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Influence of Strategic Leadership on Competitiveness of Logistics Firms in Kenya

Daizy Kanana Muriithi[1]
Paul Kariuki[2]
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya[1,2]

Abstract

The main objective of the study was, therefore, to determine the influence of Strategic leadership on competitiveness of firms in Kenya's Logistics Sector. The general objective of this study was therefore to determine the influence strategic leadership including strategic direction, strategic control, capacity building and organizational dynamics had on competitiveness of logistics firms in Nairobi Kenya. The study was based on leadership theories, resource-based view, capacity building theory. The study embraced both qualitative and quantitative method. Primary data was obtained using questionnaires from sample of 30 employees from each of the targeted 65 logistics firms in Kenya. Secondary data was also used. Reliability was calculated with assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data was analyzed as per study objectives using SPSS. Results indicated that Strategic leadership significantly influenced Competitiveness of firms in the Kenya's logistics sector. On overall profitability majority of firms had an increase in profitability of between 15-20 million at 49.1.1% in the year 2020, between 15-20 million at 48.6% in the year 2019 and between Kshs 5-10 million at 39.5% in the year 2018. The year 2020 however had less increase from the previous year because of the Global pandemic Covid-19. Therefore, the study recommended that Firms in logistics sector should have very specific and quantifiable goals clear to everyone in the organization, Internal controls ensure errors and mistakes are removed and the standard operating procedures are observed is important.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, Competitiveness, Strategic control, Strategic direction, Capacity building, Organization dynamics

*Corresponding author: Daizy Kanana Muriithi; Email: daizymuriithi012@gmail.com
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Introduction

Both researchers and practitioners have invested attention to the potential effects of Strategic leadership on performance. Despite extensive research on leadership, major gaps remain (Jing & Avery, 2011). Strategic leadership is the leader's ability to predict and maintain flexibility and to empower others to make strategic change as necessary (Islam et al., 2018; Aldaihani & Ali, 2018) and according to Hitt and Ireland (2012), strategic leaders anticipate in time to line directions for the organization. Their power is increased once they scan and deal with the critical sectorsof their environment as leadership remains one among foremost important and driving forces of corporation (Alwagee et al., 2013).

The six components of Strategic Leadership, according to Haitt & Ireland (2012), include identifying the organization's objective or vision, exploiting, or retaining essential skills, generating human capital, maintaining an effective organizational culture, stressing ethical standards, and implementing balanced organizational controls.

Hughes and Beatty (2015), states strategic leadership is how individuals and teams enact strategic leadership once they think, act and influence in ways in which promote sustainable competitive advantage of the organization. Strategic leadership requires expertise in managing both internal and external business environment and interacts during a complex information science (Deeboonmee and Ariratana, 2014).

Competitiveness is when a company has capacity to generate goods and services successfully match the needs of markets. Corporations do compete over their share of domestic and global markets. The competitiveness of any given organization primarily depends on the ability to be innovative and to remodel quickly to market changes and to improve quality by expanding its market share at the expense of less- efficient firms (Cruz-Cunha & Putnik, 2016)

Leaders need to enhance their critical thinking as challenges increases, their performance requirements become stringent. Hughes & Beatty (2015) studied the core elements of strategic leadership framework and competitiveness of firms and located there to be three major components of strategic leadership. First, the strategic leadership role is to know the business is both interdependent and interconnected. Therefore, Strategic leadership is aimed toward finding a balance between long-term focus of designs, like transformational leadership and therefore the short-term focused sort of transactional leadership. (McCleskey, 2014)

The aim is to integrate short-term decisions which are a necessary part of any organization and its decision-making, with the extensive outlook. There's a robust transformational element to strategic leadership. The framework sets bent have a deep impact on organization’s vision and values, as its structure and systems. The design sets create more clarity and operational strength throughout it, with leaders having the most important role in achieving this. The strategic leader must possess specific qualities and skills to possess a deep impact on operational culture. (Carpenter, 2011)

Global perspective of Strategic Leadership

According to Basit (2018) study, it established that car manufacturing business Proton in Malaysia, practices strategic leadership to influence its operational strategy and performance. The study examines both dependent and independent variables influence on strategic leadership with implications for research within the future. Research on leadership focused on strategic leadership, in contrast to the normal managerial and visionary leadership has been rising. The focus was on how the choices leaders make within short term guarantees long-term viability of the organization.

The study by Carey et al. (2012) examined, "Within an organization, there is likely going to struggle from an absence of workers’ morale, confidence and productivity among workers and likewise, stockholders may be alarmed when a company is left with enormous gap in leadership for any reason. The causal consequences are widely felt both within and outside the doors of the organization". Strategic leadership is the drive to figure successfully and deliver extraordinary performance (Deeboonmee & Ariratana, 2014). The study targeted groups of employees from senior executive and used 65 respondents. It was established there was an instantaneous and positive relationship between strategic leadership operational excellence, strategic orientation, and business performance. The study proposed strategic competitiveness would give companies a competitive advantage to survive in an uncertain time by formulating and executing their strategies successfully. Regional perspective of Strategic Leadership

Participants of the inaugural Africa leadership forum in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania convened by former president of Tanzania Benjamin Mkapa and Uongozi institute under the theme ''meeting challenges of Africa transformation'' agreed Africa needs the kind of leaders who are very strategic, inclusive, and capable of managing diversities so on realize great transformation in these times. They agreed Africa doesn't lack vision and concepts but needs leaders to remodel these ideas to action (The African Leadership Forum, 2014).In recent years, business environments and competitive markets are volatile, uncertain, complex, and heterogeneous. Therefore, firms have implemented valuable competencies, capabilities and methods for own business operations and activities to reinforce business excellence, encourage competitive advantage, achieve firm performance, gain corporate survival, and promote organizational sustainability in these circumstances (Halawi et al., 2015).

Kenyan Perspective of Strategic Leadership on Competitiveness of Firms

Kabetu and Iravo (2018), sought to ascertain the influence of adoption of strategic leadership on the performance of UN-Habitat in Kenya. The study revealed the adoption of core competencies dramatically affects the performance of UN-Habitat in Kenya. This correlates with Gorgens (2009), who argued understanding the abilities needed and therefore the capacity of individuals also the leadership involved within the M&E system undertaking human capacity assessments and addressing existing capacity gaps through structured capacity development programs is at the center of the system.

This study found team building in the organization leads to mentorship and which training and seminar programs within the organization enhance service delivery. This supports Clarke (2013), who noted through strategic leadership, teams could manage tasks better than individuals. The study found communicating the strategic direction affects the performance of UN-Habitat in Kenya significantly. The study went on to revealing core values are well stated within organization for strategy implementation process enhancing performance (Clarke, 2013)

This conforms to Clarke et al. (2013) who argued almost all firms hire strategic leaders who can use the efficient mode of communication with the technological advancement for his or her execution abilities, not for his or her discovery, skills and CEOs with the insight and commitment to cultivating organizational capabilities for the invention are rare. A majority of the conceptual and empirical studies done have shown strategic leadership actions significantly influence performance of a company. Despite its necessity, studies have demonstrated influence of strategic leadership on organizational performance is contingent upon situational constraints or random effects which can be out of control. To date, very little empirical research has analyzed the direct and indirect relationship between strategic direction and competitiveness of firms (Clarke, 2013).

Logistics Firms in Kenya

Kenya's logistics market has evolved over the past decade from typical low specification warehouses commonly identified as 'go downs' to higher quality A- and B-grade warehouses. Due to the improved infrastructure, and specifically road transport system, most operators are now considering relocating to less congested areas away from Nairobi City, such as Kiambu and Machakos counties where there is availability of relatively cheap land to maximize their resources.

Logistics users currently occupy the highest market share of approximately 26%, followed by the manufacturing and engineering sector at 23% and the wholesale at 22%. Demand from these Logistics users are mainly driven by improved infrastructure; government support regarding tax incentives and SEZ status, expanding retail platforms; and Mombasa Port's throughput growth has immensely contributed to the growth of logistics sector. The transport and storage industry registered a small growth of 5.4% in Q3 2019 in comparison to 5.3% in the same quarter of 2018. The volume of port throughput grew by 10% in 2019, from 1.19 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEU) in 2018, to 1.31 million TEU in 2019. This growth was sky rocketed and was driven by performance of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Nairobi to Mombasa, which commenced commercial freight operations in January 2018 focus and undesirable results have been achieved so far.

Fewer than 10% of leaders exhibit strategic skills a woefully low number considering the demands on organizations today (Kabetu & Iravo, 2018). This therefore prove multinational logistics organization stay ahead in terms of competition as compared to the Kenyan-based logistics firms. This challenge significantly influences the performance of an organization (Quigley & Graffin, 2017; Islam, et al., 2018).

Many studies have been done locally in Kenya regarding competitiveness in logistics companies in Kenya. Kenya is among the top-four countries in Africa with the most significant economic growth promise over the next five years, a new survey of global logistics executives show. (Hitt & Ireland, 2012) did research on the impact of strategic leadership on the Organization performance, strategic orientation, and operational strategy in Malaysia. The study realized strategic leadership is directly and indirectly positively associated with the organizational performance of business organizations.

The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of strategic leadership on competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the influence of Strategic direction on competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya. To establish how strategic control influence competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya. To determine the influence of capacity building on the competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya. To determine how organization dynamics, influence competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya.

Justification of the study

This study will help Academicians and researchers to understand how strategic leadership affects the performance of logistics industry in Kenya and identify areas of further research in strategic leadership on performance of organizations. Executives/ corporations; this study will help executives understand the importance of strategic leadership on performance of Logistics industry in Kenya. This will help them in emphasizing areas need to be improved and make strategic leadership a tool of performance. Policy makers (government and regulators); this study will help policy makers to identify whether there is any improvement in the performance of logistics companies can directly be attributed to strategic leadership. Therefore, the study will help policy makers to ensure high performance of the companies. Investors: this study will help investors understand management of Logistics industry in Kenya and measures the government has taken to ensure their performance improves.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework shows how the researcher develops thoughts on what the possible answers could be. These thoughts and theories are then classified into themes frame the subject. This research will mainly focus on the influence of Strategic leadership on Logistics firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The Leadership theories include Trait theory, Behavioral theory, Transactional theory, and transformational theory.

Resource Based View

The Resource-based View (RBV) is considered as one of the most influential theories in strategic management. The term ‘‘resource’’ is very broad in nature, in it refers to not only physical (tangible) assets, such as equipment, plants, and location, but for intangible assets, such as management skill, knowledge and organizational assets (Dietrich & Krafft, 2012). Resource based theory views the firm as a bundle of distinctive resources and assets, which emphasizes the use of rate, valuable, in-imitable and un-substitutable resources to gain sustainable competitive advantage (Sehgal, 2012) states resource-based view investigates the importance of internal resources in determining firm actions to create and maintain a competitive advantage and improve performance. However, only owning such resources does not guarantee the development of competitive advantage or the creation of value to an organization. To achieve good performance, firms must effectively manage, allocate, and exploit resource (Sehgal, 2012).

In their book, Lange P. et al (2012) noted research on organizational structure has indicated logistics innovations and capabilities play an important role in competitiveness of firms. However, the scholars fail to look at problems associated with the lack of management information therefore does not provide a complete view of resources of a firm to make allocation and exploitation give the organization a competitive advantage. Organizations can achieve core competence by developing expertise and resource strengths, being a low-cost provider or focus on niche market to achieve competitive advantage. Implication of Resource Based View and firm capability was illustrated in Toyota (Anand & Ward, 2014), the strategic approach of logistics firms has changed, with a new focus on building capabilities to effectively deal with dynamic environments instead of simply trying to avoid uncertainties.

Leadership Theory

Leadership studies in the early part of the 20th century focused on Great Man and trait theories. Great man theory of leadership suggests there are certain men are born to lead and when crises arise these men step up the responsibility and take their natural place. The theory was related to trait theory which proposes only men with the in-born characteristics for leadership will be successful leaders. The leadership theory consists of trait leadership, behavioral leadership, the transactional leadership, and the transformational leadership. The trait leadership says leaders are born and not made.

Trait theory is anchored on the character traits or the individual characteristics of leaders. It relies on the “big five ‘personality factors we all possess to varying degrees, which include Openness to experience whereby Leaders tend to be receptive new situations and new stimulations. They change jobs often, explore new countries regularly, and are outgoing by default, Conscientiousness whereby Leaders are hardworking, thorough, and precise. The Extroversion trait, great leaders, likes to communicate. They like to meet new people, and they like to talk to others. Extroversion is highly correlated with success. This theory assumes leaders have innate great character qualities enable them to be better suited for leadership. This makes them different from other people or their followers. (Northouse, 2013)

The trait leadership gives valuable information about leadership. People at all levels in all types of organizations can apply it. Managers can utilize the data from the approach to evaluate their position in the organization and to assess how their job can be made stronger in the organization. They can get an in-depth understanding of their identity and therefore the way they're going to affect others within the organization. This theory makes the manager conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, and thus, they get an understanding of how they will develop their leadership qualities. In this regard, the behavioral theories sound common sense because if it were not true, there would not have been leadership programs churning out leaders. Therefore, people can get leadership training to start leading others (Derue et al., 2011)

Transactional leadership is recognized as the laissez-faire dimension. Laissez-faire leadership indicates a lack of leadership and a completely hands-off approach with employees. These leaders use awards and punishments to gain compliance from their subordinates. In any case, transactional leaders are not concerned with the well-being of the workers as compared to transformational leadership. They are incentive motivators bring minimal compliance from followers and are directive and action oriented. They accept the goals, structure, and the culture of the existing organization.

Capacity Building Theory

Capacity building theory is defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2006) as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes, and resources organizations need to survive and thrive in the current fast-changing world. It intends to improve skills for carrying out key functions, solving problems, defining, and achieving objectives. Theory-based evaluation was identified as one of the main approaches to evaluating the efficient delivery of European Union (EU) Cohesion policy. Where other types of impact evaluation are not feasible for certain types of interventions, given their socio-economic context or actual implementation phase. This theory-based evaluation can explain what conditions certain interventions produce (or fail to produce) impacts by providing an evidence-based narrative (The European Commission, 2011a).

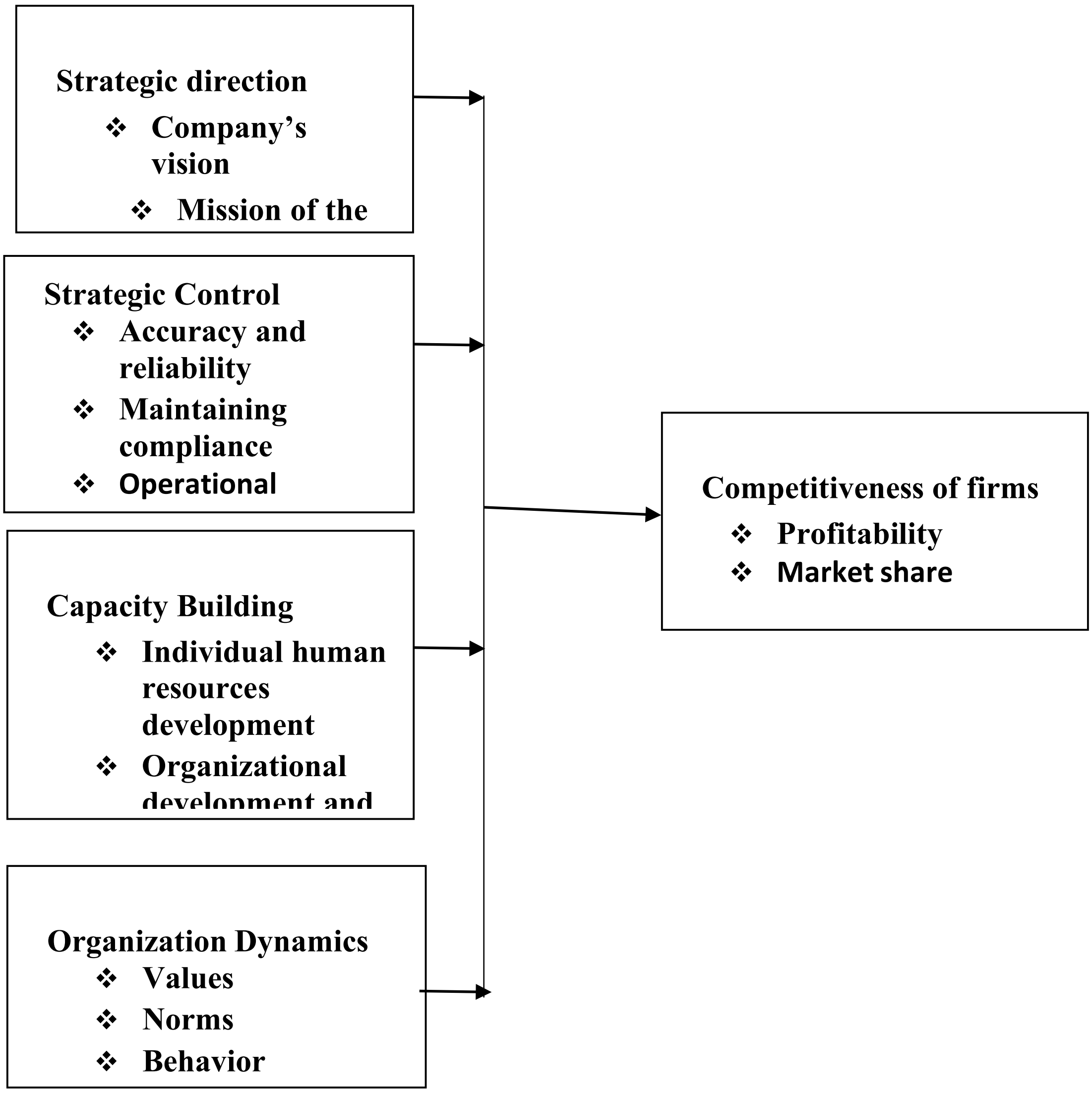
Capacity building focuses on three levels including the individual, human resources development such as training coaches and the organization which includes organizational development integrates life skills training for overall development. The broader system including institutional development, such as Capacity building to collaborate with the private sector to implement projects. There are some well-defined Capacity building projects, such as identifying a communications strategy, improving volunteer recruitment, ensuring thoughtful leadership succession, updating technology, and improving how it measures its outcomes, all build the capacity to effectively deliver its mission. Strong capacity building is successful, it increases a firm’s ability to fulfill its mission over time, thereby enhancing the ability to have a positive impact and profitability. Capacity building main aim is to develop the institution as a total system, including individual groups and the organization itself. (Garriga, 2019)

Conceptual Framework

To illustrate the fundamental concepts of Strategic Leadership and organization performance, there is a need to understand the conceptual framework integrates the independent and dependent variables. Mugenda & Mugenda (2013), an independent variable is a property of a phenomenon, which influences or affects others, while a dependent variable is one is controlled by the independent variables. The conceptual framework of strategic leadership and organizational performance is illustrated in the figure follows:

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**



Strategic Direction

Strategic direction is very crucial to the performance of an organization as it relates to the long-term vision of the organization, which is five to ten years ahead and its strategic goals. Nthini (2013), specified there is a positive connection between strategic direction and organizational performance. Formulated strategies with feasible plans are needed to translate vision into workable action and implementation to achieve every long- term vision (Hassan, 2020).

Strategic leadership would be able to consider external and internal business environment when providing the strategic direction especially in predicting the future requirements of the organization to be positioned in the direction meets those demands and to stay ahead of its Hassan, Z. (2020). Strategic direction will help to develop marketing assets to gain competitive advantage and therefore, it's very necessary to deploy the suitable strategies and tactics (Rust et al., 2020). In setting strategic directions, strategic leadership should be able to identify internal strength and weaknesses, external threats, and opportunities for maximum market penetration leading to high business performance and consider the long- and short-term objectives of the firm.

Strategic Control

Having the right controls and internal systems, protect a business physical and financial asset from fraud, theft, and errors. Similarly, the proper and clear controls quickly identify errors and fraud if they occur. One of the most essential concepts related to internal controls is the segregation of duties and distribution of activities as well as separating incompatible functions over the remote processes because it prevents a single individual from requesting, authorizing, verifying, and/or recording business expenditure and some transactional processes (Islam, Igwe, Rahman, & Saif, 2021). Owners and managers require accurate and updated financial information to make informed decisions. This is because having solid internal controls help to maintain the validity of financial data and equip management to make more informed judgment calls. Financial data and internal systems are credible enables firm to fulfill their duties to file complete and accurate tax returns, as well as meet any financial reporting obligations granted by the government and other stakeholders. Appropriate processes and procedures are defined in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) allow organizations to meet other regulatory and statutory filing or reporting requirements.

Capacity Building

Capacity building aims at improving skills for performing key functions, solving problems, defining, and achieving organizations objectives overall. A motivated workforce is amongst the most substantial assets an organization has translates into greater success and revenue for it. When Capacity building is successful, it strengthens a firm's ability to fulfill its mission and vision over time, thereby enhancing the ability to have a positive impact and profitability. Rewarding employees fall in the HR's area of responsibility, a task with substantial implications if an unmotivated workforce can disrupt the organization's efficacy due to lack of focus and undesirable results. Thus, the rewards system holds a high magnitude of power in the eye of managers with understanding this system profoundly influences employee behavior and productivity. (Ritz-Carlton Hotel Group, 2015)

Organization Dynamics

Dynamics is defined as the self-sustaining pattern of behavior determines how things are done. Made of instinctive, repetitive habits and emotional responses, culture cannot be copied or easily pinned down. Organization Dynamics are constantly self-renewing and slowly evolving: What people feel, think, and believe is reflected and shaped by the way they go about their business. Formal efforts to change a mode of operation in an organization (to replace it with something entirely new and different) seldom manage to get to the heart of what motivates people, what makes them tick. complexity shouldn't deter leaders from trying to use organization dynamics as a lever.

Values are the goals, views, and philosophies an organization share. Norms: The ways of doing things in an organization; the rules, tasks, and standards of the organization. Dress codes or ways of addressing superiors/subordinates, and employee's behavior. Companies must be rigorously selective when it comes to picking behaviors. The key is to focus on the critical number of important behaviors would have great impact if put into practice by a significant number of people. Motivation and rewards are two positive reinforcement tools generally have a favorable impact on people's behavior and performance. Naturally, these tools motivate employees to work towards achieving the organizational goals.

Competitiveness of firms

Organizational competitiveness is a crucial aspect determines the ultimate performance recorded by a firm and strategic leadership is hugely viewed among the essential elements enhance competitiveness of a firm over a long period. In a competitive marketplace, a business owner must learn to realize a satisfactory level of profitability.

An Increasing profitability necessitates determining which areas of a financial strategy are working and which of them need improvement. Understanding the key factors determining profitability assists managers in developing an efficient profitability strategy for a company. Sales are an essential factor in determining profitability. The return on sales ratio measures profits after taxes based upon the present year's sales. Price setting is a critical factor in determining profit. Careful analysis is necessary for determining the correct pricing strategy for a company. An essential factor to consider in pricing strategy is deciding what price customers are willing to pay for a product (Aldaihani & Ali, 2019). Customers can pay more for niche products or services aren't readily available elsewhere. A firm does not want to leave money on the table by undercutting the price charged for products and services. (Northouse, 2020) Market share is a representation of the percentage of an industry or a market's total sales is earned by a particular company over a period is specified and defined. Such metrics are used to give a general idea of size of a company concerning its market and its competitors. Changes in market share have a more significant impact on the performance of companies in mature or cyclical sectors where there is low growth. In contrast, changes in market share have less effect on companies in growth industries. In these industries, the entire pie is growing, so companies can still be growing sales albeit they're losing market share. For companies during this situation, stock performance is more suffering from sales growth and margins than other factors (Delaney, 2021)

Empirical Review

Globally, several empirical studies have been done to try and establish the influence of strategic leadership on the performance of an organization. Few empirical studies have systematically traced the causal path of the effects of strategic direction on performance by examining the moderating and mediating influence of the external environment and organizational change, respectively.

Itza (2017) did an empirical test of (Quigley & Graffin's 2017) framework on how much of the variance in performance can be attributed to CEOs The analysis and results show the influence of CEOs on performance is not remarkable since they are mainly constrained by chance or random events. This is contradicting to Quigley & Graffin's (2017) results CEOs have a substantial effect on performance. The study did not investigate impact of strategic leadership on performance by explicitly incorporating external environment and organizational change as moderating and mediating variables, respectively. Quigley & Graffin (2017).

A replication of (Fitza, 2014) study using multi – variate modeling, which is a more appropriate statistical technique than the ANOVA model Fitz used their findings contrasts with (Fitza, 2014) where they were able to demonstrate the positive impact of CEOs on performance of an organization. The study however did not address the indirect influence of strategic leadership on performance and explicitly incorporate constraining factors of the external environment as a moderating variable and organizational change as a mediating variable.

Kitonga (2017), the influence of strategic leadership on performance in not-for-profit organizations in Nairobi County, Kenya. The analysis of the results show there is a significant positive correlation between strategic leadership and performance. The study focused on direct relationship between strategic leadership and performance without incorporating the influence of the external environment and organizational change as moderating and mediating variables, respectively. Knies et al., (2016) study on the influence of Leadership on Performance in public organizations. The analysis and results support the propositions transformational and Transactional leadership styles have a positive impact on performance, although size effect varies considerably and consistently.

The study focused on the influence of leadership on return from a micro- level perspective and not the macro-level view of strategic direction and how it could influence performance through the balanced scorecard (BSC). (Witts, 2016) studied The Role of Strategic Leadership in enhancing Profitability. The study assumed linear relationship between strategic leadership and performance without considering constraining factors such as the external environment and organizational change as moderating and mediating variables respectively which are very key factors.

Resources are organization-specific properties are hard to handover because the assets may contain tacit knowledge as an organization's strategic leadership competency. Swann and Brocklehurst (2014) argued resource-based model emphasize on the technological, marketing, organizational, good performance and managerial novelty towards strategic leadership. Mackey (2008) conducted a study on the effect of CEOs in certain settings on firm performance. The study however did not factor the task environment as a key moderating variable in determining the relationship between strategic leadership and performance of an organization.

Critique of Existing Literature Relevant to the Study

Despite several empirical oversight, extensive research has generally been documented, and few studies have been undertaken in Kenya on influence of strategic leadership on the competitiveness of the logistics industry. There are critiques Resource-Based View's value of resources is not useful for firms. The firm needs to understand funds are not productive by themselves. Many scholars who subscribed to the leadership school argue the influence of strategic leadership on performance is substantial (Hambrick & Quigley, 2014). Some scholars who endorse the constraint school argue such kind of an influence is limited by contextual factors (Knies et al., 2016). Thus, question of whether strategic leadership influences competitiveness of firms is yet to be resolved given the findings as evidenced by the recent scholarly debate (Quigley & Graffin, 2017; Fitza, 2014; 2017). However, most contemporary studies using improved methodologies have generally found there is a positive relationship between strategic leadership and organization performance. The leadership of an organization must be able to turn advantage-creating resources into profits (Lucas & Kirillova, 2010)

While cognitive ability has its origin partly in genes, it still needs to be developed and none of these ingredients are received overnight but developed over time. Studies show strategic leadership influences organization change and ultimately performance given the need to articulate a clear vision of future organization is very necessary (Goll et al., 2007). However, other scholars argue when change should be a well thought and planned process, when its hastily implemented, performance can be negatively affected or the relationship is not consistent (Kim et al., 2010). Generally, studies show strategic leadership leads to organization change and which influences performance positively. (Goll et al., 2007).

Research gaps

Various knowledge gaps are revolving around the influence of strategic leadership on competitiveness and performance of firms. Studies have been inconclusive when examining the effect and extent of strategic direction on performance. Although evidence shows strategic leadership actions substantially influence performance, the processes through which they exert this influence is still limited and mostly speculative. Few empirical studies have systematically traced the causal path of effects of strategic leadership on performance and competitiveness by examining the moderating and mediating influence of external environment and organizational change respectively. This paper seeks to address this research gap by arguing strategic leadership influences competitiveness of firms. This research, therefore, seeks to address the research gaps by determining the influence of strategic leadership on the competitiveness of firms. The paper proposes strategic leadership is independent variable while competitiveness is dependent variable.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was employed in this study. Descriptive survey as described by Zikmund (2011) is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it. Mugenda & Mugenda (2013) define survey as a strategy used to collect information from a large population by use of structured interviews, questionnaires among other methods.

Since surveys make it possible to study a population too large to observe directly, it presents an excellent mechanism to collect original data. According to Mansyuri (2019), the careful selection of a probability sample was provided a gaggle of respondents whose characteristics could mirror those of the larger population. This research design is suitable for this study because It's an efficient way of collecting information from a selected number of respondents being targeted from a given population.

Scope of the study

The study was carried out on 65 Logistics firms in Nairobi Kenya. It targeted the executive leaders of the organization in both private and public sectors with a focus on the Heads of Operations, Finance, Marketing and Supply chain department. The study was carried out in January 2021-July 2021.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data for this study was obtained from both primary sources and secondary sources. The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on study objectives and administered using 'drop-and-pick-later' method.

The secondary source of this information was obtained from journals, magazines, and books.

Research instruments ask techniques and materials employed by the study to gather information (Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected in this study. Data was collected mainly through questionnaires. The questionnaires used for study comprised of open and close-ended questions. A Likert scale was used for closed ended questions. The intent of Likert scale is the statement represents different aspects of same attitude (Brace, 2014). Data was screened to identify omissions and removal of non – answered questions, checked for completeness, accuracy, errors in responses, omissions, and other inconsistencies. The data was then coded using numerals to put them in limited numbers of categories. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 25. Data was then be classified, tabulated, and summarized using descriptive measures: percentages mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution tables was used for presentation of findings.

Regression Model/Statistical Model

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine influence of competitiveness on logistics firms in Kenya. Regression analysis was conducted to determine influence of the independent variable on the change of dependent variable. The competitiveness of logistics firms in Kenya was regressed against the independent variables which are Strategic direction, strategic control, CapacityBuilding and Organization Dynamics.

The equation expressed as follows:

- $Y= \beta o+\beta i\times i+\beta 2\times 2+\beta 3\times 3+\beta 4\times 4+\varepsilon$ Where:
- Yp= Competitiveness of logistics firms
- βo =Constant
- $\times i$ =Strategic direction
- $\times 2$=Strategic control
- $\times 3$= CapacityBuilding
- $\times 4$=Organization Dynamics

Diagnostic Test of Multiple Regression

Test of Normality by Shapiro Wilk test was used to test for normality. If the p-value (significant value) > 0.05, then the data is normally distributed. ShapiroWilk test is the most sensitive normality test because this test rejects the null hypothesis of normality at the smallest sample sizes compared to the other tests, at all levels of skewness and kurtosis.

Multicollinearity test shows A VIF value of 1-10 indicates no Multicollinearity. Multicollinearity refers to the linear relation among two or more variables. It's a data problem which may cause serious difficulty with the reliability of the estimates of the model parameters. To identify any misplaced values or glaring errors would need to be modified, data screening was be conducted.

Homogeneity Test is stated as the assumption any distribution or comparison of distributions shares the same level of variance within group of data points. It's referred to homoscedasticity. The importance of the assumption lies in nature of tests compared between-group variability (usually the mean of each group) to the level of within-group variability (often expressed as the error term, the average mean square error/within, or weighted average standard deviation).

The assumption of homogeneity test is an assumption of the independent samples t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) stating all comparison groups have the same variance. If the variances are not homogeneous, they are said to be heterogeneous. If this is the case, we say underlying populations, or random variables, are heteroscedastic. Autocorrelation Test a Durbin Watson test statistic was chosen where significance less than 0.05 indicated data is not auto correlated.

Data Analysis and Presentation of the Findings

Response Rate

In this study, thirty (30) questionnaires were randomly distributed to sampled managers, transport and logistics managers, finance managers, operations managers and warehouse/storage managers drawn from firms in Kenya's Logistics sector. Twenty-six (26) questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 85.7%. A response rate of 30-40% is considered adequate (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2017). Sekaran, 2013 and Mugenda and Mugenda (2011) are of the view a response rate of 30% and greater than 50% respectively is adequate. Hager, Wilson, Pollack, and Rooney (2017) recommend 50% response rate as adequate. The response rate for this study is, therefore, adequate. The table 4.1 presents response rate.

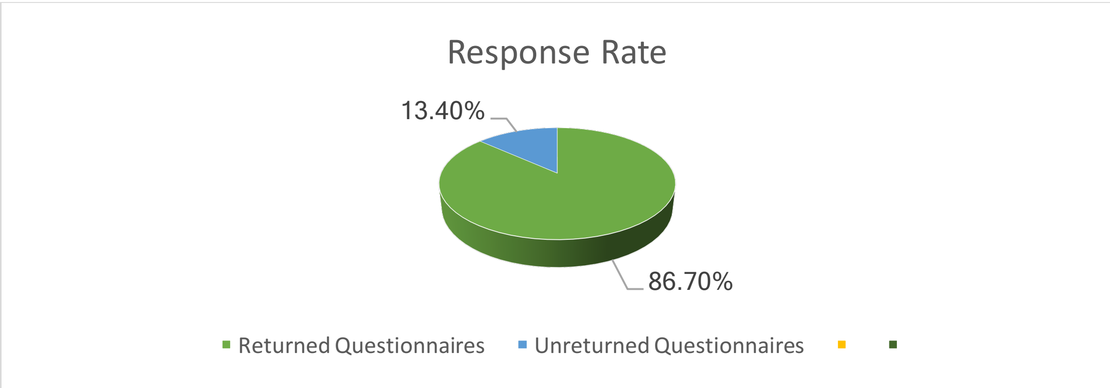


Figure 1: Response Rate

Reliability Test

A pilot study was conducted to pretest the tool used in data collection. Six questionnaires administered to non-Logistics sector respondents randomly selected. In this study, an internal consistency was done using Cronbach's Alpha to measure how well the items correlated to each other for all questionnaires issued to different groups of pilot respondents. A Cronbach value of 0.7 or greater is considered reliable (Straub et al, 2014). The rule of thumb for Cronbach Alpha is the closer is to 1, the higher the reliability (Sekaran, 2010).

As presented in table 4.2 below, Strategic Direction had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.838, Strategic control had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.745, CapacityBuilding had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.800 and OrganizationDynamics had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.863, Competitiveness of firms had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.742. All the variables under study had a Cronbach's Alpha above recommended 0.7, an indication data collection instrument was reliable and hence adopted for study without amendments. The Table 1 presents reliability statistics.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's alpha value (Pre-test, n=6)	Comment
Strategic Direction	6	.838	Reliable
Strategic control	5	.745	Reliable
CapacityBuilding	4	.800	Reliable
OrganizationDynamics	4	.863	Reliable
Competitiveness of firms	4	.742	Reliable

Education Level of Respondents

Study findings indicate that 15.4% of respondents had diploma level, 26.9% had undergraduate level of education, 38.5% who had master's degree, 19.2% had PhD. Majority of respondents had minimum academic qualifications to be General manager, Finance, Operations, Sales and marketing Managers and they, therefore, had the information on the influence of Strategic leadership on competitiveness of firms.

Designation of Respondents

Figure 2 below presents the designation of respondents. The findings show 15.4% of respondents were General managers, 23%Finance managers, 23% Procurement Managers, 11.2%Operations managers, 19.2% Sales Managers. This shows all respondents in departments were involved in leadership activities in their organizations. They therefore had required expertise and information on Strategic leadership. Figure 4.2 presents level of designation of respondents

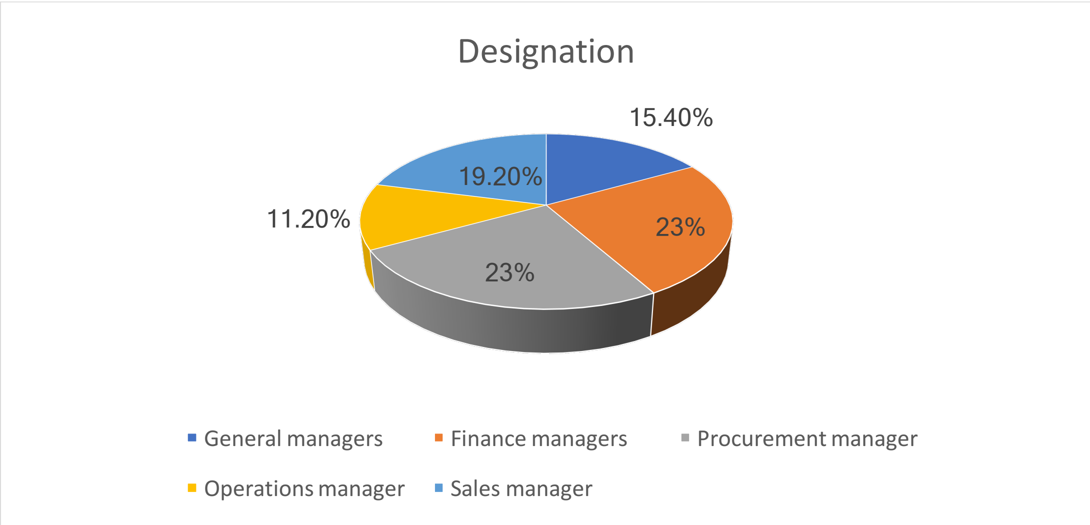


Figure 2: Designation of Respondents

Period with the Organization

Data was analyzed to establish the numbers of years the respondents had worked for their organizations. Results show that 46.6% of the respondents had worked for their organizations for a period of between 3-5 years, followed by 38.1% of respondents who had worked for their organizations for a period of between 6-10 years, 6.7% had worked for their organizations for a period of between 11-15 years, 5.7% had worked for their organizations for a period of less than two (2) years while 2.7% had worked for their organizations for a period of 16 years and above. Majority of the respondents had worked for their organizations for more than 4 years. They had acquired the relevant experience and were able to express opinions on matters relating to Leadership roles they hold currently and in the past.

Strategic Direction and Competitiveness of Firms

The study sought to establish the influence of strategic direction on competitiveness of firms. The practices were rated as Strongly Agree by 30.4% of respondents, agree by 37.3% of respondents, disagree by 23.2% of the respondents and strongly disagree by 9.1% of respondents. The findings, in line with those of Knies, (2021) who concluded Strategic direction was effective in influencing competitiveness of firms by ensuring the vision, mission and objective of the organization are clear. The figure 3 presents the findings

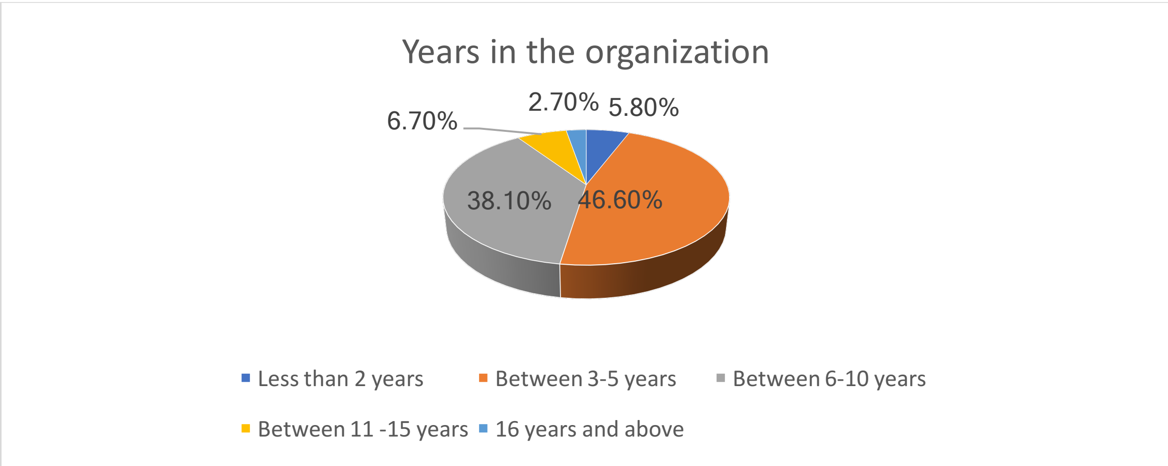


Figure 3: Respondents years with their organizations

The study further sought to establish views of respondents on certain aspects of Strategic direction and the influence on Competitiveness in the Logistics sector. Vision of the organization needs to be understood by the whole organization which had a mean of 4.10 (SD=0.724) followed by mission of organization at a mean of 4.31 (SD=0.660). Long term objective had a mean of 4.03 (SD=0.626). The respondents viewed short term objectives and distinctive competencies influence competitiveness of forms with mean 4.10 (SD=0.673) and mean 3.97 (SD=0.673). This conforms with study indicating Strategic leadership would be able to consider the external and internal business environment when providing the strategic direction especially in predicting the future requirements of the organization to be positioned in the direction meet those demands and to stay ahead of its Hassan, Z. (2020). Table 4.7 presents the findings

Table 2: Rating of Influence of Strategic Direction

Strategic Direction	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vision of the organization	**4.10**	**.724**
Mission of the organization	**4.31**	**.660**
Long-term objective	**4.03**	**.626**
Organization purpose	**4.00**	**.655**
Short term objectives	**4.10**	**.673**
Distinctive Competencies	**3.97**	**.566**

Strategic Control and Competitiveness of Firms

The study sought to establish the influence of strategic direction on competitiveness of firms. The practices were rated as Strongly Agree by 46.0% of the respondents, agree by 26.9% of respondents, disagree by 15.4% of respondents and strongly disagree by 11.5% of respondents. Having right controls and internal systems protect a business physical and financial asset from fraud, theft, and errors. Similarly, proper and clear controls quickly identify errors and fraud if they occur.

Table 3: Rating of Influence of Strategic Control

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	12	46.0
Agree	7	26.9
Disagree	4	15.4
Strongly Disagree	3	11.5
Total	26	100.0

The study further sought to establish views of respondents on certain aspects of Strategic Control and influence on Competitiveness in the Logistics sector. There should be accuracy and reliability as internal control system which had a mean of 4.66 (SD=0.553). This was followed by maintenance of compliance at a mean of 4.62 (SD=0.561). Operational efficiency had a mean of 4.48 (SD=0.574). The respondents were of the view Consistence of data and automation of processes influence competitiveness of forms with mean 4.52 (SD=0.574) and mean 4.66 (SD=0.553). This is because having solid internal controls help to maintain validity of financial data and equip management to make more informed judgment calls. Table 4 below presents findings.

Table 4: Rating of Influence of Strategic Control

Strategic Control	Mean	Std. Deviation
Accuracy and reliability	4.66	.553
Maintaining Compliance	4.62	.561
Operational Efficiency	4.48	.574
Consistence of data	4.52	.574
Automation of processes	4.66	.553

CapacityBuilding and Competitiveness of Firms

The study sought to establish the influence of Capacity building on competitiveness of firms. Activities were rated as Very Effective by 38.5% of the respondents, Effective by 34.6% of the respondents, somehow effective 19.2% of the respondents and Ineffective by 7.7% of the respondents. The Table 5 presents the findings.

Table 5 Rating of Influence of Capacity building

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Ineffective	2	7.7
Somehow Effective	5	19.2
Effective	9	34.6
Very Effective	10	38.5
Total	26	100.0

The views of the respondents on the influence of Capacity building on Competitiveness of firms were collected. Individual human resource development, motivated workforce and organization development and training each had of 4.79 (SD=0.491). This was followed by Firm's collaboration which had a mean of 4.86 (SD=0.351). Therefore, from the study Rewarding employees fall in HR's area of responsibility, a task with substantial implications if an unmotivated workforce can disrupt organization's efficacy due to lack of focus and undesirable results. (Ritz-Carlton Hotel Group, 2015) Table 6 below presents findings

Table 6: Statements on effects of Capacity building

Rating	Mean	Std. Deviation
Individual human resources development	4.79	.491
Firms' collaboration	4.86	.351
Motivated workforce	4.79	.491
Organizational development and training	4.79	.491

Organization Dynamics and Competitiveness of Firms

The study sought to establish the influence of Organization dynamics on competitiveness of firms. The Organization dynamics are key in the operation in an organization, therefore the respondents rated as follows: activities were rated as Very Effective by 34.6% of the respondents, Effective by 26.9% of the respondents, somehow effective 26.9% of the respondents and Ineffective by 3% of the respondents. Organization dynamics are constantly self-renewing and slowly evolving. Formal efforts to change a mode of operation in an organization (to replace it with something entirely different) seldom manage to get to the heart of what motivates people, what makes them tick. complexity shouldn't deter leaders from trying to use Organization dynamics as a lever. (Dee, 2008) The Table 7 presents findings.

Table 7: Rating of Influence of Organization Dynamics

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Ineffective	3	11.5
Somehow Effective	7	26.9
Effective	7	26.9
Very Effective	9	34.6
Total	26	100.0

The views of respondents on the influence of Organization Dynamics on Competitiveness of firms were collected. Behavior within the organization and Positive systems each had a mean of 4.72 (SD=0.591). Values of the organization had a mean of 4.69 (SD=0.604) followed by Norms upheld by organization which had a mean of 4.55(SD=0.686). Norms, values, behavior of people in an organization are tools motivate employees to work towards achieving organizational goals. Discern a few things people do throughout company positively affect business performance and should be aligned with company's overall strategy. Table 8 below presents findings:

Table 8: Statement on Influence of Organization Dynamics

Organization Dynamics	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Values of the organization	4.69	.604
Norms upheld by employees	4.55	.686
Behavior within the organization	4.72	.591
Positive systems	4.72	.591

Competitiveness of Firms

Profitability

The respondents found Competitiveness of firms determined by the profitability and market share. The profitability of the organization had a mean of 4.34 (SD=0.670), followed by price setting had a mean of 4.62 (SD=0.494), One measure of a company's profitability is profitability ratio which analyze the financial health of a business. (Flynn & Herrington, 2015)

Table 9: Rating of Influence of Competitiveness of Firms

Competitiveness of Firms	Mean	Std. Deviation
Profitability of the organization	4.34	.670
Price Setting of products	4.62	.494
Market Share representation	4.55	.572
Changes in the market share	4.59	.568

Market Share

The results are in congruence with those of Stank et al., (2013) and Zhang et al., (2013) who held organizations apply strategic leadership provide high value to their customers, thus achieving high levels of customer satisfaction. below presents findings. Market share representation of percentage of an industry or a market's total sales is earned by a particular company over a period is specified. Such metrics are used to give a general idea of the size of a company concerning its market and its competitors**.**

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the influence of Strategic leadership on Competitiveness of Logistics firm in Kenya.

Model Summary

From the findings, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.8792 which is a positive, shows a strong relationship Strategic leadership from on Competitiveness of firms. The R-Square value of 0.772 shows accounts for 77.2% of the variation or change in the performance of firms in the logistics sector in Kenya. This result supports the general view strategic leadership are not the only factors explain competitiveness of firms as was found in studies done by Senzen & Cakaya (2013). It implies there are other factors explain firms' performance in addition to strategic leadership management. The table 4.15 presents the model summary.

Table 10: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.879	0.772	0.291	0.564

Regression Coefficients

The table 4.17 below presents regression coefficients of the effect of Strategic leadership (Strategic direction, Strategic control, capacityBuilding and OrganizationDynamics) on Competitiveness of firms. The Beta coefficients indicate the extent to which firm competitiveness (dependent variable) changes due to a unit change Strategic leadership (independent variables).

Table 11: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.322	1.876		1.238	.000
	Strategic Direction	.838	.211	.805	2.571	002
	Strategic Control	.745	.195	.875	1.037	.003
	CapacityBuilding	.800	.192	.761	3.071	.000
	Organization Dynamics	.863	.156	.910	2.213	.004

The regression equation for the study was:

$Y= 2.322+ 0.838X_1+ 0.745X_3+0.800X_3+ 0.863X_4$

Where:

Y=Competitiveness of Firms in the Logistics sector.

βo = Constant

β_1, β_2, β_3 and β_4 = Regression coefficients

X_1= Strategic Direction

X_2 = Strategic Control

X_3 = Capacity building

X_4 = Organization dynamics

ε is the error term.

The regression equation above has established using (strategic direction, strategic control, Capacity building and organization dynamics), competitiveness of firms was 2.322. The results show, holding other variables constant, a unit increase in the adoption of Strategic Direction would lead to 0.838 increases in Competitiveness of firms in Logistics sector. This variable was significant since calculated p-value (0.002) is less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. The results support the findings of Knies, (2021) who concluded Strategic direction was effective in influencing competitiveness of firms by ensuring the vision, mission and objective of the organization are clear. The results further show holding other variables constant, a unit increase in the adoption of Strategic control would lead to 0.745 increases in Competitiveness in the Logistics sector.

This variable was significant since calculated p-value (0.003) was lower than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. Having the right controls, internal systems protect a business physical and financial asset from fraud, theft, errors. Similarly, the proper and clear controls quickly identify errors if they occur. Capacity building indicate when other variables are held constant, leads to 0.800 changes in Competitiveness of firms in Kenya's Logistics sector. This means unit increase in the adoption of Capacity Building would lead to an increase in firm competitiveness by 0.800. This variable was significant since p-value (0.00) was less than 0.05 at 5% level of significance. While intrinsic rewards are essential in their capacity to create personal satisfaction in an employee due to their efforts being recognized, financial rewards must follow it up to maximize employee motivation hence increasing competitiveness of firms in the logistics sector. Overall, Organization dynamics had the greatest effect on competitiveness of firms followed by Strategic direction then Capacity building and Strategic control in order.

Concluding Remarks

This section presents a summary of the findings addressing each objective of the study as interpreted in chapter four. The study sought to find out the Influence of Strategic direction on competitiveness of Logistics firms in Kenya. It was established having a strategic direction in an organization is effective. Both Long term and short-term objectives should be well defined and understood by everyone. Regression analysis established, while holding other variables constant, a unit increase in adoption of Strategic direction would lead to 0.838 increases in competitiveness of Logistics firms in Kenya.

The study sought to find out the effectiveness of Strategic control on competitiveness in the logistics sector. Overall, right controls and internal systems protect a business physical and financial asset from fraud, theft, therefore ensuring Accuracy and reliability on any data managed by an organization and presented to stakeholders. Similarly, maintaining compliance as a tool of control, ensure the proper, clear controls quickly identify errors and fraud if they occur. The study further established while holding other variables constant, a unit increase in the Strategic control would lead to 0.745 increase in performance of firms in Kenya's logistics sector.

Assessment of Capacity building in an organization found out there is positive influence on competitiveness of firms study established when Capacity building is successful, it strengthens a firm's ability to fulfill its mission and vision over time, thereby enhancing the ability to have a positive impact and profitability. These Capacity building practices were found to lead to 0.800 increase in performance of firms in Kenya's Logistics sector when other factors were held constant.

The assessment of influence of Organization dynamics adopted by firms in the logistics sector found out practices were effective in influencing firm's competitiveness. Organization dynamics are constantly self-renewing and slowly evolving: What people feel, think, believe is reflected and shaped by the way they go about their business. The norms, values and behavior motivate employees to work towards achieving organizational goals. Regression analysis established Organization dynamics explained for 0.863 changes in performance of firms in Kenya's logistics sector when other variables were held constant.

It established quality of service offered by firms in logistics sector improved competitiveness by 63.78% because of adopting Strategic leadership. There was increase in profitability and a larger market share was covered over the past 3 years. An Increasing profitability necessitates determining which areas of a financial strategy are working and need improvement which is evident in the study. Understanding the key factors determining profitability assists managers in developing an efficient profitability strategy for his or her company. On overall profitability majority of firms had an increase in profitability of between 15-20 million at 49.1.1% in the year 2020, between 15-20 million at 48.6% in the year 2019 and between Kshs 5-10 million at 39.5% in 2018. The year 2020 however had less increase from the previous year because of the Global pandemic Covid-19.

The study sought to determine the Influence of Strategic Leadership on Competitiveness of firms. To determine this, the study first sought to establish level of having of strategic control, strategic direction, Capacity building and organization dynamics among these firms. These practices found to be effectively adopted by firms in the logistics sector. The study concludes Strategic Leadership had significance influence on competitiveness in Kenya's Logistics sector. Having a clear vision and mission of is understood by everyone in the organization is key. The long term and short-term objective of the organization should be clearly defined. The internal control tools are also essential to ensure there are minimum or no errors and any chance of fraud. These internal controls such as the Standard Operating Procedures ensure there is alignment of processes. Capacity building activities including training, development and reward systems act as a motivating factor for employees to perform better in an organization. The study further concluded Organization dynamics had a significant influence on performance of firms in Kenya's Logistics sector.

The study finally concluded that profitability and market share of an organization is determined by the leader's organization has. Therefore, strategic leaders ensure through having Strategic direction, strategic control, Organization dynamics, Capacity building increased competitiveness of firms. Overall, profitability of firm increased by 15-20 million at 49.1.1% in the year 2020, between 15-20 million at 48.6% in the year 2019 and between Kshs 5-10 million at 39.5% in the year 2018. The year 2020 however had less increase from previous year because of the Global pandemic Covid-19.

This study experienced various limitations. First, Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic it was difficult to get hold of some managers as they were working from home and rarely came to office. Therefore, I had to send soft copy documents to be filled virtually. The study targeted organizations spread over Kenya geographically. This limited access to these organizations since the researchers could not reach to all of them and had to send emails with the attachment for the managers of the firms to fill. Lastly, some of the respondents targeted, they were either out of the office at the time data collection was done or were unwilling to fill the questionnaires. This limited the information collected as the study could not benefit from the rich information possessed by the respondents who declined to participate in the study.

Recommendations

Firms in Logistics sector should have very specific and quantifiable goals are clear to everyone in organization, are analyzed periodically to ensure every employee in the organization understand them and comply effectively. This will ensure the long term and short-term objective of organization are clear to everyone and therefore they work towards achieving goals. Firms should also ensure they hire leaders who are very strategic, and they will enhance performance and competitiveness of firms.

Having Internal controls ensure errors and mistakes are removed, so standard operating procedures are observed is important. Organization self- valuation of the internal controls to are adequate supporting documentation as the possibilities of errors are reduced. Firms in the logistics sector should, while ensuring procedures are defined, minimize ambiguous procedures. Intensified evaluation of the existing internal tools should be adopted to reduce errors impacts while efficiently having the right controls.

To realize the benefits of Capacity building firms in the logistics sector should have activities intrinsic rewards, financial rewards which are essential in their capacity to create personal satisfaction in an employee due to their efforts being recognized, Firms should adopt approached minimize an over reliance on outside expertise which in turn reduces the costs incurred by the organization. This will ensure employees are motivated to work in the organization and receive compensation matches their work.

To ensure the dynamics and culture of the organization is consistent, the norms, behavior, values are upheld by all the employees in the company, activities ruin the values and norms of the organization should mitigated with at an early stage before they develop to become norms. Overall, firms, especially the small ones, in the logistics sector should be empowered to adopt positive values, norms and introduced policies promote the positive culture of the organization so as this is maintained as the organization grow over time.

Areas for Further Research

The focus of this study was on Influence of Strategic Leadership on Competitiveness of Logistics firms in Kenya. There are other sectors such as Strategic Execution and Implementation of Leadership policies. Similar studies should be done in these sectors to establish whether same or different results will be obtained. Existing literature indicates as a future avenue of research, there is need to undertake similar research in other sectors, government institutions, public sector organizations in Kenya and other countries to establish whether explored factors can be generalized to effects of Strategic leadership in Kenya's logistics sector

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