defined economic security as the sustained improvement of macroeconomic performance indicators such as; industrial output, GDP growth, unemployment rates, and investment inflows. They observed that regional economic security is strongly influenced by structural transformation and the diversification of economic activities. Their findings further observed that regions with strong infrastructure systems and integrated markets, exhibited higher levels of resilience, and thus, economic stability.

Asongu and Nwachukwu (2018) observed that economic insecurity in African economies was largely driven by structural issues - like as; low industrialization, overreliance on primary commodities, and infrastructure deficits – which in-turn limits employment creation and expose local and regional economies to external shocks. They recommended for the building of infrastructures and regional integration, in-order to bolster economic resilience, and thus, shielding African economies from risks associated with global economic fluctuations. Similarly, Njoh (2012) observed inadequate infrastructure as a major barrier to economic development and regional integration, noting that poor transport networks increased the cost of trade and limited economic diversification. These structural issues highlight the importance of infrastructure-led development strategies.

Empirical literature on regional infrastructure corridors further reinforced the linkage between connectivity and economic security. While Kuroda et al. (2016) - when investigating the Asian development corridors - observed that improved transport infrastructures significantly bolstered regional competitiveness, reduced logistics costs, and increased trade volumes, Banerjee et al.,

(2012) observed that infrastructure expansion in China led to significant economic growth and poverty reduction in the infrastructure connected regions, demonstrating the transformative role of infrastructure connectivity in promoting economic stability.

In Africa, the ADB (2020) reported that infrastructure deficits continued to constrain Africa's economic growth, especially in the landlocked developing countries, as well as in volatile states. This report emphasized that regional infrastructure corridors such as the Northern Corridor and Abidjan–Lagos Corridor have improved trade flows and economic integration, although challenges in implementation and coordination were still present. These findings underscore the relevance of infrastructure in bolstering regional economic security.

In the Horn of Africa's context, Tadesse (2022) observed economic insecurity as being characterized by limited industrial capacity, high unemployment, and low investment inflows. The scholar noted that infrastructure development projects have the capabilities of addressing these issues by facilitating cross-border trade, and improving connectivity. Similarly, while Ochieng and Mbithi (2020) emphasized that regional infrastructure projects in East Africa were critical in fostering economic diversification, and thus, reducing dependency on volatile sectors, Musungu (2023) observed the LAPSET infrastructural initiative as having the potential to significantly improve the economic wellbeing of the tripartite states, especially by; attracting both domestic and foreign investments, expanding markets, and creating employment opportunities.

Despite these positive contributions, empirical literature also highlights that infrastructure alone cannot guarantee economic security. Abrita et al., (2024) argued that without governance improvements, and commensurate institutional reforms, infrastructural investments may have limited impact on long-term economic stability. Similarly, Gramlich (1994) observed that the

effectiveness of physical infrastructure in fostering economic growth depended on the efficient allocation, maintenance, and integration into broader development strategies.

A synthesis of the aforementioned literature, therefore, indicates that economic security is a multidimensional outcome, which is influenced by; macroeconomic stability, institutional strength, employment creation, and infrastructure development. It is against this backdrop that this study highlighted economic security stabilization as the dependent variable, and examined how the conceptual design, economic imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative influence economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. By integrating insights from development economics, infrastructure studies, and regional integration literature, the study addressed the existing gap in understanding how transnational infrastructure projects contribute to sustainable economic security in fragile regional contexts (AfDB, 2020; Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2018; Calderón & Servén, 2010; Korkmaz, 2017; Stiglitz, 2015).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study operationalized and linked all the study variables. The indicators that were evaluated, regarding the narrow conceptualization of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative were; the strategic conceptualization of the LAPSSET, the scope and regional inclusivity of the LAPSSET conceptual design, and the implications of the LAPSSET for economic stabilization. These indicators were operationalized and measured against economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

The indicators which were analyzed regarding the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative were; investments and economic stabilization through the

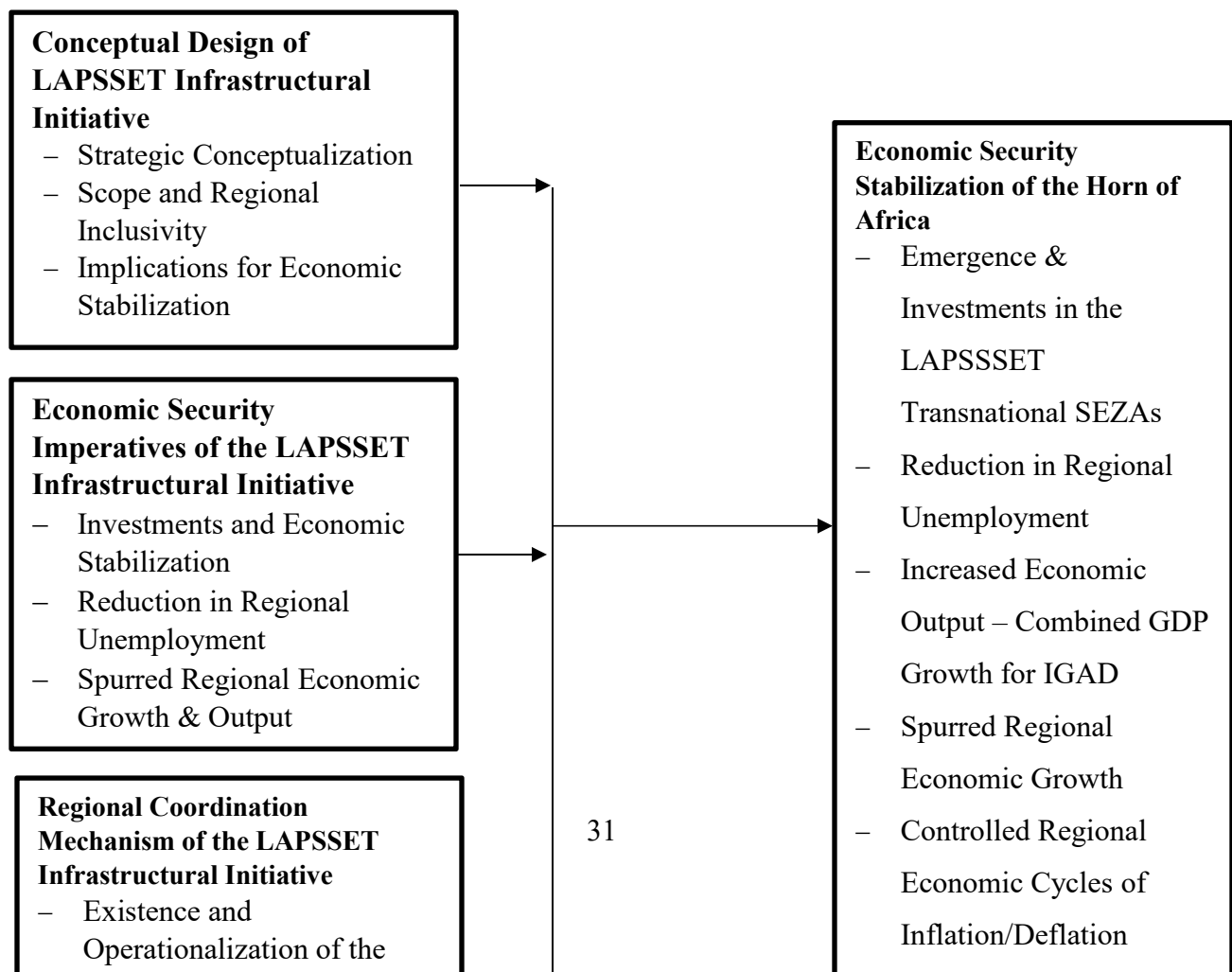
LAPSSET transnational special economic zone areas (TSEZAs), reduction in regional unemployment, and spurred regional economic growth and increased economic output. These indicators were operationalized and measured against economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

The indicators that were explored regarding the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism included; existence and operationalization of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, stakeholder engagement and community inclusion into the LAPSSET, and regional integration and economic interdependence through the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. These indicators were operationalized and measured against economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

Figure 2.1, presents the conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 2.1

The Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

2.4.1 Conceptual Clarification and Operationalization of Key Concepts

This subsection clarifies and operationalizes the key concepts of this study. It precisely defines the main variables, and specifies how each concept was interpreted and measured within the context of this study.

Table 2.1

Conceptual Clarification and Operationalization of Key Concepts

Concept	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition (How it was measured in the study)
LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	A transnational infrastructure corridor project linking Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan through ports, highways, railways, pipelines, and special economic zones aimed at enhancing regional integration and development.	Measured as a composite index based on: (i) conceptual design (scope, inclusivity, strategic framing), (ii) economic security imperatives (employment creation, investment attraction, trade stimulation), and (iii) regional coordination mechanisms (institutional collaboration and governance structures).

Economic Security	The ability of the Horn of Africa region to maintain stable economic conditions that support livelihoods, reduce vulnerability, and ensure sustainable economic growth.	Measured using indicators including: employment levels, investment inflows, GDP growth trends, trade performance, and levels of economic vulnerability such as inflation and unemployment rates.
Stabilization (Economic Security Stabilization)	The process through which economic systems achieve reduced volatility, improved resilience, and sustained socio-economic stability in the region.	Measured through: reduction in unemployment-driven insecurity, stability in economic growth patterns, improved regional trade consistency, and reduced exposure to economic shocks and fluctuations.
Regional Coordination Mechanism	Institutional and governance arrangements that facilitate joint planning, implementation, and management of the LAPSET initiative among Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.	Measured using: existence of formal coordination institutions, level of policy harmonization, stakeholder engagement effectiveness, and strength of cross-border institutional collaboration.

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

The conceptualization of the variables in this study was anchored on the need to establish clear analytical linkages between infrastructure development and economic security outcomes. The LAPSET infrastructural initiative was treated as the independent construct, decomposed into three analytical dimensions - conceptual design, economic imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms - to capture its multidimensional nature.

Economic stabilization was conceptualized as the dynamic outcome process through which economic security is achieved, particularly through reduced volatility and improved resilience of

regional economies. The regional coordination mechanism was treated as a critical institutional variable determining the effectiveness of cross-border implementation and governance alignment. This operational framework ensured that all key concepts were not only clearly defined but also empirically measurable, thereby strengthening the conceptual rigor and analytical clarity of the study.

2.5 Research Gaps

The reviewed literature revealed substantial scholarly attention on transnational infrastructure corridors, economic development, and regional integration. However, critical gaps were evident, particularly in relation to the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its role in economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

Firstly, many studies on infrastructure corridors have concentrated on the established global and regional cases, such as; the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the Maputo Development Corridor. These studies emphasized more on logistics performance and economic efficiency (Vickerman, 2017). However, they largely underexplored the economic security aspects of infrastructure development, particularly on how transnational infrastructures influence economic security stabilization in volatile regions. Therefore, a conceptual gap existed in linking infrastructure development to broader economic security outcomes in volatile regions.

Secondly, although empirical literature on regional integration have discussed regionalism and complex interdependence theories (Either, 1998; Keohane & Nye, 1977; Nye, 1968; Söderbaum, 2003), much of their work were based on institutional cooperation and economic integration in relatively stable regions. Limited attention had been given to how these theoretical frameworks

operated in fragile regions such as the Horn of Africa, where insecurity, uneven development, and weak governance structures exist. Consequently, a contextual gap emerged in the application of these established integration theories to infrastructure-led stabilization processes in conflict-ridden environments, like the Horn of Africa region.

Thirdly, studies on African infrastructure corridors (ADB, 2018; UNECA, 2017; WB, 2019) primarily focused on performance challenges like; as financing gaps, governance inefficiencies, and implementation delays. While these studies delivered valuable insights into operational challenges, they did not sufficiently interrogate how coordination mechanisms influenced long-term economic security outcomes.

Fourthly, the existing empirical literature about the LAPSET remained largely descriptive and project-oriented. Existing empirical literature by Kasuku (2016) and the LAPSET Corridor Development Authority Strategic Plan (2023–2027) focused more on the individual project components. These studies did not adequately interrogate the broader regional implications of the LAPSET, especially its potential contributions to economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, and thus, a significant empirical gap in understanding the LAPSET as a regional economic security infrastructure, rather than merely a national infrastructure project.

Finally, the existing empirical literature showed limited integration of the three independent variables investigated by this study - conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms. Most studies treated these variables in isolation rather than examining their combined effect on economic security stabilization, and thus, an empirical and theoretical gap which limited a holistic understanding of how mega infrastructure corridors influence regional economic stability.

This study has, therefore, addressed these gaps by providing insights of how the conceptual design, economic imperatives, and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET initiative collectively influenced economic security outcomes in the greater Horn of Africa region.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has dispensed a review of both theoretical and empirical literature. Theoretical review concentrated on the two theories - namely; theory of regionalism and complex interdependence theory - which guided this study. The empirical review section has dispensed empirical literature from past studies about the LAPSSSET. The literature reviewed were local, regional and global. Finally, this chapter has synthesized the reviewed literature and presented the research gaps, which provided the basis for the current study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines; the adopted study design, the study site and units of analysis, the study sample and selection procedures, the data collection techniques, the ethical considerations, the pilot testing of the research instrument, the validity of and reliability of the research instrument, the data analysis methods, and the limitations of this study.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

According to Ogula (2005), sampling is the procedure of selecting representatives for a study in a manner where these representatives reflect the larger population from which they are drawn. In this study, where populations comprised thirty or more personnel to be interviewed, the researcher applied stratified sampling. Simple random sampling was then applied within each stratum in-order to select the sample respondents, proportionate to the stratum size. For populations of fewer than thirty personnel to be interviewed, the sample size was the entire stratum. The researcher used open-ended key informants interview schedules, in-order to gather qualitative data from the Ethiopian and South Sudanese LAPSSSET counterparts. Finally, the researcher moderated focus group discussion (FGDs) in-order to gather qualitative data from the border communities residing in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, the border towns between Kenya and Ethiopia, and Kenya and South Sudan, respectively.

Table 3.1 presents the number of LAPSSSET stakeholder institutions from the national government of Kenya, that were directly involved in the delivery of the LAPSSSET infrastructural and economic initiative.

Table 3.1*Stratum of the National Government LAPSSET Stakeholder Institutions*

The LAPSSET National Government Institutions	Number of Technical Personnel
LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority	12
The National Treasury & Economic Planning	4
Kenya Vision 2030	6
Ministry of Trade, Investments & Industry	5
Kenya Ports Authority	5
Ministry of East African Community & Regional Development	2
Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure	3
New Partnership for African Development – African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM)	4
Total Population	41

Source: LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (2025)

The table 3.2 below presents the number of the county governments traversing the LAPSSET infrastructural and economic initiative.

Table 3.2*Stratum of County Governments Traversed by the LAPSSET Initiative in Kenya*

LAPSSET Counties	Number of Key Technical Personnel
Lamu County Government	6
Garissa County Government	7
Isiolo County Government	6
Marsabit County Government	5
Samburu County Government	5
Turkana County Government	5

LAPSSET Counties	Number of Key Technical Personnel
Total Population	34

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The Table 3.3 presents the stratum of the international organization which is interested in the delivery of the LAPSSET infrastructural and economic initiatives.

Table 3.3

Stratum of International Organizations Interested in the LAPSSET Initiative

International Organizations	Number of Key Technical Personnel
TradeMark Africa	2
Total Population	2

Source: LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (2025)

The Table 3.4 presents the categories of focus group discussions, that were moderated in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, the Kenyan borders towns with Ethiopia and South Sudan, respectively.

Table 3.4*Stratum of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)*

Focus Discussion Group (FDG)	Number of Discussants
Moyale Constituency Focus Group Discussion	10
Lodwar Town Focus Group Discussion	10
Total Population	20

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The table below presents the stratum of key informants on the LAPSSET from Ethiopia and South Sudan, from whom qualitative data about the LAPSSET were collected from.

Table 3.5*Stratum of the Key Informants on the LAPSSET*

Key Informants on the LAPSSET	Number of Discussants
Ethiopian Embassy in Kenya	1
Ethiopian Technical Personnel on the LAPSSET	2
South Sudan Embassy in Kenya	1
South Sudan Technical Personnel on the LAPSSET	2
Total Population	6

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

Ogula (2005) defined the sample size as the number of individuals or observations included in a study, drawn from a larger population to statistically represent it. For populations of thirty or more technical personnel, a sample that represented the entire population, with defined confidence and risk levels, was applied, based on the work of Yamane (1967).

Yamane's sample computation formula was presented below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

Where;

“n” shall be the sample size (required respondents).

“N” shall be the population size. Confidence level shall be at 95%

“e” shall be the error limit, 10% in this case.

Therefore, for the national government stratum, the required number of respondents was:

$$n = \frac{41}{1+41 (0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 29.0780; \approx 29 \text{ respondents.}$$

For the county governments stratum, the required number of respondents was:

$$n = \frac{34}{1+34 (0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 25.3731; \approx 25 \text{ respondents.}$$

Simple random sampling was then applied to select respondents from each of the public sector strata, proportionate to their respective target populations. The researcher applied the basic arithmetic formula; $k = [a \div b] \times [n]$, to determine the proportionate number of respondents from each of the two strata identified in Tables 3.6 and 3.7 below, where: “k” represented the number of respondents selected from each stratum; “a” denoted the number of personnel per stratum directly involved in the delivery of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative; “b” indicated the total target population; and “n” referred to the total number of respondents, as determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula.

Table 3.6 below presents the actual number of key technical respondents who were selected from the national government stakeholder institutions, and to whom the semi-structured questionnaire was administered to.

Table 3.6

Technical Respondents from National Government Stakeholder Institutions

LAPSSET National Government Institution	Number of Key Technical Respondents
LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority	$k = [12 \div 41] \times 29 = 8.49 \approx 8$
The National Treasury & Economic Planning	$k = [4 \div 41] \times 29 = 2.92 \approx 2$
Kenya Vision 2030	$k = [6 \div 41] \times 29 = 4.38 \approx 4$
Ministry of Trade, Investments & Industry	$k = [5 \div 41] \times 29 = 3.65 \approx 5$
Kenya Ports Authority	$k = [5 \div 41] \times 29 = 3.65 \approx 5$
Ministry of East African Community & Regional Development	$k = [2 \div 41] \times 29 = 1.46 \approx 1$
Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure	$k = [3 \div 41] \times 29 = 2.19 \approx 2$
New Partnership for African Development – African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM)	$k = [4 \div 41] \times 29 = 2.19 \approx 2$
Total Sample Size	29 Respondents

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Table 3.7 below presents the number of technical respondents who were selected from each of the county governments, and to whom the questionnaire was administered to.

Table 3.7*Technical Respondents from LAPSSET Traversed County Governments*

LAPSSET County Government Institution	Number of Key Technical Respondents ($k = \lfloor n/34 \rfloor \times 25$)	Final Sample ($\approx$)
Lamu County Government	$k = (6/34) \times 25 = 4.41$	4
Garissa County Government	$k = (7/34) \times 25 = 5.15$	5
Isiolo County Government	$k = (5/34) \times 25 = 3.68$	4
Marsabit County Government	$k = (6/34) \times 25 = 4.41$	4
Samburu County Government	$k = (5/34) \times 25 = 3.68$	4
Turkana County Government	$k = (5/34) \times 25 = 3.68$	4
Total Sample		25 Respondents

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

From the aforementioned inferences, 56 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the following respondents in the indicated proportions: 8 respondents at LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (LCDA); 2 respondents at The National Treasury & Economic Planning; 4 respondents at Kenya Vision 2030; 5 respondents at the Ministry of Trade, Investments & Industry; 5 respondents at Kenya Ports Authority; 1 respondent at the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development; 2 respondents at the Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure; 2 respondents at the New Partnership for African Development – African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM); 4 respondents at the County Government of Lamu; 5 respondents at the County Government of Garissa; 4 respondents at the County Government of Marsabit; 4 respondents at the County Government of Isiolo; 4 respondents at the County Government of Samburu; 4 respondents at the County Government of Turkana; and 2 respondents at TradeMark Africa. For the focus group discussions (FGDs), the researcher

collected qualitative data by moderating interviews, and therefore did not administer the questionnaire to the discussants.

Table 3.8 summarizes the sample size of the respondents from the three strata (representing the LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya) to whom the semi-structured questionnaire was administered to.

Table 3.8

Summary of Respondents from LAPSSET Stakeholder Institutions in Kenya

LAPSSET Stakeholder Institutions in Kenya	Number of Technical Respondents
LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority	8
The National Treasury & Economic Planning	2
Kenya Vision 2030	4
Ministry of Trade, Investments & Industry	5
Kenya Ports Authority	5
Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development	1
Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure	2
County Government of Lamu	4
County Government of Garissa	5
County Government of Marsabit	4
County Government of Isiolo	4
County Government of Samburu	4
County Government of Turkana	4
New Partnership for Africa's Development – African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM)	2
TradeMark Africa	2
Total Sample Size	56 Respondents

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Table 3.9 presents the sample size of the focus group discussions (FGDs), that were moderated by the researcher in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, respectively.

Table 3.9 Sample Size of FGDs

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Number of Discussants
Moyale Town Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	10
Lodwar Town Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	10
Total Sample Size	20 Discussants

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Table 3.10 presents the sample size of the key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan, who were targeted through the respective Embassies in Kenya, and through LAPSSSET Corridor Development Authority.

Table 3.10

Sample Size of Key Informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan

Key Informants on the LAPSSSET	Number of Key Informants
Ethiopian Embassy in Kenya	1
Ethiopian Technical Personnel on the LAPSSSET	2
South Sudan Embassy in Kenya	1
South Sudan Technical Personnel on the LAPSSSET	2
Total Sample Size	6

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

Table 3.11 summarizes the study population, sampling frame, sampling technique, population size and sample size.

Table 3.11*Summary of Population, Sampling Frame, Technique and Sample Size*

Stratum	Sampling frame	Instrument	Sampling technique	Population size (n)	Sample size (n)
National Government Institutions in Kenya	Institutional staff lists (LCDA, Ministries, Agencies)	The semi-structured questionnaire	Stratified + Simple random sampling	41	29
County Governments traversed by the LAPSET Initiative in Kenya	County Departmental Personnel Registers	The semi-structured questionnaire	Stratified + Simple random sampling	34	25
International Organization (TradeMark Africa)	Institutional Staff Directory	The semi-structured questionnaire	Census (small population)	2	2
Border Communities (Moyale & Lodwar FGDs)	Community Leader Registers	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Purposive sampling	20	20
Key Informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan	Economic & Trade Divisions of the Ethiopian & South Sudanese Embassies LAPSET Technical officers in Ethiopia & South Sudan	Open-ended Key Informants Interview Schedules	Purposive sampling	6	6
Cumulative Totals				103	82

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

3.2 Research Design

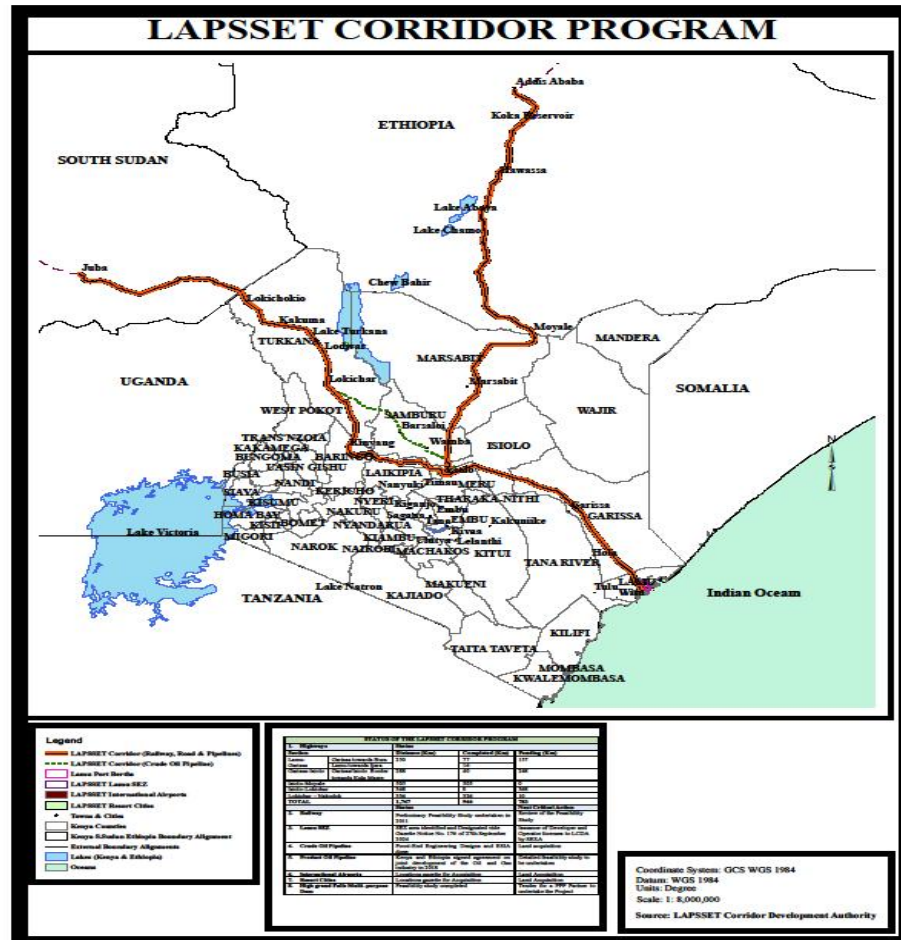
This study utilized a descriptive research design. Orodho and Kombo (2002) asserted that descriptive research design was suitable for collecting data and information about people's attitudes, habits, opinions, or any of a variety of social issues. Since this thesis was investigating the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, descriptive research design was deemed appropriate in-order to demonstrate the effects of each of the independent variables on the dependent variable. While the dependent variable was economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, the independent variables were; the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, and the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

3.3 Site of the Study

The study was conducted from the republic of Kenya, considering that Kenya represents the primary operational hub of the LAPSSET project and houses the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, which provides institutional oversight and coordination of the LAPSSET initiative. Therefore, the institutional concentration and project implementation visibility in Kenya, made it the most suitable setting for collecting data which was used in examining the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanism of the initiative. In-order to bolster regional contextualization, key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan were also interviewed. Below is a Geographic Information System (GIS) - generated map of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

Figure 3.1

GIS Generated Map of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative.



Source: LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (2026)

3.4 Target Population

The target population of this study comprised of: government stakeholders who directly influenced the planning, sequencing, coordination and implementation of the LAPSSET infrastructural and economic initiatives; border communities of Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, who are directly affected by the LAPSSET initiative; and key informants (with technical insights on the LAPSSET initiative) from Ethiopia and South Sudan, considering the Ethiopia and South

Sudan are partners with Kenya in the LAPSSSET initiative. These stakeholders were clustered into five strata. The first stratum consisted of LAPSSSET stakeholder institutions from the national government of Kenya, with respondents being; technical directors, heads of technical departments and their deputies, and technical staffs. These institutions included; the LAPSSSET Corridor Development Authority, the National Treasury & Economic Planning, the Kenya Vision 2030, the Ministry of Trade, Investments & Industry, the Kenya Ports Authority, Ministry of East African Community & Regional Development, the New Partnership for African Development – African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM) and the Ministry of Transport & Infrastructure.

The second stratum comprised the six county governments traversed by the LAPSSSET initiative in Kenya, namely; Lamu, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, and Turkana counties. The respondents from these counties included chief officers and their technical staffs, who were responsible for; economic planning and budget, trade and investments, livestock and cooperative development, peace and cohesion, blue economy, pastoral economy, and natural resources. The third stratum comprised of one international organization, which has its regional offices in Kenya, and which is involved with the LAPSSSET's infrastructural and economic initiatives. This organization was TradeMark Africa, with its chief executive officer and technical directors as the respondents. The fourth stratum comprised border communities residing in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, the border towns at the Kenya-Ethiopia and Kenya-South Sudan borders, respectively. These communities were directly affected by the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, and their perspectives were considered vital for generating informed practice and policy recommendations. The fifth stratum consisted of the key informants on the LAPSSSET initiative from Ethiopia and South Sudan. These key informants were targeted from the

Economic and Trade Divisions of the Ethiopian and South Sudanese Embassies in Kenya, respectively. Moreover, additional key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan (with technical insights on the LAPSSET initiative) were sourced with the help of the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, the main LAPSSET cooperating facility in Kenya, in-order to give this study a regional contextualization.

This study used a probability sampling design, utilizing both stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Following Tyrell and Hunt (2001), members of the population were categorized into mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive groups, from which independent simple random samples were drawn. A sampling frame was prepared for each stratum, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal probability of selection during the sampling process (Kiderlen & Pausinger, 2021).

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to enhance triangulation and strengthen the robustness of findings on the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa. The semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya. Additional qualitative data was collected from border communities and key informants (from Ethiopia and South Sudan) using focus group discussions, and open-ended key informants interview schedules, respectively.

The semi-structured questionnaire was the primary instrument for quantitative data collection and was administered to 56 respondents drawn from the LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya, namely; national government institutions, county governments, and TradeMark Africa.

According to Gillham (2013), questionnaires are structured tools used to obtain responses that facilitate systematic analyses and comparisons. The administration of the semi-structured questionnaire in this study followed a researcher-assisted drop-and-pick approach, whereby the questionnaires were personally delivered to respondents at their institutional headquarters and collected after completion. This ensured higher response rates, improved clarity of technical questions, and reduced non-response bias.

Key informant qualitative information was gathered - using the key informants open-ended interview schedules - from selected technical officers from Ethiopia and South Sudan. These individuals were considered as key informants owing to their technical expertise and regular collaborations with Kenya during the planning, coordination, sequencing and implementation of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. Their responses were therefore considered as expert-level insights, necessary for giving this study a regional contextualization.

Qualitative information was also sought through two focus group discussions (FGDs), which were moderated by the researcher in Moyale and Lodwar sub-counties, the Kenyan border towns with Ethiopia and South Sudan, respectively. According to Krueger (1994), focus group discussions are planned discussions aimed at collecting information about specific topics from the discussants. These discussions are usually conducted in friendly environments, in-order to strengthen the atmosphere of discussion, and thus, a catalyst for effective data collection. In this study, the FGDs were moderated on the basis of residency within the LAPSSET corridor communities, as participants were selected because they were directly influenced by the geopolitical and socio-economic effects of the LAPSSET initiative. Additional considerations were given to the diversity of discussants, in-terms of their gender, age, and occupational background, and thus, a balanced representation.

3.5.1 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments

In order to assess the reliability, validity and overall suitability of the semi-structured questionnaire, a pilot test was performed on it prior to the actual data collection exercise. The pilot study was performed in-order to uncover and rectify any weakness in the questionnaires' design, structure and content before administering it to the real respondents. In the pilot phase, the following were checked; grammar, the logical order of sections, whether the questions were clear, appropriate, relevant, the duration of completing the instrument, and whether the response options were appropriate. The pilot exercise also looked at the possible fatigue of the respondents, and their understanding of the questions, which was an important aspect for the data to be collected (Babbie, 2016). Neither were the focus group discussion guide, nor the open-ended key informants interview guides piloted separately, as the questions in both instruments were derived and refined from the validated thematic sections of the semi-structured questionnaire.

The pilot study was conducted in July 2025 at the headquarters of the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (LCDA) in Nairobi, Kenya. LCDA was selected for piloting the semi-structured questionnaire, since it was the main institution mandated with the planning, coordinating and sequencing of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative in Kenya. Therefore, it provided a pool of technically qualified respondents, with requisite insights about the study variables. Six middle-level managers and key technical officers from the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (LCDA) – the main agency that coordinates the planning and implementation of the LAPSSET projects in Kenya - participated in the pilot test. The sample size represented almost 10% of the actual sample size.

Creswell (2014) stated that a researcher should ensure that a pilot study ideally comprises 5% to 10% of the actual study sample. The researcher did not include the LAPSSET project personnel from the six county governments that the LAPSSET infrastructural project traverses, since they were far. Furthermore, technical personnel from the other national institutions and international organizations were few, and thus, their exclusion from the pilot test. The feedback from the pilot test helped in revising the wordings of some questions, and therefore, improved the flow of sections and clarity of questions. Hence, the revised questionnaire was considered reliable and valid for actual data collection.

No research assistants were engaged during the pilot phase. However, during the main study, two trained research assistants were engaged to support in data collection. They were trained by the researcher on the objectives of the study, ethical considerations, questionnaire administration procedures, and techniques for engaging respondents in institutional settings. Their training also emphasized neutrality, confidentiality, and consistency in data collection procedures in-order to reduce interviewer bias and ensure standardization across all respondents.

Overall, the pilot test was critical in bolstering the clarity, reliability and validity of the questionnaire, and thus, ensuring that the final questionnaire was fit for purpose in capturing accurate and meaningful data on the study variables.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability of research instrument occurs when the instrument consistently measures what it should, and thus, no random errors in a measure (Johnson & Lee, 2021). In this study, the semi-structured questionnaires' reliability was measured through the Cronbach's Alpha. Harris and Green (2022) observed that a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.7 or more is acceptable, denoting

good reliability of the questions. The researcher tested the reliability of the independent variables and the results are shown in Table 3.12 below.

Table 3.12

Reliability Test Results

Variable	Alpha Statistics	No. of Items
Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.781	9
Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.802	9
Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.773	9
Overall Reliability	0.785	27

Source: Research Data (2026)

All variables recorded Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above the 0.70 threshold, indicating that the items within each construct demonstrated good internal consistency. The Economic Security Imperatives construct recorded the highest reliability coefficient (0.802), suggesting that its items were highly correlated and consistent. the regional coordination mechanism (0.773) and conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative (0.781) also exhibited satisfactory reliability. These findings confirmed that the questionnaire was a reliable tool for data collection, ensuring consistency across responses and supporting the dependability of the subsequent statistical analyses. Overall, the reliability results demonstrated that the research instrument was stable, coherent, and suitable for investigating the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region.

3.5.3 Validity of the Research Instrument

This study assessed three aspects of validity: content validity, face validity, and construct validity, in-order to ensure that the semi-structured questionnaire accurately measured the variables related to the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa.

Content validity was the primary form of validity applied in this study. It examined the extent to which the questionnaire adequately covered all dimensions of the study variables, including the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET, and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET. In-order to establish content validity, the semi-structured questionnaire was reviewed by the researcher and the research supervisor. Both experts investigated the relevance, clarity, and alignment of each item with the study objectives. Their review ensured that all key constructs were sufficiently included in the questionnaire, and that no critical dimension of the study variables was left behind.

Face validity was also assessed to determine whether the semi-structured questionnaire was appropriate, clear, and understandable to respondents at face value. Dobakhti (2020) observed face validity as the extent to which the questionnaire subjectively appeared to measure what it was intended to measure. To bolster face validity, a pilot test was conducted with six technical officers from the LAPSSSET Corridor Development Authority. These respondents evaluated the wording, clarity, and relevance of the questionnaire items. Their feedback confirmed that the semi-structured questionnaire was understandable and contextually appropriate for the study.

Construct validity was used to confirm whether the semi-structured questionnaire accurately measured the theoretical constructs underpinning the study. Shrestha (2021) observed that construct validity assesses whether an instrument truly reflects the theoretical concepts it is designed to measure. In this study, construct validity was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. KMO values above 0.70 indicate adequate sampling adequacy, while a significant Bartlett's Test ($p < 0.05$) confirms sufficient correlations among variables for factor analysis.

Table 3.13

Construct Validity Test Results

Variable	KMO	Bartlett's Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Conceptual Design of LAPSSET	0.846	578.214	36	0.000
Economic Security Imperatives	0.812	642.387	45	0.000
Regional Coordination Mechanism	0.773	498.265	28	0.000

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

The KMO values ranged between 0.773 and 0.846, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that the data was suitable for factor analysis. Additionally, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant for all constructs ($p < 0.001$), confirming strong inter-variable correlations.

From the results, the semi-structured questionnaire demonstrated strong content validity, face validity, and construct validity, confirming that it was appropriate for measuring the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods

Data analytics commenced by reviewing the collected semi-structured questionnaires in-order to ensure that they had been comprehensively and correctly filled in. Data cleansing was performed to ensure that the analysis only included questionnaires that were complete and correctly filled in. After examining the completeness of the questionnaires, coding of the questionnaires and keying in of the responses into a software application followed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26 assisted with the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequency distributions, mean scores, and percentages, which assisted in providing a summary of the collected information. Inferential statistics applied included multiple regression analysis, which helped in investigating the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. Additionally, the qualitative responses from focus group discussions and key informants were objectively analyzed, interpreted, and presented in the report by the researcher. The multiple regression model used in this study was in the form of:

$$ESS_{HofA} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CD + \beta_2 ESI + \beta_3 RCM + e$$

Where:

ESS_{HofA} – Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa

β_0 – the constant (y intercept).

β_1 – β_3 – regression coefficients relating to the process.

CD – Conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

ESI – Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

RCM – Regional Coordination Mechanism for the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

e – error term.

The above multiple regression equation was used to test the researcher's assumptions in this study. The assumptions were: the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative had been narrowly conceptualized to serve the tripartite states of Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, and thus, producing a trickle effect on the entire Horn of Africa region; the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET initiative had implications for regional stabilization in the Horn of Africa; and finally, the researcher assumed the absence of a regional coordination mechanism for the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is the cornerstone for conducting valuable research work. Therefore, the ethical behavior of researchers is under ceaseless surveillance (Field & Behrman, 2004). The researcher and his assistants upheld and championed the values of integrity, professionalism, and respect diversity during data collection. The researcher also obtained consent from the respondents, prior to administering the questionnaire and moderating the focus group discussions (FGDs). Additionally, the researcher and his assistants upheld high ethical standards of discipline, and respected the dignity, privacy rights, and sensitiveness of responses, as well as the integrity of the institutions within which the research was conducted. To bolster the security of the data collected, the researcher and his assistant upheld the virtue of confidentiality, and thus, protected the respondents' identities and data collected from them against unauthorized access, use, disclosure, modification, loss, or theft. This confidentiality clause was clearly stated in the respondents' informed consent form.

Finally, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from Laikipia University Institutional Ethics Review Committee (LUIERC), a committee accredited by the Commission of University Education (CUE) in Kenya. Additionally, the researcher also obtained a research permit from the

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) - a state corporation mandated to regulate and provide assurance on quality in the science, technology, and innovation sector in Kenya – prior to data collection.

3.8 Limitations of Study

Robson (2017) defined limitations of a study as the factors restricting research work and over which the researcher has limited control. The target population for this study constituted public sector institutions and organs of the executive arm of government in the Republic of Kenya. As such, the researcher was limited in accessing classified cabinet deliberations about each of the tripartite states' foreign policy and relations, given that cabinet deliberations on matters of security were considered sensitive and, therefore, classified. With these limitations, the researcher relied more on publicly available literature (secondary data) about the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its impact in the Horn of Africa.

The researcher was also faced with challenges in accessing the county government of Isiolo in the first instance of data collection in September 2025, owing to the devolution political wrangles in the county. To counter this limitation, the researcher recruited a research assistant who had a good rapport with officials of the county government of Isiolo, and thus, a successful administration of the semi-structured questionnaire in Isiolo county in October 2025. Additionally, the researcher did not travel to Ethiopia and South Sudan for data collection, owing to travel and logistical costs, but leveraged the: Trade & Economic divisions Ethiopian and South Sudanese Embassies in Kenya, respectively; and LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (a significant cooperating facility in Kenya) to perform the open-ended key informants' interviews with the technical LAPSSET respondents from Ethiopia and South Sudan. Additionally, the researcher has recommended for a similar study to be replicated by scholars in;

the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia; the republic of the South Sudan, and by the economic cooperation and regional integration division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in-order to see whether the results will be replicated.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter delivers the actual procedure followed by the researcher in data analysis and presentation of the resulting research findings. This chapter first and foremost presents the response rate from the administered research instruments, followed closely by the demographic features of the respondents and descriptive analysis. This chapter also presents the outcomes of the autocorrelation and normality tests performed by the researcher, as well as the regression analysis outcome, which provided an assessment of the effect of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. This chapter concluded by discussing the findings, in the context of relevant literature, and provided insights that enhanced the understanding of the study's key research questions.

4.2 Response Rate

Data for this study was collected using three research instruments, namely; the semi-structured questionnaire, open-ended key informants interview schedules, and moderated focus group discussions. The study targeted key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan, as well as respondents drawn from the LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya, and community stakeholders involved in the LAPSSET infrastructure initiative in Kenya. Specifically, the study covered national government institutions involved in infrastructure planning, coordination, and implementation under the LAPSSET framework, county government institutions located along the LAPSSET corridor (in Kenya) and who engaged in local implementation support, key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan (sourced through the Economic and Trade divisions

of their respective embassies, and through the LAPSET Corridor Development Authority), and an international organization engaged in development financing and technical support to the LAPSET initiatives. Moreover, community perspectives were obtained through focus group discussions moderated in selected border communities in Kenya. A total of 56 semi-structured questionnaires were administered to institutional respondents, while 20 participants, and 6 key informants were targeted for focus group discussions, and open-ended key informants' interviews, respectively.

4.2.1 Response Rate from the Semi-structured Questionnaire

Cumulatively, 56 semi-structured questionnaires were distributed to respondents drawn from the stakeholder institutions involved with the LAPSET infrastructural initiative in Kenya. These institutions were; national government institutions, county government institutions and an international organization. Out of these, 48 questionnaires were properly filled in and returned to the researcher, yielding an overall response rate of 85.71%. Table 4.1 below presents the response rate from the administered questionnaires.

Table 4.1

Response Rate from the Semi-Structured Questionnaire

Category	Targeted Respondents	Responded	Percentage (%)
National Government Institutions involved in LAPSET implementation and coordination	29	25	44.64
County Government Institutions along the LAPSET Corridor	25	23	41.07
International Organization supporting the LAPSET Initiative	2	0	0.00
Total	56	48	85.71

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 29 targeted respondents from national government institutions, 25 successfully returned their questionnaires, representing (44.64%) of the total respondents. Similarly, 23 respondents (41.07%) were drawn from county governments traversed by the LAPSSET initiative. The remaining 8 respondents who did not return their filled in questionnaires were distributed amongst all cluster of respondents and they represented (14.29%). No response was received from the international organization in Kenya, which is affiliated to the LAPSSET initiative, despite repeated engagement attempts. This non-response may be attributed to institutional confidentiality protocols within international development agencies. Therefore, the absence of responses from the international organization presented a limitation in capturing the full range of perspectives from development partners involved in the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. However, this shortcoming was countered by the inclusion of national and county government institutions, which directly interact with international partners during implementation and coordination processes of the LAPSSET initiative.

Overall, the response rate through the semi-structured questionnaire (of 85.71%) was considered adequate for social science research, and thus, bolstered data reliability, reduced the risk of non-response bias, and ensured that the findings were sufficiently representative of institutional stakeholders involved in the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

4.2.2 Focus Group Discussion Response Rate

The researcher moderated two focus group discussions with the border communities in: Moyale sub-county, the border town between Kenya and Ethiopia; and Lodwar sub-county, the border town between Kenya and South Sudan. Out of the sample size of 10 discussants for each focus group discussions, the Moyale focus group discussion had 8 discussants (6 of whom were male), while the Lodwar focus group discussion had 10 discussants (2 of whom were female), and thus,

an overall response rate of 90%. Table 4.2 below presents the response rate from the moderated focus discussion groups.

Table 4.2

Response Rate from Focus Group Discussions

Category	Targeted Respondents	Responded	Percentage (%)
Moyale Sub-County Focus Group Discussion	10	8	80.00
Lodwar Sub-County Focus Group Discussion	10	10	100.00
Total	20	18	90.00

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

4.2.3 Response Rate from the Open-ended Key Informants Interview Schedules

As a strategy of bolstering the study's regional contextualization, six key informants from South Sudan and Ethiopia were targeted through: The Economic and Trade divisions of the Embassies of Ethiopia and South Sudan (located in Kenya), respectively; as well as from the technical pool of Ethiopian and South Sudanese technical experts who are involved with the planning, sequencing, coordination and implementation of the LAPSSET initiatives. The technical pool of the key informants was sourced through LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, a cooperating facility in Kenya for the LAPSSET infrastructural initiatives.

Out of the targeted six key informants, three were interviewed. The table 4.3 below presents an analysis of these responses, yielding a 50% response rate from the key informants.

Table 4.3*Response Rate from Key Informants*

Category	Targeted Key Informants	Responded	Percentage (%)
Key informants from Ethiopia	3	2	66.67
Key Informants from South Sudan	3	1	33.33
Total	6	3	50.00

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)**4.2.4 Average Response Rate**

The average overall response rate of 84.15% demonstrated a strong level of cooperation from the participants, ensuring that the collected data was both reliable and representative of the target population. According to Creswell and Poth (2022), a response rate above 70% is considered excellent in social research. The Table 4.4 below dispenses the average response rate of 84.15%.

Table 4.4*Summary of Overall Response Rate*

Research Instrument	Targeted Respondents	Responded	Response Rate (%)
Semi-structured Questionnaire	56	48	85.71
Focus Group Discussions	20	18	90.00
Key Informants	6	3	50.00
Overall Total	82	69	84.15

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

4.3 Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Demographic features of the technical respondents investigated by this study – through the three research instruments - included the respondents; gender, age, academic qualification, the number of years of interaction with the LAPSSSET initiative and the number of continuous years the relevant respondents had been technically involved with the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender of respondents, in-order to adequately describe the socio-demographic composition of the study sample, and thus, support interpretation of potential variations in perceptions about the LAPSSSET. Table 4.5 below presents the distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 4.5

Gender of Respondents Through the Three Research Instruments

Gender	Semi-structured Questionnaire		Key Informants		Focus Group Discussions		Cumulative Averages
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	%
Male	31	64.6	2	66.67	14	77.78	69.68
Female	17	35.4	1	33.33	4	22.22	30.32
Cumulative Totals	48	100	3	100	18	100	100

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The findings revealed that cumulatively, 69.68% of the respondents (across the three research instruments) were male, while 30.32% were female. This indicates that the sample was male-dominated, reflecting the gender composition commonly observed in technical and infrastructure-related large-scale projects such as the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative. This

imbalance may be attributed to the technical and engineering-oriented nature of infrastructure implementation roles, which historically have had higher male participation. Nonetheless, the inclusion of both male and female respondents ensured that the study captured diverse perspectives, and thus, improving the robustness of findings related to socio-economic outcomes such as economic security and project impact assessment.

4.3.2 Age Category of Respondents

Question 2 in part A of the semi-structured questionnaire sought to establish ages of respondents in the study, with the overall aim of establishing the respondents' maturity level in answering the questions presented. Discussants for the focus group discussions, as well as the key informants were over eighteen years of age, and thus, their ages were not critically analyzed. The Table 4.6 below illustrates findings with regard to the respondents' ages.

Table 4.6

Age Category of Respondents Through the Semi-Structured Questionnaire

Age Category (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
25–29	3	6.3
30–34	7	14.6
35–39	12	25.0
40–44	10	20.8
45–49	9	18.8
Above 50	7	14.6
Total	48	100.0

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Respondents were asked to indicate their age bracket. The findings reveal that 25% fell within the age bracket of 35-39 years, 20.8% fell within age bracket of 40-44 years, 18.8% fell within the age bracket of 45-49 years, 14.6% were either between the age brackets of 30-34 years or those above the age of 50 years, and 6.3% were within the age of 25-29 years. The researcher

concluded that the technical workforce involved in the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative is relatively youthful.

4.3.3 Highest Education Level of Respondents through the Semi-structured Questionnaire

Question 3 in part A of the research questionnaire sought to find out the respondents' highest level of education. The Table 4.7 below illustrates findings on the respondents' highest level of education.

Table 4.7

Highest Education Level of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
PhD	1	2.08
Master's Degree	19	39.58
Undergraduate	30	62.50
Total	48	100.0

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Regarding academic qualifications of the respondents, the findings, as presented in the Table 4.7 above, indicate that all respondents fell into three categories. Those holding undergraduate degrees at 62.5%, those with masters' degree at 39.58%, and PhD holders at 2.08%. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the technical personnel involved with the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative are well educated, and that this complemented their technical, managerial and strategic roles within the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

4.3.4 Current Role in Organization/Institution

Question 4 in part A of the research questionnaire sought to find out the positions currently held by the respondents in their respective organizations. The Table 4.8 below illustrates findings on the role of respondents' in their respective organizations.

Table 4.8

Current Role of Respondents

Position Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Economic Advisor	1	2.08
Technical Director	2	4.17
Technical Manager	8	16.67
Deputy Technical Director	8	16.67
Assistant Manager	5	10.42
County Director	2	4.17
County Deputy Director	6	12.50
County Technical Officer	13	27.08
Technical Officer	3	6.25
Total	48	100

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Regarding the respondent's role in their respective organizations, 27.08% were county government technical officers involved with the initiative, 16.67% were either national government technical managers or national government deputy technical directors involved with the initiative, 12.5% were county government deputy directors involved with the initiative, 10.42% were national government assistant managers involved with the initiative, 6.25% were county government technical officers involved with the initiative, 4.17% were either national

government technical directors or county government directors involved with the initiative, and 2.08% was an economic advisor within the initiative.

The diversity of roles of the respondents enriched this study by delivering insights and foresights in-terms of policy formulation, strategic decision-making, and operational execution within the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

4.3.5 Duration of Progressive Responsible Involvement with the LAPSSET Initiative

The study sought to find out the respondents' length of progressive responsible involvement with the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. The Table 4.9 below illustrates the respondents' length of progressive responsible involvement with the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

Table 4.9

Duration of Progressive Responsible Involvement with the LAPSSET

Duration (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 Year	3	6.3
1–3 Years	9	18.8
4–6 Years	13	27.1
7–9 Years	6	12.5
9–11 Years	7	14.6
Over 12 Years	10	20.83
Total	48	100.0

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Regarding the respondent's length of progressive responsible involvement with the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, the study found out that; a majority of the respondents (27.1%) had 4 to 6 years of progressive responsible involvement with the initiative, 20.83% had over 12 years of

progressive responsible involvement with the initiative, 18.8% had 1 to 3 years of progressive responsible involvement with the initiative, 14.6% had 9-11 years of progressive responsible involvement with the initiative, 12.5% had 7-9 years of progressive responsible involvement with the initiative, and that 6.3% had less than 1 year of progressive responsible involvement with the initiative. This diversity in tenure of service, bolstered the reliability of responses by incorporating both long-term and new perspectives on the initiative's milestones and challenges.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis Results

According to Nachmias and Guerrero (2009), descriptive analysis is the application of statistical procedures in-order to describe the population which a researcher is studying. This part, therefore, presents the descriptive results of the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. Data were analyzed using ranges, standard deviations and means, and the responses were based upon a 5-point Likert scale, where: 4.2–5.0 = Strongly Agree, denoted by the abbreviation SA; 3.4–4.2 = Agree, denoted by the abbreviation A; 2.6–3.4 = Neutral, denoted by the abbreviation N; 1.8–2.6 = disagree, denoted by the abbreviation D; and 1.0–1.8 = strongly disagree, denoted by the abbreviation SD. A mean score above 3.4 meant that the respondents agreed with the variable statements, while a mean score below 3.4 meant that the respondents disagreed with the variable statements. This conformed to Sullivan and Artino (2013) and Norman (2010).

4.4.1 Descriptive Analysis for Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

The first independent variable examined was the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, where respondents rated their level of agreement with statements

concerning the LAPSSET initiatives' strategic conceptualization, scope and regional inclusivity, and implications for economic stabilization. The results are summarized in Table 4.10

Table 4.10*Descriptive Results for Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative*

Statements	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	M	STD
Strategic Conceptualization of the LAPSSET							
The conceptual design of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was informed by a clear strategic vision for regional development, and the project components were selected on the basis of economic viability.	34(70.8%)	11(22.9%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4.65	0.54
National Government leaders from Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan were sufficiently involved during the conceptual design phase of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.	19(39.6%)	26(54.2%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4.33	0.56
The initial conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative incorporated the broader infrastructure and long-term sustainability and regional stability needs of the greater Horn of Africa Region.	0 (0.0%)	13(27.1%)	11(22.9%)	18(37.5%)	6 (12.5%)	2.59	1.10
Scope and Regional Inclusivity of the LAPSSET							
The LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was primarily conceptualized to serve Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.	30(62.5%)	18(37.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4.63	0.49
The other IGAD member states (Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia) were adequately involved in the initial conceptual design phase of the LAPSSET	0 (0.0%)	4 (8.3%)	11(22.9%)	18(37.5%)	15(31.3%)	2.09	1.03

infrastructural initiative.

A more inclusive LAPSET conceptual design framework has potentials for increased regional impact of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative in the greater Horn of Africa.

Implications for Economic Stabilization

An expanded LAPSET initiative mandate (which includes Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia) has potential for reducing regional economic disparities in the greater Horn of Africa Region.

An expanded LAPSET initiative mandate (which includes Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia) can promote economic stability by opening up marginalized regions of the greater Horn of Africa to trade and investments.

An expanded LAPSET initiative mandate (which includes Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia) is capable of supporting peace and stability initiatives of the IGAD region through economic interdependence of the IGAD cooperating states.

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

According to findings on the strategic conceptualization of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, there was a strong positive perception of its foundation and purpose. Most respondents (70.8% strongly agreed, 22.9% agreed) claimed that the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET was based on the strategic vision of regional development, while also considering the economic viability of its components (mean = 4.65, SD = 0.54). This implies that the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative was grounded in a coherent strategy aimed at driving cross-border development. Likewise, the respondents strongly agreed that leaders of the national governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan were sufficiently involved in the conceptual design phase of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative (54.2% agreed, 39.6% strongly agreed) (mean = 4.33, SD = 0.56). This indicates strong intergovernmental collaboration of the tripartite states at the formative stage. Conversely, most respondents (37.5% disagreed, and 12.5% strongly disagreed) felt that the initial conceptual design of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative did not adequately reflect the wider sustainability and regional stability needs of the greater Horn of Africa region, and thus, a mean rating of 2.59 (SD = 1.10). The failure of LAPSSSET to utilize its mega infrastructure to economically integrate the greater Horn of Africa is underscored by this.

Concerning the scope and regional coverage of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, the responses indicated that the initiative was mainly confined to its three founding states – Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Most of the respondents (62.5% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed) revealed that LAPSSSET was predominantly conceived to benefit these three pioneering countries (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.49), but regard to other member states of IGAD was limited. Only eight point three per cent agreed, while a cumulative sixty-eight point eight per cent (thirty-seven point five per cent disagreed, and thirty-one point three per cent strongly disagreed) felt that the other countries in greater Horn of Africa - namely; the Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia -

a mean = 2.09; SD = 1.03 - were not adequately involved in the initial conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, and thus, a noticeable gap in regional coordination at the initiatives planning stage. Nonetheless, a great majority (77.1% strongly agreed, 16.7% agreed) of the respondents supported the idea that through a more nuanced conceptual design framework, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative could potentially optimize the regional impact of the initiative across the greater Horn of Africa (mean = 4.72, SD = 0.52). According to these findings, there is increasing support for a more participatory and regionally integrated approach to infrastructure planning in the greater Horn of Africa.

The results on the implications for economic stabilization displayed great optimism about the initiatives prospects for reducing regional economic disparities in the greater Horn of Africa region. All respondents (45.8% strongly agreed, 54.2% agreed) held that by expanding the initiative's mandate - to include all the states in the Horn of Africa region - regional economic disparities could be reduced (mean = 4.46, SD = 0.50). Likewise, there was a unanimous agreement (62.5% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed) that an expanded mandate of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative would bolster the region's economic stability by opening up the Horn of Africa's marginalized regions to trade and investment (mean = 4.63, SD = 0.49). Moreover, 60.4% strongly agreed and 39.6% agreed that the LAPSSET initiative could support the IGADs peace and stability initiatives through economic interdependence amongst the cooperating states (mean = 4.60, SD = 0.49). These results depict a strong belief in the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative as a potential frontier for economic integration, as well as a catalyst for peace in the greater Horn of Africa region.

These results also demonstrate that the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative was strategically sound and economically viable, but constrained by limited inclusivity

of other cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region. This is confirmed by the high levels of agreement on the initiative's strategic clarity and intergovernmental cooperation amongst the tripartite states, and the low ratings for inclusivity of the other cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region. These results concur with Wafula et al., (2025) who noted that transnational infrastructure projects in Africa are more likely to succeed when inclusive design and governance mechanisms are incorporated early into the project initiation and planning phases. Similarly, Ajakaiye and Ncube (2021) noted that inclusivity is critical to ensuring that regional integration initiatives bolster socio-economic benefits. Therefore, while the LAPSSET conceptual design presents a robust strategic foundation, its strategic success is dependent on expanding its mandate, in-order to strengthen inclusivity in planning and governance amongst cooperating member states under the IGAD regional economic community.

4.4.2 Descriptive Analysis for Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

The second study objective was to assess the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative that have implication for regional economic stabilization in the Horn of Africa. The respondents were asked to show their degree of agreement along the three indicators of investments and economic stabilization, reduction in regional unemployment, and spurred regional economic growth and output. The responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale. As can be seen in Table 4.11

Table 4.11*Descriptive Results for Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSSET Initiative*

Statements	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	M	STD
Investments and Economic Stabilization							
An expanded LAPSSSET mandate (to include Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia) has potentials for the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas (TSEZAs) and value-addition industries in minerals, precious metals, animal products, oil and natural gas.	28(58.3%)	17(35.4%)	3 (6.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.52	0.57
LAPSSSET Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas (TSEZAs) will create new employment and trade opportunities, and thus, reduce resource-fueled insurgencies.	37(77.1%)	7 (14.6%)	4 (8.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.69	0.59
LAPSSSET Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas (TSEZAs) will increase regional trade settlements in local currencies, and thus, promote wealth creation.	25(52.1%)	18(37.5%)	5 (10.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.42	0.64
Reduction in Regional Unemployment							
Regional trade initiatives from the expanded LAPSSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn of Africa region) will create employment opportunities for local communities.	29(60.4%)	19(39.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.60	0.49
Infrastructure construction jobs from the expanded LAPSSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn	20(41.7%)	25(52.1%)	3 (6.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.35	0.56

of Africa region) will create employment opportunities, and thus, significantly reduce poverty-instigated conflicts.

The expanded LAPSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn of Africa region) will support long-term employment goals of the Horn of Africa region. 26(54.2%) 19(39.6%) 3 (6.3%) 0(0.0%) 0(0.0%) 4.48 0.56

Spurred Regional Economic Growth & Output

The expanded LAPSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn of Africa region) has potential for cross-border investments and sustained regional growth for the Horn of Africa. 37(77.1%) 11(22.9%) 0 (0.0%) 0(0.0%) 0(0.0%) 4.77 0.42

The expanded LAPSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn of Africa region) has potential for accelerated regional economic growth due to harmonized trade and investment frameworks. 35(72.9%) 13(27.1%) 0 (0.0%) 0(0.0%) 0(0.0%) 4.73 0.45

The expanded LAPSSET mandate (which includes all the states in the Horn of Africa region) has potential for stabilizing erratic economic cycles in the Horn of Africa region. 11(22.9%) 23(47.9%) 14(29.2%) 0(0.0%) 0(0.0%) 3.94 0.71

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

From the results in Table 4.11, most respondents (58.3% strongly agreed, 35.4% agreed) said that the LAPSET initiative could lead to the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas (TSEZAs) and regional value-addition industries in minerals, precious metals and animal products (mean = 4.52, SD = 0.57). In the same way, 77.1% strongly agreed and 14.6% agreed that these TSEZAs would generate new jobs and trade opportunities, while helping to mitigate resource-driven insurgencies in the region (mean = 4.69, SD = 0.59). Moreover, over half (52.1% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed) of the participants believed that the establishment of TSEZAs under the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, would result in intra-regional trade settlements in local currencies, and thus, bolster wealth creation (mean = 4.42, SD = 0.64). These findings suggested that most participants felt that the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has potentials for diversifying industries, attracting cross border investments, and cushioning the regional economy through the development of an appropriate economic corridor.

The results also observed high hopes under the sub-variable on reduction in regional unemployment, noting that the expansion of the LAPSSET mandate (which will incorporate all the states in the Horn of Africa region) will help reduce unemployment as well as poverty-induced instabilities. All respondents stated that regional trade initiatives that would emerge from the expanded LAPSSET mandate would generate more employment for local communities (60.4 percent strongly agreed; and 39.6 percent agreed, mean = 4.60, SD = 0.49). A similar proportion, 52.1% agreed, and 41.7% strongly agreed, that infrastructure construction jobs from the LAPSSET infrastructural project would very likely help in containing conflicts induced by poverty (Mean = 4.35, SD = 0.56). In addition, most respondents (54.2% strongly agreed, 39.6% agreed) were also of the opinion that an enhanced mandate for LAPSSET will go a long way in achieving long-term employment in the Horn of Africa (M=4.48, SD=0.56).

Results regarding spurred regional economic growth and output were overwhelmingly positive. Majority of the respondents, seventy-seven-point one percent strongly agreed, while twenty-two-point nine percent were in agreement. This implies that the LAPSSET has potentials for cross-border investments, as well as sustained regional economic growth in the Horn of Africa (mean=4.77, SD=0.42). Likewise, by harmonizing the trade and investment frameworks of the expanded LAPSSET mandate, the greater Horn of Africa is likely to experience accelerated regional economic growth. In this regard, 72.9% strongly agreed, while 27.1% agreed. (mean = 4.73, SD = 0.45). Although perceptions were comparatively lower regarding whether the LAPSSET can stabilize erratic economic cycles in the Horn of Africa, 47.9% were in agreement, 22.9% strongly agreed while 29.2% were neutral (mean = 3.94, SD = 0.71). Cumulatively, the above mean scores depicted the general confidence of the LAPSSET initiative's potentials of delivering sustainable economic integration through transnational physical infrastructures.

According to these findings, respondents viewed the LAPSSET initiative as a potential game-changer for industrial growth, job creation and stabilization of the macroeconomics of the Horn of Africa. There was a widespread agreement on the capabilities of Transnational Special Economic Zones and trade facilitation. Similar observations by the African Development Bank (2023) and the United Nations Economic Council for Africa (2024), noted that regional infrastructure corridors can promote industrial clustering and inclusive growth, provided they are anchored on multi-country investments. Despite the moderate score for the stabilizing regional economic cycles (Mean = 3.94), the researcher interpreted the existence of a significant caveat, that, unless there is fiscal and monetary coordination of cooperating IGAD member states, economic benefits from infrastructural integration may not be evenly shared.

In conclusion, these evidences indicate that for the LAPSET infrastructural initiative to realize its full economic stabilization potential, economic stabilization instruments such as investment harmonization, labor mobility agreements and convergence of monetary and fiscal policies, must be embedded at the level of regional institutions, and thus, ensure equitable growth and benefits sharing among cooperating states.

4.4.3 Descriptive Analysis for Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative

The study explored the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative, aimed at regional economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements relating to three main indicators: existence and operationalization of regional coordination mechanisms, stakeholder engagement and community inclusion, and regional integration & economic interdependence. Responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale and the results are summarized in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12*Descriptive Results for Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Initiative*

Statements	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	M	STD
Existence and Operationalization of Regional Coordination Mechanisms							
The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is in existence and was ratified by Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.	0 (0.0%)	7(14.6%)	15(31.3%)	23(47.9%)	3(6.3%)	2.29	0.94
The ratified LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is operational and enjoys committed governance support.	0 (0.0%)	7(14.6%)	13(27.1%)	24(50.0%)	4(8.3%)	2.19	0.96
A regional coordination body jointly established by Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan exists to manage joint initiatives.	0 (0.0%)	7(14.6%)	14(29.2%)	24(50.0%)	3(6.3%)	2.23	0.93
Stakeholder Engagement & Community Inclusion							
Local communities are meaningfully involved in the initiation and planning of LAPSSET projects, and thus, reducing grievances and enhancing social harmony.	19(39.6%)	7(14.6%)	7 (14.6%)	15(31.3%)	0(0.0%)	3.77	1.13
A LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism has potentials for ensuring equitable access to integration benefits among affected communities in the Horn of Africa region.	18(37.5%)	24(50.0%)	6 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.25	0.66

A LAPSSET coordination mechanism has potentials for fostering collaboration between governments, private sector, and civil society organizations in the Horn of Africa region.	28(58.3%)	20(41.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.58	0.50
Regional Integration & Economic Interdependence							
A LAPSSET coordination mechanism has potentials for strengthening political and economic ties among cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region, especially by harmonizing the; disjointed transport and transit infrastructures, existing trade barriers and slow decision making amongst cooperating states.	30(62.5%)	15(31.3%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.56	0.59
The LAPSSET coordination mechanism should be dynamic enough to accommodate other cooperating states (Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, and Eritrea) in the Horn of Africa region.	15(31.3%)	30(62.5%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.25	0.57
The inclusive LAPSSET coordination mechanism should receive governance support from regional institutions such as IGAD (Economic cooperation and Regional Integration department) and Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI). Thus, increased investor confidence in the LAPSSET Initiative.	13(27.1%)	32(66.7%)	3 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	4.21	0.54
Source: Researcher Generated (2025)							

According to the findings, the existence and functioning of a regional coordination mechanism under the LAPSSSET initiative is actually quite weak. A mere 14.6% of respondents agreed that the mechanism exists and is ratified by Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, while 47.9% disagreed and 31.3% were neutral, and thus, giving the statement a mean equal to 2.29 and standard deviation equal to 0.94. Likewise, whereas 14.6% agreed that the LAPSSSET regional coordination mechanism is operational and that it benefits from committed governance support, 50% disagreed and 27.1% were neutral ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 0.96$). Additionally, only 14.6% of respondents agreed that a joint regional body has been established to manage the LAPSSSET related activities, with 50% disagreeing and 29.2% neutral ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.93$).

In terms of formalization, the principles around a regional coordination mechanism for the LAPSSSET do not appear to have been established. Therefore, operationalization of such a mechanism in practice is not adequate, and thus, there are governance and institutional gaps which limit cross-border coordination and strategy alignment. The results also showed that there was moderate, but inconsistent, stakeholder engagement and community inclusion in the LAPSSSET initiative. According to these findings, 39.6% of respondents strongly agreed while 14.6% agreed that there is meaningful involvement of the surrounding local communities in the initiation and planning of LAPSSSET projects. On the contrary, 31.3% disagreed while 14.6% were neutral on this issue ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.13$).

A LAPSSSET regional coordination mechanism has potentials for ensuring equitable access to integration benefits among affected communities in the Horn of Africa region, as the respondents strongly agreed (37.5%) and agreed (50%) (Mean = 4.25; $SD = 0.66$). Additionally, all participants (100%) either strongly agree (58.3%) or agree (41.7%) that a LAPSSSET regional

coordination mechanism has potentials for enhancing collaboration among governments, private sector and civil society of the greater Horn of Africa ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.50$).

With regard to regional integration and economic interdependence, the outcomes were mostly positive. Almost all respondents (93.8%) either agreed (31.3% agreed and 62.5% strongly agreed) that a LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism can strengthen political and economic relations between cooperating states ($M=4.56$, $SD=0.59$). Similarly, there was agreement ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.57$) that the regional coordination mechanism should not be exclusive to East Africa, but should facilitate the participation of other cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region, like; Uganda, Eritrea, the Sudan, Somalia and Djibouti. Furthermore, 93.8% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that governance support from regional institutions such as; the economic cooperation and regional integration division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); and the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI), should be given to the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, in-order to enhance investors' confidence ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.54$). The findings show that there is a strong view that a LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism may foster regional integration and interdependence in the greater Horn of Africa.

The results showed that a LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism was not in existence, and thus, its operational capacity and institutional effectiveness remain limited. The average mean scores for operationalization ($M \approx 2.24$) contrast the high ratings for integration potential ($M \approx 4.21-4.58$), which indicates a gap between institutional intent and implementation.

The LAPSSET is therefore viewed as a potential unifying infrastructural initiative, not only for East Africa, but also for the greater Horn of Africa. These views concur with the African Unions'

(AUs) Agenda 2063 aspiration and goal of an integrated Africa through world class transnational infrastructure.

4.4.4 Descriptive Analysis for Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa

The study sought respondents' opinions concerning the dependent variable - economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa - in order to establish how LAPSET-like regional initiatives contribute towards investment growth, employment generation, economic output, as well as monetary stability. Participants were asked how much they agreed with the statements on five major dimensions including Investments in Transnational SEZAs, Regional Employment Reduction, Economic Output Increase, Regional Development Growth, and Regional Economic Cycle control of Inflation/Deflation. The responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale in which 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). Table 4.13 summarizes the results obtained.

Descriptive Results for Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region

Statements	5 (SA)	4 (A)	3 (N)	2 (D)	1 (SD)	M	STD
Investments in the Transnational SEZAs (Special Economic Zones and Agreements)							
Regional trade settlements in local currencies (through the TSEZAs) will increase wealth creation of the greater Horn of Africa.	11(22.9%)	20(41.7%)	9(18.8%)	5(10.4%)	3(6.3%)	3.65	1.01
Local currencies of the Horn of Africa region will stabilize due to trade opportunities across the new LAPSSET TSEZAs.	9(18.8%)	18(37.5%)	11(22.9%)	6(12.5%)	3(6.25%)	3.43	1.08
Regional trade integration will increase due to shared LAPSSET TSEZAs and local currency use.	10(20.8%)	19(39.6%)	11(22.9%)	5(10.4%)	3(6.3%)	3.58	1.05
Reduction in Regional Unemployment							
Regional economic initiatives will reduce unemployment across IGAD countries.	11(22.9%)	20(41.6%)	10(20.8%)	5(10.4%)	2(4.2%)	3.68	1.02
Youth employment will improve through transnational infrastructure and trade projects.	10(21.0%)	19(39.2%)	12(24.5%)	5(10.5%)	2(4.9%)	3.83	1.06
Increased Economic Output – Combined GDP Growth for IGAD							

The economic output of individual IGAD member states will increase due to the expanded LAPSSSET mandate, which will incorporate the cooperating states under IGAD	10(20.8%)	20(41.7%)	11(22.9%)	5(10.4%)	2(4.2%)	3.65	1.03
Spurred Regional Economic Growth							
Infrastructure development and cross-border investment will drive long-term regional growth.	12(25%)	20(41.7%)	10(20.8%)	4(8.3%)	3(6.3%)	3.77	1.00
Controlled Regional Economic Cycles of Inflation/Deflation							
The LAPSSSET initiative will stabilize inflation and deflation cycles due to coordinated regional economic policies.	9(18.8%)	19(39.6%)	12(25%)	5(10.4%)	3(6.3%)	3.75	1.05
The expanded LAPSSSET mandate will create a platform for fiscal and monetary cooperation across IGAD states.	10(20.8%)	19(39.6%)	11(22.9%)	4(8.3%)	4(8.3%)	3.56	1.04
Source: Researcher Generated (2025)							

The table 4.13 above, shows that respondents had positive perceptions towards investing in the LAPSSET Transnational Special Economic Zones Areas (TSEZAs) as a means to improve economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. For wealth creation through regional trade settlements in local currencies, 64.6% of the respondents (22.9% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed) thought that the LAPSSET initiative will create wealth in the greater Horn of Africa. ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.01$). Likewise, 56.3% (18.8% strongly agreed, 37.5% agreed) opined that there would be stabilization of local currencies via trade opportunities in the LAPSSET TSEZAs ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.08$). Further, 60.4% (20.8% strongly agreed, 39.6% agreed) opined that there will be integration of regional trade through the LAPSSET TSEZAs, and local currency usage ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.08$). These results indicated that the respondents broadly agreed that LAPSSET TSEZAs are capable of improving regional trade and stabilizing the local currencies across the Horn of Africa.

According to the findings, the respondents were optimistic about the LAPSSET initiative reducing the rate of unemployment in the Horn of Africa. About 64.5% (22.9% strongly agreed, 41.6% agreed) believed that regional economic undertakings would assist in reducing unemployment ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.04$), while 60.2% (21% strongly agreed, 39.2% agreed) indicated that youth employment would emerge from the LAPSSET transnational infrastructure and trade initiatives ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.05$). These results show that the respondents are optimistic about the LAPSSETs creation of jobs, especially for youth in the Horn of Africa. Further, it can enhance regional integration.

LAPSSET investments will also result in increased output. About 62.5% (20.8% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed) of the respondents felt that the economic output of individual IGAD member states would improve, following the expansion of the LAPSSET mandate, to incorporate the

cooperating states under IGAD ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.03$). This shows moderate agreement that the initiative can assist in enhancing GDP growth of states in the region. Concerning long-term economic growth of the region, 25% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed that development of infrastructure and cross-border investment under the LAPSSSET initiative may lead to long-term economic growth of the region. ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.00$). These results reflect wider optimism that the LAPSSSET initiative can spark economic dynamism, cross-border collaboration, and economic integration among IGAD states.

In the end, the respondents displayed moderate confidence regarding the LAPSSSET's performance in stabilizing economic cycles in the region. Approximately 58.4% of respondents (18.8% strongly agreed and 39.6% agreed) believed that coordinated regional policies, through the LAPSSSET, would stabilize inflation and deflation cycles, with a mean of 3.75 and a standard deviation of 1.05. Further, 60.4% of respondents (20.8% strongly agreed and 39.6% agreed) believed that the LAPSSSET initiative would establish a platform for interaction between fiscal and monetary authorities of the IGAD member states (Mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 1.04).

In conclusion, these findings reflect a general outlook that the LAPSSSET initiative has potentials for integrating the various socioeconomic forces and stabilizing other ones in the Horn of Africa region. The belief of the respondents in the LAPSSSET TSEZAs, use of local currency, job creation, growth of GDP, and regional stability are in line with the objectives of IGAD's Regional Infrastructure Master Plan (2022).

4.5 Qualitative Analysis Results

Presented herein is the analysis of the qualitative results of this study. While the qualitative responses from the LAPSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya were obtained through the open-ended section of the semi-structured questionnaire, qualitative responses from the key informants (from Ethiopia and South Sudan) and border communities were obtained through the open-ended key informants' interviews, and moderated focus group discussions, respectively.

4.5.1 Qualitative Analysis on The Conceptual Design of the LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative

The study sought to evaluate the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. Qualitative findings indicated that most respondents viewed the transport and economic orientation of the initiative as a key driver of enhanced regional connectivity and shared economic interests.

4.5.1.1 Qualitative Responses from Key Informants on Conceptual Design of the LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative

Three key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan provided their opinions on the vision and economic rationality of the conceptual design of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative. The first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“The conceptual design of the LAPSET initiative was established on a regional integration vision which sought to integrate transport corridors, and trade facilitation systems across the cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region. However, in practice, the selection of some project components appeared to have been shaped by geopolitical priorities, rather than strict economic viability assessments, especially during the early

phases of design, where feasibility alignment across all partner states was not fully harmonized.”

The second key informant (KI 2) added that:

“From my understanding, the initial conceptualization of the LAPSSET reflected a strategic aspiration for regional transformation, but the depth of economic feasibility analysis differed across project components such as the new Lamu port, transnational highways and pipelines. Some elements were demand driven and viable, but others were ambitious and required stronger cost-benefit analysis justification, especially considering the disparities in the economic capabilities of the LAPSSET participating states.”

The third key informant (KI 3) observed that:

“From the lenses of South Sudan, the LAPSSET conceptual design adequately serves South Sudan. The initial memorandum of understanding (MOU) to construct a transnational crude oil pipeline was signed between South Sudan and Kenya in January 2012, and later the LAPSSET tripartite agreement was signed by Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia in March 2012. In May 2023, the tripartite states re-committed themselves through the Juba agreement, in-order to re-accelerate the LAPSSET initiative. Therefore, from the lenses of South Sudan, the conceptual design of the LAPSSET is adequate, considering that South Sudan joined the LAPSSET primarily because of the oil pipeline. Initially, South Sudan planned to export its oil through the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), but later settled on exporting through the Port of Lamu, and thus, South Sudan’s presence in the LAPSSET initiative.”

On the issue of initial stakeholder involvement, the third key informant (KI 3) provided a critical regional perspective, noting that:

“During the initial conceptual design phase of the LAPSSSET, the inclusion of the other states in the Horn of Africa - Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Uganda, and Somalia – was minimal and majorly consultative, rather than participatory. The process was primarily driven by South Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya, therefore limiting the broader regional ownership of the LAPSSSET. This may have reduced the early buy-in from the other states in the Horn of Africa region, who could have strategically contributed towards shaping a more inclusive LAPSSSET framework.”

Regarding the extent to which the LAPSSSET conceptual design reflected long-term regional development and security priorities, the first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“The LAPSSSET initiative partially reflects long-term regional development aspirations, especially in regard to trade facilitation and connectivity. However, its alignment with regional security priorities such as migration governance, and cross-border conflict prevention resource management remains insufficiently operationalized within the original design framework.”

The second key informant (KI 2) also noted that:

“While the LAPSSSET conceptual design acknowledged the value of regional integration and security cooperation, its translation into long-term strategic priorities for the greater Horn of Africa is uneven. Economic integration concerns are more clearly articulated, compared to the security cooperation mechanisms, which remain less developed in terms of actual implementation and institutional coordination.”

On gaps in the initial conceptual design, the third key informant (KI 3) observed that:

“The gap in the initial conceptual design of the LAPSSET is its limited regional inclusivity, where the other states in the Horn of Africa were under-engaged. This has implications for long-term stability, as regional infrastructure projects of this magnitude require joint ownership, shared governance structures, and equitable distribution of infrastructure benefits, in-order to avoid the perceptions of dominance by a few states.”

Finally, on whether an expanded mandate would reduce regional disparities, the first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“An expanded and more inclusive LAPSSET mandate which brings together all the states in the Horn of Africa region is likely to enhance regional economic integration by expanding market access, balancing development disparities, and improving connectivity. However, this would require very strong institutional coordination and harmonization of policy frameworks in-order to ensure equitable distribution of the LAPSSET benefits across all participating states in the region.”

The second key informant (KI 2) similarly observed that:

“Including the previously excluded Horn of Africa states into the LAPSSET initiative will significantly reduce the existing regional economic disparities by extending infrastructure benefits beyond Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. However, the success of such an expansion is dependent on addressing governance challenges, financing constraints, and ensuring that all member states have a meaningful role in the planning, sequencing, coordination and implementation processes.”

Overall, these qualitative findings observed that, although the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative is a potential driver for regional development in the Horn of Africa, the initiative's conceptual design needs participatory collaboration in its planning, by cooperating states in the region.

4.5.1.2 Qualitative Results from Respondents in the LAPSSET Stakeholder Institutions in Kenya on Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET

The study sought to identify gaps in the initial conceptual design of the LAPSSET Initiative with regard to regional inclusivity and the sustainability of strategic regional stability objectives. These responses were obtained through the qualitative section of the semi-structured questionnaire that was administered to respondents in the LAPSSET stakeholder institutions in Kenya. Findings indicated that respondents observed several limitations in the original design, particularly the dominance of national priorities over broader regional integration goals. This was viewed as a key constraint to achieving deeper and more balanced cooperation among partner states.

For instance, Respondent 1 (R1) noted that:

“By linking Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan strengthens economic diplomacy and interdependence, which may contribute to reduced regional tensions and improved prospects for sustainable peace.” Respondent 40 (R40) observed that: “The LAPSSET planning phase was Kenya-centric, with South Sudan and Ethiopia being marginally engaged.” Respondent 46 (R46) observed that “The initial design of the LAPSSET initiative may not have explored the economic situations and national priorities of different countries in the region, especially in security and economic growth.”

This limited inclusivity was perceived as a barrier to genuine regional ownership of the LAPSSET initiative.

Another critical observation was the inadequate integration of local communities and cross-border dynamics into the initiation and planning phases of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

Respondent 48 (R48) further observed that:

“Project displaced persons along the LAPSSET transect were not fully consulted, creating governance and social vulnerabilities.”

Respondent 48 (R48) observed that:

The LAPSSET initiative has been critiqued from the lenses of inclusivity, with the primary concern being the inadequate and non-transparent engagement of project affected persons into the governance of the initiative. Therefore, creating anxieties over land rights, and displacement from traditional economic ecosystems like ancestral farming lands and fishing grounds. Additionally, LAPSSET initiative has been criticized for being centralized, with heavy emphasis on Kenya national interests, as opposed to genuine regional cooperation. Equally, there exists political and financial challenges in the initiative’s implementation.

Respondent 6 (R6) observed that:

“The LAPSSET security initiatives are usually mentioned over the years, but there are limited mechanisms for coordinating migration, resource-sharing and defense issues.”

Overall, these results observed that while the initiative’s design envisioned regional development, it failed in incorporating inclusivity in its planning and governance mechanisms, which are essential for sustained regional integration.

4.5.1.3 Qualitative Responses from Focus Group Discussions on Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were moderated by the researcher. The first FGD included 8 discussants from the Moyale sub-county community, the border community between Kenya and Ethiopia. The second FGD included 10 discussants from the Lodwar sub-county community, the border community between Kenya and South Sudan. Both FGDs were conducted in the respective local trade centers, and consisted of the local residents, who introduced themselves as either; cross-border traders, local business owners, long-distance truck drivers, youth group leaders, policy makers, regional development experts, economists or physical planners. These discussants explored the three key sub-variables, namely; strategic conceptualization of the initiative, scope and regional inclusivity of the initiative, and the initiative's implications for economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Data was thematically analyzed through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method, encompassing coding, familiarization, theme generation, and interpretation.

The study sought to examine the strategic conceptualization of the LAPSSET Initiative as a regional integration infrastructure project linking Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan through transport and economic development initiatives. Findings indicated that discussants in both FGDs generally viewed the initiative as a strategic framework aimed at enhancing regional integration. However, some discussants noted that although the aspirations of the LAPSSET Initiative are ambitious and forward-looking, its implementation has been characterized by weak and inconsistent strategic alignment. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-County Physical Planner) stated that:

“The design of the LAPSSET initiative is very strong on paper, especially with the new Lamu Port, transnational highways, railroads, and cross-border pipelines, but weak in translating this vision into sequenced, deliverable phases.”

Some discussants further observed that the LAPSSET vision has been perceived as Kenyan-centric, leading to ownership and coordination gaps among participating states. FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-county cross-border trader) stated that:

“South Sudan’s contributions are yet to be fully realized in the LAPSSET initiative, partly due to the contested 11 km stretch at the Nadapal–Nakodok area along the Kenya–South Sudan border. A multilateral agreement on borderlands between Kenya and South Sudan has the potential to foster shared ownership and strengthen collaborative implementation of the LAPSSET initiative between the two countries.”

These findings propose that, while the strategic conceptualization of LAPSSET initiative aligned with regional integration aspirations, the LAPSSETs viability was dependent on political goodwill and harmonized planning amongst the cooperating states.

The study also sought to examine the scope and regional inclusivity of the LAPSSET Initiative as a transformative regional infrastructure program encompassing port development, resort cities, transnational highways, pipelines, railway lines, and special economic zones around the Lamu Port. Findings indicated that discussants generally perceived the scope of the initiative as comprehensive and transformative in nature.

However, participants in both FGDs observed limited participation by cooperating states, particularly in relation to cross-border trade harmonization and broader regional coordination. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-county long-distance truck driver) stated that:

“Inclusivity should not only be based on geographical location but also on the economic interests of cooperating states so that benefits are proportionate. A case in point is the difference in axle load capacities between Kenya and Ethiopia, which limits Ethiopian trucks from accessing areas beyond the Moyale one-stop border post (OSBP). This increases the cost of doing business for the Ethiopian counterpart, especially in transporting cargo from the new Lamu Port to the Moyale OSBP.”

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-County economic analyst) observed that:

“The blueprint of the LAPSSET infrastructure has the potential to cover the greater Horn of Africa region if its scope is expanded beyond Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia.”

Overall, the discussants emphasized that regional inclusivity requires a joint institutional framework that supports coordinated financing, shared decision-making, and equitable distribution of benefits among cooperating states.

The study sought to examine the implications of the LAPSSET Initiative for economic stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Findings indicate that discussants across both FGDs generally agreed that the initiative has the potential to enhance economic security stabilization in the region, particularly through improved trade facilitation and infrastructure-related employment opportunities.

However, participants also highlighted several challenges, including governance gaps, infrastructural disparities, and security concerns, as key risks that may undermine the realization of these economic stabilization objectives. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-County resident) stated that:

“Economic stabilization can only occur when LAPSSET benefits are equitably distributed among cooperating states and when porous borders within the Horn of Africa region are adequately pacified.”

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-County resident) observed that:

“Without harmonized trade policies and frameworks, the LAPSSET infrastructure alone will not ensure economic stability.”

The above results indicate that economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region through the LAPSSET initiative depends a lot on; security cooperation, the alignment of regional trade policies, and sustained investments in physical and social infrastructures.

Table 4.14

Summary of FGD Findings for Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET

Theme	Emerging Insights	Implications for Economic Stabilization
Strategic Conceptualization	• Ambitious regional integration vision but limited executional coherence	• Requires strategic alignment and shared implementation framework
Scope & Regional Inclusivity	• Broad infrastructure scope but uneven regional participation	• Necessitates inclusive governance and co-financing models
Economic Security Stabilization	• High potential for trade and connectivity-led growth	• Dependent on policy coordination, peace, and security cooperation

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

Cumulatively, these FGD observations revealed that the conceptual design of LAPSSET was good, though, its regional viability was dependent on; political goodwill of the cooperating states, adequate inclusivity, policy harmonization and coordinated implementation of the initiative.

4.5.2 Qualitative Analysis on the Economic Security Impact of the LAPSSET Initiative

The study sought to examine the effect of the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region, especially on job creation and investments attraction. Qualitative findings observed that the LAPSSET initiative has contributed positively in the creation of both direct and indirect employment, especially through infrastructure development projects such as the LAPSSET transnational highways, and the new port of Lamu.

4.5.2.1 Qualitative Responses from Key Informants on Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Initiative

Three key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan shared their opinions regarding job creation, investment attraction, and income generation through the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. The first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“The LAPSSET initiative fosters economic security by stimulating construction-related employment. The LAPSSET also attracts foreign direct investment into the transport corridor and logistics hubs. However, the sustainability of these gains is dependent depends on whether the cooperating states harmonize their investment policies in-order to ensure continuity beyond project completion phases.”

The second key informant (KI 2) added that:

“The LAPSSET initiative has potentials to diversify income sources for local communities through cross-border commercial activities. However, the uneven distribution of the LAPSSET infrastructure development means that broader regional

economic transformation has not yet been fully realized, since income generation is still localized.”

The third key informant (KI 3) noted that:

“The LAPSSET initiative in its current form, has limited direct economic impact in South Sudan, but its regional spillover effects are significant in terms of attracting investment interest and promoting expectations of future integration. If fully expanded, it could significantly create jobs and investment flows across multiple economic sectors in the Horn of Africa region, such as energy and logistics.”

On expansion of the LAPSSET mandate in-order to facilitate the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zones, the key informants from both Ethiopia and Sudan expressed strong support. The first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“An expanded LAPSSET mandate would definitely contribute towards the creation of cross-border Special Economic Zones through improved infrastructure connectivity and policy harmonization, thereby creating value addition industries in agri-business.”

The second key informant (KI 2) added that:

“Yes, an expanded LAPSSET mandate will facilitate the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas by encouraging industrial clustering along the LAPSSET corridor. This will ensure value addition in hides, meat, milk, and minerals, while at the same time positioning the Horn of Africa region to the global markets.”

The third key informant (KI 3) also affirmed that:

“If the LAPSSET mandate is expanded to include the previously excluded Horn of Africa states, Transnational Special Economic Zones would likely emerge naturally along the

corridor, owing to improved connectivity and harmonized trade policies. This will foster industrial linkages across borders and stimulate the currently under developed regional value chains.”

On the benefits of such transnational special economic zones, the first key informant (KI 1) noted that:

“The establishment of the LAPSSET transnational special economic zones will enhance industrialization, promote technology transfer among cooperating states, reduce dependency on raw commodity exports, create large-scale employment opportunities, and ultimately strengthen regional economic resilience.”

Similarly, the second key informant (KI 2) emphasized that:

“The main benefits would include increased export competitiveness, accelerated development of value chains, diversification of regional economies, and improved income generation for local communities engaged in agribusiness and mining sectors.”

The third key informant (KI 3) added that:

“Regarding the emergence of transnational special economic zone areas through the LAPSSET, South Sudan believes that the LAPSSET initiative has the potential of contributing towards the emergence of special economic zones. Specifically, South Sudan is interested in the Lamu Port special economic zone where its crude oil can be refined in Lamu for exports. This will create jobs in the region.”

4.5.2.2 Qualitative Results from Respondents in the LAPSSET Stakeholder Institutions in Kenya on the Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

The LAPSSET initiative is seen to have made a positive contribution toward creating jobs and attracting investments. Respondent 1 (R1) stated that “LAPSSET has created direct and indirect employment, especially in the construction of LAPSSET roads and the new Lamu Port.” However, the respondent noted that most of these employment opportunities were short-term and largely concentrated in Kenya, particularly in Lamu and Isiolo counties.

Respondent 2 (R2) mentioned that the project has spurred investment both nationally and regionally, noting that:

“The initiative has opened up new investment avenues and the private sector is participating, particularly in logistics, transport, and hospitality ventures. However, inefficiencies and contradictory policy coordination among the LAPSSET tripartite states have inhibited the inflow of sustained investment.”

Respondent 3 (R3) stated that:

“Local communities have benefited from LAPSSET trade linkages and improved infrastructure, but the benefits remain concentrated near key project nodes.”

Collectively, these responses indicated that the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has bolstered economic security through infrastructure-led growth, yet gaps still persist in ensuring inclusive regional cooperation for long-term economic gains.

The study also sought to examine the contribution of the LAPSSET Initiative to reducing economic vulnerabilities and enhancing economic security in the Horn of Africa. Findings indicated that the majority of respondents perceived the initiative as having the potential to

strengthen infrastructure connectivity and deepen economic interdependence across the region, thereby reducing structural economic vulnerabilities.

Respondent 7 (R7) noted that:

“LAPSSET connects historically marginalized areas and facilitates cross-border trade, promoting regional integration and inclusivity. Additionally, such integration can reduce social and economic inequalities and support shared prosperity, which is considered essential for long-term regional stability and peace.”

Respondent 2 (R2) observed that:

“The LAPSSET stimulates collective regional security by strengthening economic cooperation among the current cooperating states, and thus, providing incentives for peaceful coexistence which reduces cross-border political tensions. Additionally, the LAPSSET transport and logistics infrastructure has potentials for improving quicker humanitarian responses and aid distribution during crises, therefore improving human security initiatives in the Horn of Africa.”

Respondent 5 (R5) asserted that:

“Without inclusive planning and equal participation of all states, the LAPSSET initiative risks reproducing existing regional inequalities instead of reducing them.”

Respondent 40 (R40) observed that:

“The initiative reduces economic vulnerabilities by reducing overreliance on a single port (the Port of Mombasa) for Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Additionally, strengthening governance has the potential to enhance the Horn of Africa’s economic growth and interdependence.”

Cumulatively, these respondents were in favor of the LAPSSET initiative, noting its' stabilization potentials in the regional economy through interdependence. They, however, pointed out that governance, inclusivity, coordinated regional implementation across the greater Horn of Africa, will significantly contribute to the LAPSSET's long-term economic aspirations.

4.5.2.3 Qualitative Results from the Moderated Focus Group Discussions on the Economic Security Impact of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

To address the second objective, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were moderated by the researcher. FGD 1 involved eight community members of Moyale sub-county, the border between Kenya and ten community members of Lodwar sub-county, the border between Kenya and South Sudan. Both FGDs were conducted in the respective local trade centers, and comprised of the local residents, who introduced themselves as either; cross-border traders, local business owners, long-distance truck drivers, bus drivers, youth group leaders, policy makers, regional development experts, economists and physical planners. These discussants explored three key sub-variables, namely; strategic conceptualization of the initiative, scope and regional inclusivity of the initiative, and the initiative's implications for economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Data was thematically analyzed through the Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method, encompassing coding, familiarization, theme generation, and interpretation.

The study sought to examine the role of a regional coordination framework under the LAPSSET Initiative in promoting investment and supporting economic stabilization. Findings indicate that discussants perceived the importance of such a framework in attracting investment and enhancing the stability of regional economies. They observed that effective cooperation among partner states can reduce investor uncertainty through the joint development and harmonization of sound economic policies. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-County policy maker) stated that:

“When LAPSSET cooperating, states are actively involved in planning, decision-making, and oversight, it sends a clear signal to investors that the environment is safe and predictable. The success of LAPSSET therefore rests on trust and transparency across borders.”

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-County economist) noted that:

“Investment flows are not only about capital; they also bring in expertise, technology, and business networks that can stabilize fragile regional economies. The planning of coordinated port operations and the creation of joint industrial zones can generate predictable markets for investors.”

The study sought to examine the potential of the LAPSSET Initiative in reducing regional unemployment through coordinated implementation and inclusive development planning. Findings indicate that discussants anticipated the initiative to generate employment opportunities across various sectors, including construction, transport, energy, and logistics. It was further observed that coordinated planning under the LAPSSET framework could help ensure a more equitable distribution of employment opportunities, particularly among marginalized communities residing along the LAPSSET corridor. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-County youth-group leader) stated that:

“Building infrastructure is not enough; nearby local communities must also be involved in employment. Collaborative labor arrangements, skills development initiatives, and coordinated recruitment strategies can reduce youth unemployment and promote regional economic integration.”

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-County resident) observed that:

“Implementing harmonized labor policies and accompanying training programs across partner states will reduce youth unemployment, minimize migration pressures, and stabilize the region under LAPSET. Variations in employment benefits across states could potentially incite tensions.”

The study sought to examine the potential of the LAPSET Initiative in stimulating regional economic growth and output. Findings indicate that discussants argued that, if effectively implemented and with full participation of partner states, the initiative could enhance gross domestic product (GDP) and overall production in the region. This was attributed to improved market linkages for traders and producers, which would facilitate economies of scale across the LAPSET corridor. FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-County local resident) stated that:

“Countries can enhance their economic growth by harmonizing policies on finance, trade regulations, and logistics standardization. LAPSET can accelerate industrial growth and boost regional output when these elements are effectively coordinated.”

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-County economist) observed that:

“The LAPSET project could lead to remarkable economic transformation in the greater Horn of Africa through a well-structured regional coordination framework that ensures economic growth is distributed across all participating states.”

Table 4.15*Summary of FGD Findings for Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET*

Theme	Emerging Insights	Implications for Regional Stabilization
Investments & Economic Stabilization	Regional coordination reduces investor risk and attracts sustainable investments	Strengthens economic stability and fosters regional trust
Reduction in Regional Unemployment	Job creation across sectors and skill development programs	Promotes social stability and reduces youth unemployment-related tensions
Spurred Regional Economic Growth & Output	Improved market connectivity, industrial output, and cross-border trade	Enhances GDP, regional integration, and shared economic prosperity

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

In the forgoing FGD findings, the effectiveness of the LAPSSET initiative in promoting regional economic stabilization is dependent on coordinated and inclusive planning and governance. When partner states are involved in decision making, policies will be harmonized, benefits will be equitable, and investments and employment will be generated and economic output will be maximized.

4.5.3 Qualitative Analysis on The Regional Coordination Mechanism of The LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

The study sought to assess the effect of the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. Findings indicated that there were mixed views among respondents regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanisms.

4.5.3.1 Qualitative Responses from Key Informants on the LAPSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism

Three key informants from Ethiopia and South Sudan provided their opinions regarding the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism. On the existence and major goals of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, the first key informant (KI 1) observed that:

“The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is yet to be formally adopted by the LAPSSET footprint countries. The primary goals of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should be; the harmonization of infrastructure standards, coordinated financing and investment mobilization, dispute resolution among member states, and equitable distribution of the LAPSSET initiative benefits across the cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region.”

On whether the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should be dynamic enough to accommodate additional Horn of Africa states, the second key informant (KI 2) observed that the mechanism must be flexible and adaptive to accommodate other willing states in the region. KI 2 stated that

“The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism must be flexible and adaptive to accommodate other willing states in the Horn of Africa region. A rigid coordination mechanism for LAPSSET will undermine broader regional integration objectives and therefore limit its transformative potential.”

Similarly, the third key informant (KI 3) stated that

“An inclusive and expandable LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is essential for the regional legitimacy of the initiative. The mechanism should be capable of

strengthening the union between South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and also integrate new members without disrupting existing institutional arrangements.”

On whether the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should receive institutional governance support from regional and international bodies, the first key informant (KI 1) emphasized that:

“Institutional support to the LAPSSET initiative from regional institutions like the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI) would significantly strengthen the technical capacity, policy coherence, and financial oversight of the LAPSSET coordination mechanism, considering that these institutions have the capacity to enhance neutrality, technical expertise, and credibility to the LAPSSET governance structures.”

The second key informant (KI 2) also observed that

“External institutional support is essential in enhancing accountability and ensuring alignment with continental integration frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), particularly in promoting cross-border infrastructure development and trade.”

Similarly, the third key informant (KI 3) observed that

“Institutional backing of the LAPSSET initiative by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) would significantly contribute to its long-term economic sustainability through strengthened policy harmonization and improved

investor confidence. This is likely to increase capital inflows and accelerate infrastructure financing.”

4.5.3.2 Qualitative Results from Respondents in the LAPSET Stakeholder Institutions in Kenya on the LAPSET Regional Coordination Mechanism

There were mixed views regarding the effectiveness of current regional coordination and governance mechanisms in managing the implementation of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative. Respondent 14 (R14) noted that:

“IGAD provides a strategic diplomatic platform for dialogue and projects coordination, but its impact on actual project implementation is limited.” This respondent further emphasized that: “While the few LAPSET regional meetings have often highlighted the importance of joint ownership, the implementation process of the LAPSET is still majorly dominated by national interests rather than a shared LAPSET vision.”

Respondent 45 (R45) also noted observed that:

“The tripartite states have on four occasions convened the LAPSET joint technical committee (JTC) and council of ministers between 2012 and 2024. However, there has been significant delays in implementing the decisions of the LAPSET JTC and ministerial council, owing to: the lack of a legal instrument that formalizes cooperation among the three footprint countries and creates institutional arrangements for the LAPSET Corridor Development Program; the lack a LAPSET regional coordination mechanism and a LAPSET umbrella body to implement joint decisions that bolster governance, transparency, accountability and ownership of decisions by the footprint states; and significant delays in convening the LAPSET presidential summit, aimed at

re-committing the tripartite states to developing the initiative, and thus, catalyzing regional economic development, trade and integration.”

Respondent 23 (R23) noted that:

“There is progress in establishing intergovernmental committees, such as the LAPSSET Joint Technical Committee. However, transparency in decision-making and accountability in resource use remain weak.”

The respondent further observed that bureaucratic overlaps and fragmented communication between member states slow down implementation and reduce mutual trust.

Similarly, Respondent 48 (R48) observed governance gaps, noting that:

“The LAPSSET regional coordination initiatives among the tripartite states are largely reactive rather than proactive. Additionally, there is insufficient consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of the LAPSSET initiative.”

These insights cumulatively suggested that, while institutional capacities for regional integration are in existence, their operational effectiveness in promoting transparency, accountability, and shared ownership remains insufficient. Strengthening governance frameworks, clarifying roles, and institutionalizing joint oversight were cited as critical steps for achieving greater legitimacy and efficiency in implementing and expanding the LAPSSET mandate among the tripartite states, as well as in the greater Horn of Africa, respectively.

A variety of improvement strategies to bolster cooperation among partner states in the Horn of Africa and regional institutions during LAPSSET implementation were suggested by respondents.

Respondent 6 (R6) emphasized the need for a more institutionalized framework, stating that:

“A LAPSSET regional authority jointly managed by Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan should be created to coordinate all transnational activities under one structure. This would strengthen communication, reduce duplication of efforts, and enhance coordination in policy implementation across the region.”

Respondent 23 (R23) highlighted the need for enhanced data-sharing and monitoring systems, stating that:

“A central information hub should be established where all partner states can access real-time project data, financial information, and implementation updates, thereby improving transparency.”

Similarly, Respondent 3 (R3) emphasized the importance of political goodwill supported by regular high-level dialogue among heads of state. R3 stated that:

“Unless partner states view LAPSSET as a regional public good rather than a national project, cooperation will remain weak. I therefore recommend that periodic summits of heads of state be convened under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to review progress and resolve emerging disputes.”

Respondent 48 (R48) proposed frequent regional coordination meetings, noting that:

“The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) should collaborate with partner states to support regular LAPSSET regional meetings. Furthermore, it is important that the New Partnership for Africa’s Development–African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD-APRM) facilitates the promotion of the LAPSSET Corridor under the African Union Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative (PICI), as one of the flagship projects in the region.”

In general, respondents were of the view that strengthening institutional coordination, promoting open communication, and depoliticizing project governance are critical for deepening regional cooperation and achieving the shared objectives of the LAPSSET initiative.

4.5.3.3 Qualitative Responses from Moderated Focus Group Discussions on the LAPSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism

To address the third objective, two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were moderated by the researcher. FGD 1 involved eight community members of Moyale sub-county, the border between Kenya and ten community members of Lodwar sub-county, the border between Kenya and South Sudan. Both FGDs were conducted in the respective local trade centers, and comprised of the local residents, who introduced themselves as either; cross-border traders, local business owners, long-distance truck drivers, bus drivers, youth group leaders, policy makers, regional development experts, economists and physical planners. These discussants explored three key sub-variables, namely; strategic conceptualization of the initiative, scope and regional inclusivity of the initiative, and the initiative's implications for economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Data was thematically analyzed through the Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method, encompassing coding, familiarization, theme generation, and interpretation.

On the existence and operationalization of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanisms, discussants in both FGDs agreed that while the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (LCDA) provides a national coordination framework for Kenya, there is still no fully institutionalized joint regional mechanism linking Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. This has resulted in fragmented implementation structures. According to the discussants, planning, policy harmonization, and accountability have been constrained by the absence of a supranational LAPSSET secretariat.

FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-county policy maker) observed that the current framework is highly centralized in Kenya, with the LCDA playing a dominant coordination role. While this enhances domestic efficiency, it inadvertently sidelines partner states, which largely engage through ad hoc bilateral arrangements rather than structured multilateral platforms. The discussant noted that this limit shared ownership and slows down joint decision-making, as each partner state appears to pursue its own national priorities.

Similarly, FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-county regional development expert) stated that:

“Without an operational supranational LAPSET secretariat to coordinate the diverse priorities of cooperating states, regional implementation remains fragmented.”

The discussant explained that while Kenya prioritizes port development, South Sudan focuses on oil pipeline access, and Ethiopia emphasizes transport linkages for industrial exports. These divergent priorities have created asymmetries in financing, planning, and execution, thereby undermining seamless project implementation.

Overall, discussants were of the view that strengthening institutional coordination mechanisms within the LAPSET framework would improve policy implementation, enhance investor confidence, and support more synchronized regional development outcomes.

On stakeholder engagement and community inclusion, discussants from both FGDs observed that the authenticity and sustainability of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative, depended on the effectiveness of stakeholder engagements, especially the project displaced persons (PDPs). The discussants general agreement was that, while the early phases of the LAPSET initiative incorporated public stakeholder engagements, the engagements were often symbolic rather than participatory. Additionally, those engagements had inadequate follow-through frameworks of

ensuring that the views of project displaced persons (PDPs) were genuinely incorporated in decision-making, especially on matters financial compensations for their land and natural fishing habitats, which were ceded to the government for project purposes.

The discussants from Moyale Sub-county noted inadequate communication between the government and project-affected persons (PDPs). They observed that communication processes were largely dominated by government technocrats and contractors. A discussant recommended that:

“Community participation must go beyond consultation to include meaningful involvement of project-affected persons in compensation and oversight committees of the LAPSET initiative. Current participation largely involves communities being informed about project milestones and aspirations rather than actively engaging them in oversight, benefit-sharing, and ensuring that outcomes such as youth employment, access to social amenities, and compensation for displaced persons are effectively realized.” (FGD 1, Moyale local community member).

Discussants from the same FGD further observed that, given the project’s cross-border nature, stakeholder engagement should extend to border communities in Ethiopia who share cultural and socio-economic ties with Kenyan communities but are separated by administrative boundaries. A youth group leader stated that:

“If local communities feel excluded from the initiative, regional mutual trust is likely to be undermined, potentially generating resistance. Authentic inclusivity should therefore involve clan leaders and cross-border community platforms such as Oromo cultural festivals that bring together communities from Kenya and Ethiopia. In addition,

historically marginalized pastoralist communities should be empowered through youth scholarships in vocational training, joint community councils, and transparent compensation processes. This would enhance ownership of the LAPSSET initiative and strengthen cross-border cohesion.” (FGD 1, Moyale Sub-county youth group leader).

Similarly, some discussants from the Lodwar FGD emphasized that effective stakeholder engagement requires capacity-building programs that improve local communities’ understanding of the technical and economic dimensions of the LAPSSET initiative. One participant noted that:

“The sustainability of the LAPSSET initiative depends on local communities’ acceptance of the projects. Communities that feel respected, adequately compensated, and meaningfully involved are more likely to protect infrastructure rather than resist it. For instance, the acquisition of large tracts of land by investors for speculative purposes has occurred without adequate community sensitization in Turkana. As a result, land is often sold at very low prices to speculators, which may lead to long-term resistance. Project sustainability is therefore grounded in trust, not only engineering and economics” (FGD 2, Lodwar Sub-county businessman).

Cumulatively, these results indicated that genuine stakeholder engagement and community involvement were not just mere considerations, but critical to the success of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

On regional integration and economic interdependence, discussants from both FGDs emphasized that the LAPSSET initiative is pivotal to economic cooperation in the greater Horn of Africa. They noted that by linking transport and economic systems, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has the potential to reshape the region’s economic diplomacy. The discussants further

observed that progress of the initiative depends on how effectively persistent insecurity challenges across porous borders are addressed and how well fragmented economic policies are harmonized.

FGD 1 (Moyale Sub-county long-distance truck driver) stated that:

“The LAPSSET initiative has the potential to significantly reduce trade barriers and foster a shared regional market if fiscal and monetary policies, transport regulations, and customs procedures are harmonized. As it stands, diverse logistical procedures and tariff regimes among cooperating states slow down the movement of cargo and people. For example, Kenya and Ethiopia have different axle load standards for long-distance trucks. As a result, Ethiopian cargo trucks cannot operate within Kenyan territory.”

The discussants further underscored that the transformative value of the LAPSSET initiative lies not only in its physical connectivity but also in the economic interlinkages it can generate among cooperating states. They observed that the initiative has the potential to redefine regional comparative advantages through the integration of Kenya’s Lamu Port infrastructure, Ethiopia’s industrial and consumer markets, and South Sudan’s oil resources.

FGD 2 (Lodwar Sub-county development expert) stated that:

“The strength of the LAPSSET initiative lies in its potential to convert national assets into regional value chains. Therefore, joint planning and oversight are required to foster economic interdependence; otherwise, economic interdependence may remain a distant aspiration.”

Table 4.16

Summary of FGD Findings for Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET

Theme	Emerging Insights	Implications for Regional Stabilization
– Existence & Operationalization of Regional Coordination Mechanisms	– Coordination remains nationalized by Kenya through the LCDA, with weak supranational structures. Cooperating states are pursuing different priorities, and therefore, fragmentation in the implementation of economic policies.	– Weakens joint planning, reduces policy coherence, and slows cross-border development momentum.
– Stakeholder Engagement & Community Inclusion	– Stakeholder engagement is more symbolic than participatory, with inadequate representation of project affected communities and cross-border communities. Exclusion of the voices of project affected persons has sparked mistrust and therefore, significant delays in project implementation.	– Erodes social cohesion and community trust, and therefore, threatens the initiative's strategic authenticity.
– Regional Integration & Economic Interdependence	– LAPSSET has the potentials for shared infrastructure, trade policy harmonization, and emergence of transnational value chains, though potential is constrained by policy fragmentation and (in)security challenges.	– Strengthens shared resilience, bolsters economic interdependence and enhances sustainability in regional economic stability.

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The LAPSSET initiatives stabilization potentials, as observed from the moderated FGDs, are dependent on coordination, participation, and interdependence. The absence of a formal supranational LAPSSET coordination body has slowed down harmonized planning and joint

implementation of the initiative by the cooperating. Discussants finally emphasized that real stakeholder engagement, especially amongst the cross-border communities is weak, and thus, reduced local trust and ownership in the LAPSSET initiative. In summary, the FGDs findings concluded that the LAPSSET initiative is a potential frontier of stabilizing the economic security initiatives of the Horn of Africa, especially when it is institutionalized through participatory governance and a joint regional coordination framework.

4.6 Triangulation of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Presented in this sub-section is the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study.

4.6.1 Triangulation of Themes on the Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Initiative

The triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative observations from the returned questionnaires, as well as the qualitative responses from the key informants and moderated focus group discussions (FGDs), provided in-depth insights of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its implications on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

Evidence in quantitative terms indicated a strong positive perception of the strategic basis of LAPSSET. Most respondents agreed that the initiative had a clear strategic vision. Most notably, 70.8% strongly agreed while 22.9% agreed. The mean was similarly high, at $M = 4.65$. Similarly, the standard deviation was low; at $SD = 0.54$. Moreover, most thought the national leaders in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan were adequately involved in the conceptual design phase, 54.2% agreed while 39.6% strongly agreed. The mean was also high, at $M = 4.33$. Similarly, the standard deviation was low; at $SD = 0.56$. On the contrary, there were lower mean scores for the

more extensive integration of sustainability (M=2.59, SD 1.10) and the engagement of other IGAD member states beyond the tripartite states (M=2.09, SD 1.03).

Qualitative insights reinforced these findings. The design was largely Kenya-centric, with Ethiopia and South Sudan marginally engaged, and largely no participation from the other Horn of Africa region states (KI 3, R4, R8, R40, R46, R48). Local communities were also not consulted enough, creating governance and social vulnerabilities (R12). According to (R6), there were no frameworks for cross-border security, migration and resource-sharing for long-term regional stability (R6). Interviewees acknowledged the strategic potential of LAPSSET to promote regional integration, economic interdependence and stabilization, but recommended the strengthening of inclusivity and coordinated governance (R4, R8).

According to FGD findings, operational coherence has been weak and Kenya-driven ownership in the early years (FGD 1, Moyale Sub-County Physical Planner; FGD 2, Lodwar Sub-county cross border trader). The FGDs pointed out how there was uneven participation from the various regions, limited cross-border harmonization, and limited participation from non-tripartite states of the Horn of Africa. Discussants indicated that economic stabilization would only happen if infrastructure benefits were shared equitably, and if there are improvements in security, policy coordination, and regional governance (FGD 1, Moyale Resident; FGD 2, Lodwar Resident).

Table 4.17*Triangulation of Themes on the Conceptual Design of the LAPSSSET Initiative*

Theme	Quantitative Evidence	Qualitative Evidence	FGD Evidence	Interpretation
Strategic Conceptualization	High mean scores: Strategic vision M = 4.65, Government involvement M = 4.33	KI 1, KI 2, R1: Emphasized economic interdependence and regional connectivity	FGD 1 & 2: Ambitious regional vision but limited execution coherence	Strong strategic foundation; early coordination recognized, but operational alignment requires more viability assessments and improvements.
Regional Inclusivity	Low mean score: Engagement of wider IGAD region M = 2.09	KI 3, R4, R8, R12, R40, R46, R48: Limited engagement of non-tripartite states; weak community consultation	FGD 1 & 2: Uneven participation, minimal infrastructure engagement from non-tripartite states.	Significant inclusivity gaps threaten shared ownership and equitable benefit distribution
Sustainability & Long-term Stability	Low mean score: M = 2.59	R6, R9: Weak integration of security, resource-sharing, and resilience mechanisms	FGD 1 & 2: Policy coordination and security frameworks not fully integrated	Weak integration of long-term stability and cross-border resilience considerations
Potential for Regional Impact & Economic Stabilization	High mean scores: M = 4.46–4.63	KI 1, KI 2, R4, R8: Expansion to broader Horn of Africa	FGD 1 & 2: High potential for trade-	Strong potential for regional integration and

Region states supports transformative potential	led growth if coordinated	economic stabilization, contingent on inclusive governance and cross- border coordination
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Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

The triangulated findings suggested that the LAPSSET's conceptual design appeared to be strategically sound and economically imaginative, however, its ability to impact the region positively and to stabilize it in the long run, was limited by lack of inclusivity and a weak sustainability integration, especially because the earlier phases of the initiative were dominated by Kenya. While survey results showed that the interviewees felt that the LAPSSET goals were clear, quantitative and qualitative information suggested that there could be operational, institutional and participation gaps which might hinder effective implementation of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative at the Horn of Africa regional level. Therefore, achieving the LAPSSET objectives in a sustainable way will require stronger regional governance frameworks. It will also need inclusion of all Horn of Africa region states, integration of cross-border security and sustainability, and robust economic stabilization mechanisms. In conclusion, the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has potentials for economically transforming the greater Horn of Africa region, if participatory planning and coordination is jointly undertaken by all the states in the region.

4.6.2 Triangulation of Themes on Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Initiative

Insights gained from the triangulation of quantitative and qualitative results, have delivered a comprehensive understanding of the economic security and stabilization potentials of the expanded LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative.

Quantitative evidence suggested there was a strong optimism about LAPSSET's potential to; industrialize the region, create jobs and grow the regions' economy. Most of the respondents agreed that the initiative could: generate Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas (TSEZAs) and the regional value-addition industry (M=4.52; SD=0.57); create jobs and trading opportunities (M=4.69; SD=0.59); enhance the intraregional trade settlements (M=4.42; SD=0.64); and contribute to long-term employment targets (M=4.48; SD=0.56). Also, the respondents showed agreement on the belief that there will be enhanced cross-border investments as a result of an expanded LAPSSET mandate that will enhance sustained economic growth (M=4.77, SD=0.42). Similarly, harmonized trade frameworks (M=4.73, SD=0.45) will also be achieved. However, the stabilization of erratic economic cycles (M=3.94, SD=0.71) received slightly less confidence.

These findings were complemented by qualitative results from the key informants and institutional respondents to whom the semi-structured questionnaires were administered to. Respondents cited that the LAPSSET initiative has caused direct and indirect employment (KI 1, R1) and investment (R2). Respondents observed the potential of the LAPSSET giving rise to transnational special economic zones, and thus, employment creation from the value chains (KI 1, KI 2 and KI 3). Furthermore, respondents noted that the LAPSSET initiative has led to improved trade links and infrastructure that is generating local income (R3). Respondents also added that

the initiative lessens economic vulnerabilities through increasing interdependence, diversifying trade routes and avoiding over-reliance on a single port (R7, R40). Nevertheless, they noted the existence of gaps related to the equitable sharing of benefits, coordinated implementation regionally, and inclusion of all Horn of Africa Region states.

Findings from the focus group discussions were consistent with the questionnaires' quantitative and qualitative findings. Discussants in both FGDs observed that regional coordination was essential to bringing sustainable investment, reducing unemployment and stimulating industrial and economic growth in partner states.

Table 4.18

Triangulation of Themes on Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSSET Initiative

Theme	Quantitative Evidence	Qualitative Evidence	FGD Evidence	Interpretation
Investments & Economic Stabilization	High mean scores: M = 4.52–4.69	- R2: Attracted regional and international investment; - R3: Infrastructure enhances local trade	FGD 1 & 2: Coordination reduces investor risk; industrial zones attract predictable investment	LAPSSSET's success in stabilizing regional economies depends on multi-country coordination and predictable investment frameworks
Reduction in Regional Unemployment	High mean scores: M = 4.35–4.60	- KI 1, KI 2, KI 3, R1: Created direct and indirect jobs; - R5: Equitable employment needed across states	FGD 1 & 2: Cross-border labor agreements and vocational training reduce youth unemployment	LAPSSSET can reduce poverty-driven instability if employment opportunities are inclusive and regionally harmonized

Spurred Regional Economic Growth & Output	• High mean scores: M = 4.73–4.77	• R3, R7: Infrastructure promotes trade, income generation, and regional interdependence	• FGD 1 & 2: Infrastructure linked with harmonized trade policies enhances GDP and economic integration	• Infrastructure-led integration drives economic growth and regional stability, contingent on policy harmonization and active regional participation
Economic Cycle Stabilization	• Moderate mean score: M = 3.94	• R40: Potential exists, but depends on coordinated fiscal/monetary policies	• FGD 1 & 2: Synchronized policy frameworks required for stability	• Stabilizing economic fluctuations requires strong fiscal, monetary, and policy coordination across IGAD states

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

The triangulated results suggest that there is a broad perception of the expanded LAPSSSET mandate as having the potential to; spur industrialization, create jobs, and stabilize the regional economy of the Horn of Africa. The quantitative data reflected high levels of confidence in the LAPSSSETs’ ability to establish Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas, as well as enhance trade and boost employment. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews highlighted the need for a fair distribution of benefits and the inclusion of all corridor states. All in all, LAPSSSET’s potential to bolster economic security, stability and resilience is dependent on the collaboration of all countries in the Horn of Africa region, inclusive implementation, as well as consistent fiscal, trade and secondary labor policies.

4.6.3 Triangulation of Themes on Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

Respondents in this study generally agreed that the regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative were ineffective, citing governance gaps (R48), transparency and accountability challenges (R23) and limited implementation of joint LAPSSET initiative resolutions owing to lack of a regional coordination mechanism (R45). In this regard, recommendations for improvements were fronted by respondents. R6 recommended the establishment of a joint LAPSSET umbrella body to assist with the coordination of LAPSSET transnational initiatives. R23 recommended the establishment of a centralized information hub, where vital information on the various LAPSSET project components can be easily accessed. R3 recommended for political goodwill and regular dialogue by the cooperating states. R48 underscored the need for regular regional meetings and effective participation of development partners - such as UNECA and NEPAD-APRM - in the LAPSSET regional meetings.

These findings were complemented by key informants responses and responses from the moderated FGDs, where the key informants observed that: the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should primarily harmonize infrastructure standards, coordinate financing and investment mobilization, facilitate dispute resolution among member states, and ensuring equitable distribution of project benefits across all cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region; the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should be dynamic to incorporate willing states in the Horn of Africa region (KI 1 & KI 2). Discussants from the moderated FGDs observed that: the current unformalized framework is highly centralized in Kenya (FGD 1); there is need for a supranational LAPSSET institution to coordinate the diverse national priorities of the LAPSSET cooperating states (FGD 2); sustainability and authenticity of the LAPSSET initiative is

dependent on meaningful stakeholder engagements, especially the inclusion of project displaced communities in the LAPSSET oversight and compensation committees (FGD 1), and meaningful involvement of local leaders and cross-border communities into the LAPSSET initiative, in--order to foster ownership of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative (FGD 2); customs, fiscal and transport regulations need to be harmonized in-order for the LAPSSET to foster economic interdependence amongst the cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region (FGD 1), national assets of the LAPSSET cooperating states should be turned into regional value chains (FGD 2).

Table 4.19

Triangulation of Themes on Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

Theme	Quantitative Evidence	Qualitative Evidence (Interviews & FGDs)	Interpretation
Existence & Operationalization of the LAPSSET Regional Coordination mechanism	Low mean scores (2.19-2.29) indicate strong agreement that the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is not in existence, and thus, not operational.	KI 1, R48, R23, R45, R3, R48, FGD 1 & FGD 2: The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is not in existence, and thus, not operational. The need for centralized information hub, the need for regular regional meetings with active participation of regional development partners.	The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is not in existence, and thus, not operational.
Stakeholder Engagement & Community Inclusion	Moderate to high ratings (3.77–4.58) indicate a mixed response on stakeholder engagement	FGD 1; FGD 2: sustainability and authenticity of the initiative depends on meaningful engagements of	Success of the initiative depends on meaningful engagement of local and cross-

		project displaced communities, local leaders and cross-border communities in the LAPSSET oversight, and compensation committees.	border communities, in the oversight and compensation committees.
Regional Integration & Economic Interdependence	Strong scores (4.21-4.56) implies the potentials of the initiative in bolstering regional integration and economic interdependence of the Horn of Africa Region.	FGD 1 & FGD 2: The initiative can foster economic interdependence in the Horn of Africa Region by harmonizing the customs, fiscal and transport regulations of cooperating states, and by converting national assets of cooperating states regional value chains.	A dynamic and more inclusive LAPSSET regional coordination is essential for economically integrating cooperating states in the Horn of Africa Region.

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

4.7 Analytical Model Diagnostic Tests on Collected Data

Prior to applying the regression model, it was vital for the researcher to ensure that data met the requisite assumptions for valid and reliable results. Failure to meet such conditions could have led to inaccurate conclusions. In this regard, the researcher performed several diagnostic tests, in-order to verify the suitability of data for regression analysis. These tests were; linearity test, multicollinearity test, and normality test. By ensuring that these assumptions were met, the reliability of the regression model was established by the researcher, and thus, the accuracy and validity of conclusions.

4.7.1 Residual Normality

The assumption of normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test applied to the regression residuals, consistent with Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) diagnostic requirements. This approach ensured that the normality assumption was evaluated on the basis of the distribution of error terms, rather than on the observed study variables. The test was appropriate for the sample size of 48 respondents to whom the semi-structured questionnaires were administered to, as the Shapiro–Wilk test is considered robust for small to moderate sample sizes (Biecek & Burzykowski, 2021).

The normality test was performed on the residuals derived from the regression model linking the independent variables - conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, regional coordination mechanisms, and economic security imperatives - to the dependent variable, economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

A p-value greater than 0.05 indicated that the residuals did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution, thereby satisfying the normality assumption required for valid inferential regression analysis.

Table 4.20

Shapiro–Wilk Test Results for Residual Normality

Variable	Shapiro–Wilk Statistic (W)	p-value
Conceptual Design of LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.974	0.312
Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.969	0.285
Economic Security Imperatives of LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.962	0.194
Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region (DV)	0.970	0.276

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The results indicated that all model residuals had p-values above the 0.05 threshold (Conceptual Design = 0.312; Regional Coordination Mechanism = 0.285; Economic Security Imperatives = 0.194; Economic Security Stabilization = 0.276), implying that the residuals were normally distributed, and that they did not significantly deviate from normality. Based on these findings, the assumption of normality for OLS regression was satisfied, confirming the suitability of the dataset for further correlation and regression analyses. This supports the validity of statistical inference drawn from the model.

4.7.2 Multicollinearity Test

In-order to bolster objectivity and reliability of the regression analysis, the researcher performed a multicollinearity test of the independent variables. According to Flores and Ocaña, (2022), multicollinearity occurs when two or more predictor variables are highly correlated, and thus; inflating the standard errors of the coefficients, making it difficult to determine the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The study employed Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance statistics to assess the level of multicollinearity. A VIF value greater than 10 or a Tolerance value below 0.1 indicates a potential multicollinearity problem (Gujarati & Porter, 2009).

Table 4.21

Collinearity Statistics

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.781	1.280
Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.729	1.372
Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative	0.763	1.310

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

The information in Table 4.20, shows that all the VIF value were lower than 10 and all the Tolerance values were higher than 0.1. Hence, there was no multicollinearity in the data. These results suggested that the three independent variables were sufficiently independent of each other, in-order to produce stable and interpretable regression estimates. This meant that the regression model employed in this study met the condition of no problematic multicollinearity or correlation among the explanatory variables. Therefore, the coefficients of conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative were interpreted as distinct contributors to the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Therefore, the statistical validity and predictive reliability of the model were preserved.

4.7.3 Auto-correlation Test

The Durbin–Watson statistic was employed to establish the existence of autocorrelation in the residuals of the regression model. According to Gujarati and Porter (2009), autocorrelation is the correlation of residuals from one observation with those from another, and thus, resulting into biased and inefficient parameter estimates. The Durbin–Watson statistic has a value between 0 and 4, and a value around 2 reflects no autocorrelation. According to Wooldridge (2016), values that are under 2 indicate positive autocorrelation and values over 2 indicate negative autocorrelation. In the study, the computed Durbin–Watson statistic confirmed the validity of the assumption of independent residuals. The test investigated if the regression model of the LAPSSSET Initiative’s Conceptual Design, Economic Security Imperatives as well as Regional Coordination Mechanism, to the Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa was auto correlated. Table 4.21 presented the model summary.

Table 4.22*Model Summary*

Model Summary	Value
Durbin–Watson	1.914

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

4.8 Pearson Correlation Matrix for Independent and Dependent Variables

Correlation analysis in quantitative research is used to determine the direction, strength and statistical significance of association among study variables (Chatterjee, 2012). The linear relationship between two variables is normally estimated with the help of Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r). It is widely used in parametric analysis. According to Sekaran (2013), value can vary from +1 to -1, where +1 shows perfect correlations, -1 indicate negative correlations, and value nearer to 0 shows little correlations.

Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to evaluate the relationships among the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative, economic security imperatives, regional coordination mechanism, and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Field (2013) classified the strength of correlation as follows: 0 showing no correlation; 0.1–0.39 a weak correlation; 0.4–0.69 a moderate correlation; 0.7–0.89 a strong correlation; 0.9–0.98 a very strong correlation; and 0.99–1.0 a perfect correlation. Table 4.22 showcases the correlation results.

Table 4.23*Pearson Correlation Matrix for Independent and Dependent Variables*

Variables	Economic Security Stabilization	Conceptual Design	Economic Security Imperatives	Regional Coordination Mechanism
Economic Security Stabilization	1			
Conceptual Design	– .701** (.000)	1		
Economic Security Imperatives	.663** (.000)	.582** (.000)	1	
Regional Coordination Mechanisms	.744** (.000)	.621** (.000)	.607** (.000)	1

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)**N=48**

The findings in the Table 4.23 above, reveal that all independent variables had statistically significant positive relationships with economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. A statistically significant positive relationship existed between the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa ($r = 0.744$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that effective LAPSSET regional coordination mechanisms - such as: shared governance frameworks among the cooperating states;

joint policy development and implementation; and a harmonized legal instrument for the initiative – carry the potential of enhancing economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

A statistically significant positive relationship existed between the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa ($r = 0.701$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that an expanded LAPSSSET mandate – in-order to include, the Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Somalia and Eritrea, as the LAPSSSET cooperating states from the Horn of Africa – has the potential to bolster economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa, especially by opening up the marginalized areas of the region to trade and investments, and thus, supporting peace and stability initiatives of the IGAD through economic interdependence of cooperating states in the region.

A statistically significant positive – though moderate - relationship also existed between the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa ($r = 0.663$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that the LAPSSSET initiatives linked to investments and economic stabilization, employment creation and economic growth are potentials for the economic posterity of the Horn of Africa. In conclusion, the strongest influence observed was the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative.

4.9 Multiple Linear Regression Model

A multiple linear regression analysis was carried out in-order to establish the joint influence of the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET initiative, economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. This

analysis quantified the predictive strength and explanatory power of these independent variables in explaining variations in economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa.

Table 4.24

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.847 ^a	.717	.701	0.38342

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

a. Predictors: (Constant), Conceptual Design of LAPSSSET Initiative, Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative, and Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative.

Table 4.24 shows that the R^2 of three independent variables to regional economic stabilization is 0.717. According to the above information, the conceptual design, economic security imperatives and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative collectively explain 71.7% of the variance in the economic security stabilization of the greater Horn of Africa. With an adjusted R^2 of 0.701, which adjusts for the number of predictors, it can be inferred that around 70.1% of the regional stabilization can be attributed to these three factors while 29.9% is due to other reasons that are not mentioned in the model. With a standard error of 0.38342, the predicted values deviate from the actual observed values by about 0.38 units on average.

The high R^2 value demonstrated a strong model fit, implying that the regression model effectively encapsulated the key dynamics explaining economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. This shows that the three independent variables of this study are potential frontiers of stabilization outcomes across the greater Horn of Africa.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

To determine the statistical significance of the regression model, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted, with a 0.05 significance level used as the decision threshold.

Table 4.25

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	39.615	3	13.205	89.775	.000 ^b
Residual	15.625	44	0.355		
Total	55.240	47			

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

a. Dependent Variable: Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa

b. Predictors: (Constant), Conceptual Design of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative, Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative, Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative.

The results displayed in the Table 4.25 above revealed that the regression model predicting the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa is highly significant ($F = 89.775$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). It affirms that the 3 independent variables together predict the dependent variable statistically. As such, differences in conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative have a strong association with differences in economic stabilization across the Horn of Africa.

The coefficients and significance of each of the independent variables (conceptual design of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative and regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative) on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa was examined. Table 4.25 below presents these coefficients.

Table 4.26*Coefficients*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-0.214	0.286		-0.748	0.458
Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET	0.412	0.091	0.398	4.527	0.000
Economic Security Imperatives	0.363	0.084	0.361	4.321	0.000
Regional Coordination Mechanism	0.476	0.078	0.447	6.091	0.000

Source: Researcher Generated (2025)

a. Dependent Variable: Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa

The multiple regression equation representing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is as follows:

$$ESS_{HoA} = -0.214 + 0.412(CD) + 0.363(ESI) + 0.476(RCM)$$

Where:

ESS_{HoA} = Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa;

CD = Conceptual Design of LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative;

ESI = Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative, and

RCM = Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative.

The regression model results indicate that, when all other variables are held constant, the baseline level of economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region is -0.214 ($p = 0.458$). This coefficient is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that the

intercept does not meaningfully differ from zero within the model context. The findings further show that the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has a positive and statistically significant relationship with economic security stabilization ($\beta = 0.412$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that a one-unit increase in the conceptual design index is associated with a 0.412-unit increase in economic security stabilization, holding other factors constant. Similarly, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative exhibit a positive and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.363$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that a one-unit increase in economic security imperatives is associated with a 0.363-unit increase in economic security stabilization, *ceteris paribus*. The regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative shows the strongest positive and statistically significant relationship with economic security stabilization ($\beta = 0.476$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that improvements in regional coordination are associated with a 0.476-unit increase in economic security stabilization, holding other variables constant.

In terms of standardized coefficients (Beta values), which allow comparison of relative influence across variables, the regional coordination mechanism exhibits the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.447$). This is followed by the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative ($\beta = 0.398$), and lastly the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative ($\beta = 0.361$). These results indicate that, while all variables make statistically significant contributions to economic security stabilization, regional coordination plays the most dominant explanatory role within the model.

4.10 Discussions

Presented here-in are the discussions on each of the study's specific objectives.

4.10.1 Conceptual Design of LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative and Its Implication on The Economic Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region

From the aforementioned regression results, re-conceptualization of the LAPSET design is vital in-order for the LAPSET infrastructural initiative to achieve the desired economic security stabilization outcomes in the Horn of Africa region. The empirical findings of this study indicated that the conceptual design of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative has a statistically significant and positive effect on the economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa ($\beta = 0.412$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the development of well-designed LAPSET infrastructural conceptual plan - to include; all the states in the Horn of Africa region, integrated transport corridors, energy projects, and trade connections - is essential for enhancing the Horn of Africa's regional economic resilience.

A strong alignment is observed with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2023), which argued that large-scale regional infrastructure projects deliver optimal developmental impact when anchored in coherent, integrated, and multi-sectoral design frameworks. UNECA further emphasizes that fragmented or narrowly defined infrastructure planning tends to undermine cross-border efficiency, and thereby, reducing the anticipated long-term economic returns. This study has reinforced this position by empirically demonstrating that an improved conceptual design of the LAPSET directly enhances economic stabilization

outcomes, particularly in a geopolitically and geostrategic complex region like the Horn of Africa.

Similarly, the World Bank (2024) empirical reports observed that infrastructure projects characterized by strong pre-implementation planning and regional coordination mechanisms attracted higher levels of investment, improved trade predictability, and reduced macroeconomic volatility. The positive coefficient (0.412) provides quantitative support for the World Bank's qualitative assertions, particularly on the role of infrastructure planning in stabilizing regional economies through improved connectivity.

Additional support is found with the African Development bank (AfDB, 2022), which observed that poorly coordinated transnational infrastructures in Africa often failed to generate expected spillover effects, owing to the weak project designs and limited regional alignment. The findings in this study diverge from such outcomes by demonstrating that when the conceptual design is strengthened, transnational infrastructures like the LAPSSET can potentially contribute to stabilization, and thus, addressing one of the key constraints identified in previous African development literature. This study also extends existing literature by introducing a more context-specific interpretation. Unlike the global infrastructure studies which emphasized on efficiency and cost-benefit optimization, this study has demonstrated that in the Horn of Africa region, the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative is deeply connected to geopolitical stability and cross-border economic harmonization.

4.10.2 Economic Security Imperatives of The LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative That Have Implication for Regional Stabilization in The Horn of Africa Region

As per the analysis, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative have demonstrated the potentials of facilitating the Horn of Africa's economic security stabilization. The empirical findings of this study have shown that the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative have a statistically significant positive effect on regional economic stabilization in the Horn of Africa ($\beta = 0.363$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that by mitigating exposure to economic shocks, the LAPSSET initiative can potentially contribute to regional stability in the Horn of Africa.

A robust association is observed with the African Union [AU] (2022), which emphasized that continental infrastructure programs should integrate economic security frameworks, in-order to enhance resilience against economic shocks and sustain inclusive growth. This position is reinforced by the IGAD (2022), which observed that transnational infrastructures required harmonized investment protection policies, in-order to reduce instability in volatile regions. This current study empirically supports both positions by demonstrating that improvements in the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET initiative can potentially bolster regional stability in the Horn of Africa region.

Additional alignment is evident with the WB (2023) and WB (2024) regional integration reports, which observed that infrastructures in fragile regions generated stronger economic returns when combined with sound macroeconomic governance and risk mitigation strategies. This study on the LAPSSET initiative not only supports this position, but also quantifies it, showing a statistically significant positive effect of economic security imperatives on stabilization outcomes. Similarly, the AfDB (2022) reports on infrastructure development in Africa noted that projects

lacking economic governance frameworks often underperformed in delivering long-term stability benefits. The current findings reinforce this argument by demonstrating that economic security is a determining factor in whether infrastructure investments translate into measurable stabilization effects.

In contrast, partial divergence is observed with Wafula et al., (2025), who observed that infrastructure development alone cannot stimulate economic growth and integration without strong emphasis on security frameworks. Njoroge and Kamau (2022), and Akinbi and Oluwole (2025) observed that in politically volatile regions, infrastructures that lacked strong economic security measures were prone to underutilization, and economic shocks. These studies strongly aligned with the current findings, and thus, reinforced the argument that economic security imperatives are necessary for delivering meaningful stabilization outcomes through the LAPSSSET initiative.

Overall, the empirical literature largely agrees with the findings of this study, particularly those emphasizing the value of incorporating economic security into infrastructure development frameworks. This study therefore extends existing literature by empirically confirming that economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET initiative are essential in determining the stabilization impact of the LAPSSSET initiative in the Horn of Africa region.

4.10.3 Regional Coordination Mechanism for The LAPSSSET Infrastructural Initiative, Aimed at Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region

Finally, the coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative exhibited the highest effect on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Results depicted that a 1-unit increase in the LAPSSSET regional coordination mechanism, may lead to a 0.476 unit

rise in stabilizing the regional economy of the Horn of Africa, with ($p = 0.000$). This is a clear demand for coordinated planning, harmonized policies and co-operation between states, in-order to maximize the benefits of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

The findings of this study agree with IGAD (2022) studies, where it was observed that institutional and policy coordination of member states mostly determines the success of regional initiatives. The powerful effect of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, demonstrated the need for cooperation of IGAD countries towards the achievement of the economic stabilization, which the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative aspires to deliver. Similarly, the African Union (2022) asserted that continental integration projects require strong supranational coordination mechanisms in-order to bolster collective integration benefits, reduce duplication, and ensure policy coherence. The findings of this study align with this perspective by demonstrating that improved regional coordination mechanisms within the LAPSSET directly translates into higher levels of regional economic stabilization. Further support is drawn from the WB (2023) regional integration studies, which noted that infrastructure projects involving multiple countries achieved higher developmental impact when supported by effective coordination platforms, joint governance structures, and shared implementation protocols. The present study not only supports this assertion but also provides empirical evidence of the magnitude of coordination effects in a fragile regional context.

In contrast, some studies present partial divergence. Wafula et al., (2025) argued that infrastructure development outcomes were primarily driven by financing capacity and technical design efficiencies, rather than coordination structures. Similarly, Lwesya (2022) suggested that national-level implementation capacity is sufficient to deliver infrastructure benefits, even in the

absence of strong regional coordination mechanisms. These perspectives, however, appear less applicable in multi-country infrastructure initiatives.

Although coordination is recognized globally for its positive influence, this study has presented context-related challenges. The lack of coordinated actions by the LAPSSET cooperating states has made it harder to implement decisions. Overall, an effective regional coordination mechanism for the LAPSSET is essential for achieving economic stabilization in the Horn of Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated the effect of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. Specifically, the study evaluated; the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, and the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, as the independent variables contributing towards the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region. This chapter, therefore, delivers a summary of the study, the conclusions reached, and the empirically backed policy and practice recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Presented here-in is a summary of the major research findings.

5.2.1 Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative and Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region

This study evaluated the effect of the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region. The analyses focused on the; strategic conceptualization of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, scope and regional inclusivity of the LAPSSET design, and implications for economic stabilization, as the key indicators of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiatives' conceptual design. Descriptive statistical measures, including means, frequencies, standard deviations and percentages, were deployed to systematically organize and summarize the collected data.

Descriptive analyses indicate that the initial conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative did not sufficiently incorporate the broader infrastructure and long-term stability needs of the greater Horn of Africa region. In particular, key regional states, including Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Somalia, were largely excluded from the initial conceptualization phase of the initiative. This suggests that the early design framework was relatively narrow in regional scope, with limited integration of wider Horn of Africa cooperation priorities.

However, the study also observed several positive design and strategic considerations underpinning the initiative. The conceptual design of LAPSSET was informed by a clear regional development vision, with project components selected based on economic viability and strategic feasibility. National government leaders from Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan were actively involved during the initial design phase, reflecting a primary tripartite ownership structure. The initiative was largely conceptualized to serve these three countries, although findings suggest that a more inclusive design framework has the potential to significantly enhance regional impact across the greater Horn of Africa. An expanded mandate incorporating Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Somalia, and Djibouti could reduce regional economic disparities, promote economic stability by opening marginalized areas to trade and investment, and strengthen peace and stability initiatives within the IGAD region through deeper economic interdependence among member states.

Regression analysis observed a positive, and statistically significant relationship between the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa, as confirmed by a beta coefficient of 0.412 and a highly significant probability value ($p = 0.000$). This means that, when regarded independently, the conceptual design of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative exerts a significant influence on the

economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region, and thus, a significant positive effect, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.398 ($p = 0.000$). This observation suggested that a one-unit improvement in the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET initiative has the potential of increasing the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region by 0.412 units.

These findings demonstrate that a well-conceptualized LAPSSSET initiative can significantly bolster economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region.

5.2.2 Economic Security Imperatives of the LAPSSSET Initiative and Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region

The study examined the effect of economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region. The analyses focused on three key indicators of the LAPSSSET economic security imperatives, namely; investments and economic stabilization, reduction in regional unemployment, and implications for economic stabilization. Descriptive statistical measures, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were employed to systematically organize and summarize the data.

Descriptive analysis indicated that an expanded LAPSSSET mandate has the potential to facilitate the emergence of transnational special economic zones (SEZs) and promote value addition in key sectors, including minerals, precious metals, animal products, oil, and natural gas. These SEZs are expected to stimulate industrial clustering, expand production linkages, and enhance regional competitiveness across the greater Horn of Africa.

Further findings suggest that the establishment of LAPSSSET-linked transnational SEZs would generate new employment and regional trade opportunities, thereby contributing to a reduction in

resource-driven and unemployment-related conflicts along porous borders in the region. Increased trade activity is also expected to promote the use of local currencies in regional settlements, strengthening monetary stability and supporting household-level wealth creation. In addition, infrastructure development particularly in roads, railways, transport logistics, and support services is projected to create substantial employment opportunities, reduce poverty-induced conflicts, and support long-term job creation goals. Overall, the expanded LAPSSET mandate is anticipated to accelerate regional economic growth through harmonized trade and investment frameworks, increased cross-border investment, and improved policy coordination, ultimately enhancing regional GDP and stabilizing economic cycles such as inflation and deflation across cooperating states in the Horn of Africa.

Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region, proved by a beta coefficient of 0.363 and a highly significant probability value ($p = 0.000$). This means that, when regarded independently, the economic security measures of the LAPSSET initiative exerts a significant influence on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region, and thus, a significant positive effect, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.361 ($p = 0.000$). This observation suggested that a one-unit improvement in the economic security measures of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative which have implications for regional stabilization has the potential of increasing the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region by 0.363 units.

5.2.3 Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative and Economic Security Stabilization of the Horn of Africa

This study assessed the effect of the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region. These indicators were; existence and operationalization of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, stakeholder engagement and community inclusion in the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, and regional integration and economic interdependence through the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative. Descriptive statistical measures, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were employed to systematically organize and summarize the data.

Descriptive analyses observed that: the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative does not formally exist, since it was neither drafted nor ratified by the current LAPSSET tripartite states, and thus, not operational; local communities are moderately involved in LAPSSET planning; a LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism has potentials for ensuring equitable access to integration benefits among affected communities, and fostering collaboration between state and non-state actors; the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism has potentials for strengthening political ties among cooperating states, and that it should be dynamic enough to accommodate other states in the Horn of Africa region. Finally, descriptive analysis observed that the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should receive governance support from regional institutions like the economic cooperation and regional Integration division of the Intergovernmental Authority on development (IGAD), as well as from the Horn of Africa Region Initiative (HoAI).

Regression analysis revealed a statistically significant and positive relationship between the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa region, as proved by a beta coefficient of 0.476 and a highly significant probability value ($p = 0.000$). This means that, when regarded independently, the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET initiative exerts a significant influence on the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region, and thus, a significant positive effect, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.447 ($p = 0.000$). This observation suggested that a one-unit improvement in the regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative has the potential of increasing the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa Region by 0.476 units.

5.3 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn in this study were anchored on an empirical - theoretical logic, commonly used in; systems-based development analysis, regional integration theory, and infrastructure economics. Scientifically, the study relies on statistically estimated relationships - regression coefficients and significance levels - to determine causal and associative effects between the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. The application of quantitative coefficients (β values) provides the scientific basis of the conclusions, allowing the study to move beyond descriptive assertions to inferential explanations of how variations in the three independent variables - conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms - translate into measurable changes in the Horn of Africa's regional stabilization outcomes. The significance levels ($p < 0.05$, particularly $p = 0.000$ across the independent variables) reinforced the reliability of these

relationships, confirming that the observed effects were due to systematic structural relationships within the regional infrastructure system.

From this scientific basis, the study established a hierarchy of explanatory power among the three independent variables. The regional coordination mechanism of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative emerged as the most powerful predictor of economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region ($\beta = 0.476$), followed by the conceptual design of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative ($\beta = 0.412$), and finally, the economic security imperatives of the LAPSET infrastructural initiative ($\beta = 0.363$). This ordering provided a systems-level interpretation where the LAPSET regional coordination mechanism acts as the integrative mechanism that determines whether the LAPSET conceptual design intentions and economic security imperatives are effectively translated into operational outcomes.

The overarching research problem in this study was to investigate the effect of LAPSET infrastructural initiative on economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. The overall conclusion was that the LAPSET infrastructural initiative is a viable and statistically supported venture for the economic security stabilization in the Horn of Africa region. However, its effectiveness was uneven and highly dependent on the strength of its regional coordination mechanisms, followed by the quality of the LAPSET conceptual design, and finally, the integration of the LAPSET economic security imperatives.

Regarding the conceptual design of the LAPSET initiative, the study concluded that the LAPSET's conceptual design appeared to be strategically sound and economically imaginative, however, its ability to impact the region positively and to stabilize it in the long run, was limited by lack of inclusivity and a weak sustainability integration, especially because the earlier phases of the initiative were dominated by Kenya. While survey results showed that the interviewees

felt that the LAPSSSET goals were clear, quantitative and qualitative information suggested that there could be operational, institutional and participation gaps which might hinder effective implementation of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative at the Horn of Africa regional level. Therefore, achieving the LAPSSSET objectives in a sustainable way will require stronger regional governance frameworks. It will also need inclusion of all Horn of Africa region states, integration of cross-border security and sustainability, and robust economic stabilization mechanisms. In conclusion, the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative has potentials for economically transforming the greater Horn of Africa region, if participatory planning and coordination is jointly undertaken by all the states in the region.

On economic security imperatives of the LAPSSSET, the study concluded that there is a broad perception of the expanded LAPSSSET mandate as having the potential to; spur industrialization, create jobs, and stabilize the regional economy of the Horn of Africa region. The quantitative data reflected high levels of confidence in the LAPSSSETs' ability to establish Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas, as well as enhance trade and boost employment. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews highlighted the need for a fair distribution of benefits and the inclusion of all corridor states. All in all, LAPSSSET's potential to bolster economic security, stability and resilience is dependent on the collaboration of all countries in the Horn of Africa, inclusive implementation, as well as consistent fiscal, trade and secondary labor policies

On regional coordination mechanisms, the study concluded that the LAPSSSET regional coordination mechanism is the most critical, yet the weakest component of the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative. The absence of a fully operationalized, legally institutionalized, and jointly ratified LAPSSSET regional coordination mechanism among the LAPSSSET tripartite states represents a major governance gap. The study also found that the LAPSSSET regional

coordination mechanism has the highest statistical effect on stabilization outcomes, indicating that it was the key leverage point for policy intervention. Reinforcing the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism would, therefore, deliver the highest marginal gains in regional stability, compared to improvements in the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative and economic security of the LAPSSET initiative.

This study concluded that LAPSSET was not merely an infrastructure project, but a regional transformation platform with significant potential to reshape the economic and security dynamics of the Horn of Africa region. However, its success was conditional. The strongest determinant - regional coordination mechanism - remained underdeveloped, thereby limiting the economic security stabilization potentials of the initiative in the Horn of Africa region. Therefore, enhancing institutional coordination, expanding the inclusivity of conceptual planning, and strengthening economic security frameworks were fronted as the prerequisites for fully realizing LAPSSET's stabilization potential. Ultimately, the scientific conclusion is that regional economic stabilization in the Horn of Africa through LAPSSET is achievable, measurable, and empirically supported, but only under conditions of strengthened governance integration and coordinated regional action.

5.4 Recommendations

This study makes a total of eight (8) recommendations, comprising four (4) practice-oriented recommendations and four (4) policy-oriented recommendations. The recommendations are directly derived from the empirical findings on the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Practices

The study recommends that the LAPSET infrastructural initiative be re-conceptualized, in order to expand its current mandate beyond Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, and thus, inclusion of other willing member states in the Horn of Africa region - such as Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan – into the LAPSET. This recommendation should be jointly implemented by the three footprint countries (Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan) through their respective national ministries responsible for transport, infrastructure, finance, industrialization and foreign affairs. This expansion should follow a phased accession approach based on agreed regional protocols.

The study recommended for the development of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas along the borders of the LAPSET cooperating states, and thus, bolster value addition in key sectors such as minerals, oil, livestock, agriculture, and manufacturing. Implementation of this recommendation should be jointly undertaken by the respective national investment authorities of the LAPSET footprint countries (Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan), and in partnership with private sector actors.

The study recommends harmonization of selected fiscal, trade, and investment policies among LAPSET partner states. This is aimed at reducing transaction costs, as well as bolster the Horn of Africa's regional economic stability. This recommendation should be implemented by the ministries of finance, central banks, and customs authorities of the respective LAPSET cooperating states, in collaboration with the regional economic integration units under IGAD – the regional economic community of the Horn of Africa region. The harmonization process should commence with digital trade facilitation systems, trade documentation, and customs procedures.

The study recommended for the establishment of a legally mandated supranational LAPSSET regional coordination authority to oversee the; planning, coordination, sequencing, implementation, monitoring, and dispute resolution across the LAPSSET cooperating states. The LAPSSET supranational institution should be established through a formal intergovernmental agreement between Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, with operational support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority (LCDA) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – the regional economic community of the Horn of Africa region. The supranational LAPSSET authority should include representation from national governments, county/local governments, private sector actors, and affected local communities along the LAPSSET transect.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Policy

The study recommended for the development of a binding regional policy framework requiring participatory planning for the LAPSSET project components. This policy should be developed and operationalized with the support of the national parliaments and ministries responsible for planning of the cooperating states, and thus, ensure that all relevant Horn of Africa region member states are included in future infrastructure planning processes.

The study recommended for the formulation of harmonized regional policies on investment protection, trade security, and economic risk mitigation. These policies should be implemented by ministries of finance, investment promotion authorities, and central banks within LAPSSET partner states, and thus, bolster investor confidence in the initiative and safeguard cross-border infrastructure investments.

The study recommended for the formal institutionalization of the LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism, in-order to adequately guide the LAPSSET implementation process. This includes establishment of; dispute resolution mechanisms, monitoring frameworks, and structured joint decision-making systems. Moreover, the policy should be implemented by the heads of state of participating countries, in-order to bolster accountability and policy coherence.

The study recommends the establishment of a common regional transit policy in-order to bolster cross-border movement of people, trade efficiencies, and address access constraints faced by the landlocked developing countries in the Horn of Africa region, such as Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. This recommendation should be implemented by the ministries of transport, customs authorities, and regional trade facilitation bodies within the LAPSSET partner states. The policy should also prioritize one-stop border posts, digital customs systems, and harmonized transit documentation.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Despite contributions made by this study, a few aspects need to be considered by future researchers. Firstly, this study indicates that the conceptual design, economic security imperatives, and regional coordination mechanisms of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative, jointly explain 71.7% of the variation in the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. While this is a strong model fit, approximately 29.3% of the variation is unexplained, suggesting the possibility of other factors influencing the economic security stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Subsequent studies, therefore, should investigate the other determinants of the Horn of Africa's regional stability, such as: the regional conflict system and geography of conflicts in the Horn of Africa; the regional approaches - such as the Nairobi protocol - for the prevention, control and reduction of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Great Lakes and the Horn

of Africa regions; the implications of extractive industries in the Horn of Africa; the location curse of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) – like, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea – in the Horn of Africa; the east and west power struggles in the Horn of Africa; and the general political stability of all states in the greater Horn of Africa region.

Secondly, considering that this study focused on the LAPSET infrastructural initiative, future researchers should consider comparative studies involving other regional infrastructure projects in the Horn of Africa region, or within the African continent. Such comparative analyses would assist in establishing whether the relationships observed in this study were unique to the LAPSET initiative, or whether they are applicable to other cross-border infrastructures in similar contexts.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Research Title: ASSESSING VIABILITY OF THE LAPSSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA.

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Mr. Brian James Ogal from Riara University. Before you decide whether to participate, please read the following information carefully. If you have any questions, feel free to ask.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to assess viability of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative as an Economic Security Stabilization Frontier in the Horn of Africa. The study objectives are:

To assess the conceptual design of LAPSSET initiative and its implication on the economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

To identify economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET initiative that have implication for regional stabilization in the Horn of Africa.

To examine the socio-economic barriers impeding the implementation of the LAPSSET initiative that have implication for economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

To explore a regional coordination mechanism for LAPSSET initiative towards regional economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

Procedures

You will be asked to complete the questionnaire provided by the researcher.

The estimated time commitment is approximately 20 minutes.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

Risks and Benefits

Benefits:

Your views shall be incorporated in developing policy recommendations through this study. Additionally, your views are important in developing the academic body of knowledge on the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative.

Risks:

The researcher considers Professional skepticism (amongst the key technical respondents from both the National government institutions as well as from the County governments) as a potential risk, especially on confidentiality of information. Additionally, the researcher is aware that Cabinet deliberations on regional integration among the LAPSET cooperating states is classified information.

Therefore, you are at liberty to uphold confidentiality regarding such Cabinet deliberations.

Data Collection and Storage

We will collect data through the Questionnaire.

Your data will be stored securely and confidentially.

We may use your de-identified data for future research or publication.

Confidentiality

Your participation will remain confidential.

Only authorized researchers will have access to your data.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Name: Mr. Brian James Ogal

Email: bogal9344@stu.riarauniversity.ac.ke

Phone Number: 0705424701 OR 0724948200

Consent

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time.

Participant Signature Date

Researcher signature Date

APPENDIX 2: THE SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to **“ASSESS THE VIABILITY OF THE LAPSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA”**.

I am a post graduate student at Riara University, currently collecting data for my Thesis - Master of Arts Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy. I would be grateful if you could provide me with valuable information that will be useful for this study. This study is for achieving an academic purpose.

Section A: Background and Demographic Information

1. Gender of the Respondent

Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age Category of the Respondent

25-29 Years ☐ 30-34 Years ☐ 35-39 Years ☐
40-44 Years ☐ 45-49 Years ☐ Above 50 Years ☐

3. Highest Education level of the respondent

PhD ☐ Masters ☐ Undergraduate ☐
Diploma ☐ Certificate ☐ O - Level ☐ A-Level ☐

4. What is your current position in your Organization/Institution?

Economic Advisor ☐ Director General/CEO/Managing Director ☐
General Manager ☐ Technical Director ☐ Technical Manager ☐
Deputy Technical Director ☐ Assistant Technical Director ☐
Assistant Manager ☐ County Chief Officer ☐ Technical Officer ☐

5. How long have you been technically involved with the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative?

Less than 1 Year [] 1 – 3 Years []
 4 – 6 Years [] 7 – 9 Years []
 9 Years – 11 Years [] Over 12 Years []

Section B: Assessing the Viability of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

The Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET Infrastructural Initiative

6. The following statements relate to the conceptual design of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its implication on the economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Please indicate with a tick [√] in the column that best describes the conceptual design of LAPSSET initiative and its implication on the economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

The rating scale for Part B of the questionnaire is as follows; **Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).**

STATEMENTS						
STRATEGIC CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE LAPSSET		SD	D	N	A	SA
CD1	The conceptual design of LAPSSET was informed by a clear strategic vision for regional development, and the project components were selected on the basis of economic viability.					
CD2	National Governments leaders from Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan were adequately involved during the conceptual design phase of the LAPSSET initiative.					
CD3	The initial conceptual design of LAPSSET initiative incorporated the broader infrastructure and long-term sustainability and regional stability needs of the greater Horn of Africa Region.					

SCOPE & REGIONAL INCLUSIVITY OF THE LAPSSET DESIGN		SD	D	N	A	SA
CD4	The LAPSSET initiative was primarily conceptualized to serve Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.					
CD5	The other IGAD member states (Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia) were adequately involved in the initial conceptual design phase of the LAPSSET initiative.					
CD6	A more inclusive conceptual design framework has potentials for increased regional impact of the LAPSSET initiative in the greater Horn of Africa.					
IMPLICATIONS FOR ECONOMIC STABILIZATION		SD	D	N	A	SA
CD7	An expanded LAPSSET mandate (to include; Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea & Somalia) has potentials for reducing regional economic disparities in the greater Horn of Africa Region.					
CD8	An expanded LAPSSET mandate (to include; Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea & Somalia) can promote economic stability by opening up the marginalized regions of the greater Horn of Africa Region to trade and investments.					
CD9	An expanded LAPSSET mandate (to include; Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea & Somalia) is capable of supporting peace and stability initiatives of the IGAD region, through economic interdependence of cooperating states.					

7. To what extent do you think the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative reflects the long-term regional development and security priorities of the greater Horn of Africa region?

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8. What gaps, if any, do you perceive in the initial Conceptual Design of the LAPSSET initiative - in terms of regional inclusivity and long-term stability goals?

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Part B: Economic Security Imperatives that Have Implications for Stabilization

9. The following statements relate to the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET initiative that have implication for regional stabilization in the Horn of Africa. Please indicate with a tick [✓] in the column that best describes the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET initiative that have implication for regional stabilization in the Horn of Africa.

The rating scale for Part B of the questionnaire is as follows; **Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).**

STATEMENTS						
INVESTMENTS AND ECONOMIC STABILIZATION		SD	D	N	A	SA
ESI1	An expanded LAPSSET Mandate has potentials for the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas, and thus, emergence of value addition industries (in hide, meat, milk and minerals) at the porous borders of the Horn of Africa Region.					
ESI2	LAPSSET Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas in the greater Horn of Africa will create new employment and regional trade opportunities, and thus, significant reduction of					

	resource-fueled insurgencies at the porous borders of the region.					
ESI3	LAPSSET Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas in the greater Horn of Africa Region will increase regional trade settlements in local currencies, and thus, stability of local currencies, and wealth creation amongst local communities.					
REDUCTION IN REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT		SD	D	N	A	SA
ESI4	Regional trade initiatives from the expanded LAPSSET Mandate will create employment opportunities for local communities, and thus, significant reduction of unemployment - fueled conflicts at the porous borders of the Horn of Africa region.					
ESI5	Infrastructure construction jobs from the expanded LAPSSET Mandate, especially in the roads and railway construction sectors, will significantly reduce poverty instigated conflicts amongst the local communities at the porous borders of the Horn of Africa region.					
ESI6	The expanded LAPSSET Mandate will support the long-term employment goals of the Horn of Africa Region, especially in transport logistics and support services.					
SPURRED REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH & INCREASED ECONOMIC OUTPUT		SD	D	N	A	SA
ESI7	The expanded LAPSSET Mandate has potentials for physical infrastructure developments, and thus, and cross-border investments and trade for sustained regional growth in the Horn of Africa.					
ESI8	The expanded LAPSSET Mandate has potentials for accelerated regional economic growth in the Horn of Africa region, due to harmonized trade and investment frameworks which accrue from regional integration. Thus, increased combined GDP of the IGAD					

	region.					
ESI9	The expanded LAPSSET Mandate has potentials for stabilizing the erratic economic cycles (of inflation and deflation) in the Horn of Africa Region, due to coordinated regional economic policies of the cooperating member states.					

10. From your perspective, how has the LAPSSET initiative contributed to job creation, investment attraction, and income generation as tools for economic security in the Horn of Africa?

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11. In what ways do you think LAPSSET contributes (or could contribute) to reducing economic vulnerabilities and promoting security in the Horn of Africa?

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PART B: Regional Coordination Mechanism of the LAPSSET Initiative

12. The following statements relate to the regional coordination mechanism for LAPSSET initiative towards regional economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa. Please indicate with a tick [✓] in the column that best describes the regional coordination mechanism for LAPSSET initiative towards regional economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.

The rating scale for Part C of the questionnaire is as follows; **Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA).**

STATEMENTS						
EXISTENCE & OPERATIONALIZATION		SD	D	N	A	SA
RCM1	The LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is in existence, and it was unanimously ratified by Kenya, Ethiopia & South Sudan.					
RCM2	The ratified LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism is operational, and it enjoys committed governance support from the Governments of Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan.					
RCM3	A LAPSSET regional coordination body/institution (that was jointly established by Kenya, Ethiopia & South Sudan) is in existence to manage the joint LAPSSET initiatives, and thus, proper governance, transparency, accountability and ownership in the joint decision making and implementation of the LAPSSET by the cooperating states.					
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY INCLUSION		SD	D	N	A	SA
RCM4	Local communities are meaningfully involved in the initiation and planning phases of LAPSSET projects, and thus, a reduction of grievances for enhanced social harmony for the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative.					
RCM5	A LAPSSET regional coordination mechanisms will ensure equitable access to the regional integration benefits of LAPSSET initiative amongst all affected communities in the Horn of Africa Region.					
RCM6	A LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism will foster collaboration between cooperating governments, private sector, and civil society organizations in the Horn of Africa					

	region.					
REGIONAL INTEGRATION & ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE		SD	D	N	A	SA
RCM7	A LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism has potentials for strengthening political & economic ties amongst the cooperating states in the Horn of Africa region, especially by harmonizing the; disjointed transport and transit infrastructures, existing trade barriers and slow decision making amongst cooperating states.					
RCM10	The LAPSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism should be dynamic enough to accommodate the other cooperating states in the Horn of Africa Region. i.e: Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, the Sudan and Eritrea.					
RCM11	The inclusive LAPSSET regional coordination mechanism should receive committed institutional governance support from regional institutions like the Economic Cooperation & Regional Integration Division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI). Thus, an increase in investor confidence in the initiative.					

13. How effective are the current regional coordination and governance mechanisms (e.g., IGAD, member state committees) in ensuring joint ownership, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of LAPSSET?

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14. What improvements would you suggest to enhance cooperation among partner states and regional institutions involved in the LAPSET initiative?

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APPENDIX 3: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SECTION A: Introduction and Warm-Up

1. What comes to your mind when you hear about the LAPSSET Corridor Project?
2. In your view, what are the main goals of the LAPSSET initiative in relation to the region's development?
3. How important do you think infrastructure development is for stabilizing economies in the Horn of Africa?

SECTION B: Conceptual Design and Economic Stabilization

(Objective i: To evaluate the conceptual design of LAPSSET infrastructural initiative and its implication on the economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.)

1. How would you describe the conceptual design of the LAPSSET initiative was it guided by a clear strategic vision for regional economic stability?
2. In your opinion, does the project design reflect the actual development needs of the Horn of Africa region?
3. How effectively does the design integrate multi-sectoral components (ports, roads, oil pipeline, railways, etc.) for economic synergy?
4. What aspects of the design do you think will enhance or weaken its potential to promote regional stability and economic security?
5. Are there specific project design gaps that might limit LAPSSET's long-term regional benefits?

SECTION C: Economic Security Imperatives and Regional Stabilization

(Objective ii: To analyze the economic security imperatives of the LAPSSET infrastructural initiative that have implication for regional stabilization in the Horn of Africa.)

1. How do you define *economic security* in the context of the Horn of Africa?
2. In your view, what are the key economic security imperatives that LAPSSET addresses (e.g., trade facilitation, employment, resource access, interconnectivity)?

3. To what extent has LAPSSSET contributed to reducing regional vulnerabilities such as economic inequality or dependency?
4. Do you think the project enhances regional resilience against political and economic shocks?
5. How can economic security outcomes from LAPSSSET be improved or better aligned with regional stability goals?

SECTION D: Regional Coordination and Mechanisms

(Objective iii: To explore a regional coordination mechanism for the LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative, aimed at regional economic stabilization of the Horn of Africa.)

1. What forms of regional coordination currently exist around the LAPSSSET initiative (e.g., policy frameworks, joint committees, cross-border agreements)?
2. How effective are these mechanisms in ensuring shared ownership and cooperation among participating countries?
3. What are the main coordination challenges between Kenya and other Horn of Africa states regarding LAPSSSET implementation?
4. In your opinion, what institutional or governance structures could strengthen regional coordination?
5. What recommendations would you suggest for improving regional collaboration to ensure LAPSSSET's contribution to sustained regional economic stability?

SECTION E: Closing Reflections

1. Overall, do you think the LAPSSSET initiative is viable in stabilizing the Horn of Africa's economic security? Why or why not?
2. What key lessons can policymakers draw from the LAPSSSET experience so far?
3. Any additional remarks on the project's long-term sustainability or inclusivity?

APPENDIX 4: OPEN-ENDED KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Was the conceptual design of LAPSSSET informed by a clear strategic vision for regional development, and were the project components selected on the basis of economic viability?
2. Were the other member states in the Horn of Africa region (i.e. Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia) involved in the initial conceptual design phase of the LAPSSSET initiative?
3. To what extent do you think the conceptual design of the LAPSSSET initiative reflects the long-term regional development and security priorities of the greater Horn of Africa region?
4. What gaps, if any, do you perceive in the initial Conceptual Design of the LAPSSSET initiative - in terms of regional inclusivity and long-term stability goals?
5. Will a more inclusive and expanded LAPSSSET mandate (to include; Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea & Somalia into the LAPSSSET) potentially reduce regional economic disparities in the greater Horn of Africa Region?
6. From your perspective, how has the LAPSSSET initiative contributed to job creation, investment attraction, and income generation as tools for economic security in the Horn of Africa Region?
7. In what ways do you think LAPSSSET contributes (or could contribute) to reducing economic vulnerabilities and promoting security in the Horn of Africa Region?
8. In your opinion, will an expanded LAPSSSET Mandate potentially facilitate the emergence of Transnational Special Economic Zone Areas across the borders of the Horn of Africa states, where value addition industries (in hide, meat, milk, precious metals and minerals) can be operationalized?

If YES, what benefits will accrue to the greater Horn of Africa region from these Transnational Special Economic Zones that have emerged as a result of the expanded LAPSSSET mandate?

9. Is there a Regional Coordination Mechanism for LAPSSSET infrastructural initiative?

If Yes, was it jointly ratified by the LAPSSSET footprint countries?

10. What should be the major goals of the LAPSSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism?

11. Should the LAPSSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism be dynamic enough in-order to accommodate the other cooperating states in the Horn of Africa (like; Uganda, Somalia, Djibouti, the Sudan and Eritrea) who may be willing to join the LAPSSSET initiative?

12. Should the inclusive LAPSSSET Regional Coordination Mechanism receive committed institutional governance support from regional institutions like; the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI), and the Economic Cooperation & Regional Integration Division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)?

If YES, what will the implications of such support from UNECA, HoAI and IGAD be on the economic posterity of the LAPSSSET in the Horn of Africa Region?

13. Is there a supranational LAPSSSET regional coordination institution (that was jointly established by Kenya, Ethiopia & South Sudan) to manage the joint LAPSSSET initiatives, and thus, ensure proper governance, transparency, accountability and ownership in the joint decision making and implementation of the LAPSSSET by the cooperating states?

14. What suggestions would you offer to the LAPSSSET stakeholders, in-order to ensure the overall success and posterity of the LAPSSSET Initiative?

APPENDIX 5: INTRODUCTION LETTER TO INSTITUTIONS

Dear **DIRECTOR GENERAL/CEO/MANGING DIRECTOR,**

**RE: ASSESSING VIABILITY OF THE LAPSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE
AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF
AFRICA**

I am a post graduate student at Riara University pursuing my Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Following the successful approval of my thesis proposal (by the University) on the aforementioned topic, and my subsequent licensing by NACOSTI, I am pleased to inform you that I have considered your organization as one of my research study organizations. In this regard, I humbly request for your permission to collect data from your key technical personnel, who are knowledgeable about the LAPSET Infrastructural Initiative.

Attached herein is my research license and authorization letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for data collection. Data collected for this study is for achieving an academic purpose, and I undertake to uphold high ethical standards, required of academic researchers. I am grateful for your assistance on this matter.

BRIAN JAMES OGAL

RIARA UNIVERSITY – ADMISSION NUMBER: 24ZAD109344

MOBILE NUMBER: 0724948200

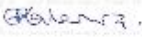
WHATS APP NUMBER: 0705424701

APPENDIX 6: THE RESEARCH WORK PLAN

THE RESEARCH WORK PLAN							
RESEARCH TASK	TASK DURATION						
	November 2024 TO March 2025	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	July 2025 to February 2026	March 2026	April 2026
Drafting of concept note, generation, approval & examination of Proposal	Achieved						
Review & approval of proposal, and thus, issuance of LUIERC authorization letter & NACOSTI permit		Achieved					
Oral Presentation of Thesis Proposal to the Riara University Proposal Defense Panel				Achieved			
Data Collection & Analysis, Report Writing					Achieved		
Submission of Thesis for Assessment by Examiners						Achieved	
Publication of Journal Article							
Final Oral Presentation of Thesis to Riara University Thesis defense Panel							Achieved

Source: Researcher Generated (2026)

APPENDIX 7: NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	
Ref No: 908577	Date of Issue: 07/June/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Mr. Brian James of Riara University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Garissa, Isiolo, Lamu, Marsabit, Mombasa, Nairobi, Samburu, Turkana on the topic: ASSESSING VIABILITY OF THE LAPSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA for the period ending : 07/June/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4174219	
908577	
Applicant Identification Number	Deputy Director NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Verification QR Code	
	
NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.	
See overleaf for conditions:	

APPENDIX 8: LAIKIPIA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE CLEARANCE LETTER



INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ref: LU/APP/156/2025

9th May, 2025

Brian James Ogal,
P. O. Box 45008-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Mr. Ogal,

Re: Assessing Viability of the LAPPSET Infrastructural Initiative as an Economic Security Stabilization Frontier in the Horn of Africa

This is to inform you that the Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (LU-ISERC) has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is LU/APP/156/2025. The approval period is 9th May, 2025 – 8th May 2026

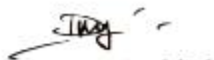
This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used;
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee;
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification;
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours;
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions;



- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal and
 - vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
- Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and obtain other necessary clearances.

Yours sincerely



Prof. Mbuthia Ngunjiri PhD

Chairman - Laikipia University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee



APPENDIX 9: FORMAL REQUEST FOR INTERVIEWS AT THE EMBASSY OF SOUTH SUDAN IN NAIROBI

Academic Research Introduction Letter

BRIAN JAMES OGAL
C/O RIARA UNIVERSITY
MOBILE NUMBER: 0705424701
Email: bogal2344@stu.riarauniversity.ac.ke
Monday: 27th April 2026

HEAD OF TRADE, INVESTMENTS & ECONOMIC MISSION SECTION
EMBASSY OF SOUTH SUDAN
P.O. BOX 73699 - 00200, NAIROBI, KENYA
NAIROBI, KENYA

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: ASSESSING VIABILITY OF THE LAPSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

I am a post graduate student at Riara University pursuing my Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Following the approval of my thesis proposal (by the University) on the aforementioned topic, and my subsequent licensing by NACOSTI, I am pleased to inform you that I have considered the Embassy of South Sudan as one of my research sites.

In the foregoing, kindly allow me to interview one officer (who is knowledgeable about the LAPSET Initiative) under your stewardship in the Trade & Investments Section of the Embassy of South Sudan. As head of section, your responses to this study are also highly welcomed and appreciated. The interview guide is available online via the google forms platform as presented by the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7OMg0-QQSHWc29RbOUNPAI1DQc5IQPhahrPwXe_WhM_LbrQ/viewform

Attached herewith is my research license and authorization letter from NACOSTI. Data collected for this study is purely for achieving an academic purpose, and I undertake to uphold high ethical standards, required of academic researchers. I am grateful for your assistance on this matter.

BRIAN JAMES OGAL
ADMISSION NUMBER: 24ZAD109344

APPENDIX 10: FORMAL REQUEST FOR INTERVIEWS AT THE EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA IN NAIROBI

Academic Research Introduction Letter

BRIAN JAMES OGAL
C/O RIARA UNIVERSITY
MOBILE NUMBER: 0705424701
Email: bogal2344@stu.riarauniversity.ac.ke
Monday: 27th April 2026

HEAD OF ECONOMIC & TRADE PROMOTIONS DIVISION
EMBASSY OF ETHIOPIA
P.O. BOX 45198 - 00100,
KENYA NAIROBI, KENYA

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: ASSESSING VIABILITY OF THE LAPSET INFRASTRUCTURAL INITIATIVE AS AN ECONOMIC SECURITY STABILIZATION FRONTIER IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

I am a post graduate student at Riara University pursuing my Master of Arts degree in International Relations and Diplomacy.

Following the approval of my thesis proposal (by the University) on the aforementioned topic, and my subsequent licensing by NACOSTI, I am pleased to inform you that I have considered the Embassy of South Sudan as one of my research sites.

In the foregoing, kindly allow me to interview one officer (who is knowledgeable about the LAPSET Initiative) under your stewardship in the Economic & Trade Promotions Division of the Embassy of Ethiopia. As head of division, your responses to this study are also highly welcomed and appreciated. The interview guide is available online via the google forms platform as presented by the link below:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc7OMg0-QOSHWC29RbOUNPAI1DQc5IQPhahrPwXe_WhM_LbrQ/viewform

Attached herewith is my research license and authorization letter from NACOSTI. Data collected for this study is purely for achieving an academic purpose, and I undertake to uphold high ethical standards, required of academic researchers. I am grateful for your assistance on this matter.

BRIAN JAMES OGAL
ADMISSION NUMBER: 24ZAD109344