MANAGERS' PERCEPTION ON STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN KENYA

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree award in the university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my family who have been inspiring me throughout the various stages of the research work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAK : Communications Authority of Kenya

RBV : Resource Based View

SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Science

SMS : Short Messaging Service

ABSTRACT

Market share is decreasing owing to increased rivalry among companies as a result of globalization and the growth of constantly expanding and rising countries. Organizational survival is getting more challenging due to a growing propensity in a competitive marketplace. Strategic solutions are being sought by organizations in order to maintain and enhance company efficiency. They are re-engineering and restructuring procedures in order to become a more capable and enthusiastic leader. The aim of this research was to investigate the impact of strategic positioning on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 50 participants from a population of 89 respondents. Questionnaires were utilized to gather primary data. A response rate of 82.6% was obtained. Analysis was done by use of percentages, frequencies, mean and regression analysis. Findings of the research showed that mobile telecommunication companies have adopted strategic positioning strategies namely differentiation positioning, cost positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning to a great extent. The research utilized inferential statistics multiple linear regression analyses. The study findings recorded a co-efficient of determination of 0.141% implying that differentiation positioning, cost positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning explain 14.1% of competitive advantage. The findings revealed that the model entailing the selected strategic positioning strategies significantly predicts competitive advantage $0.00 \leq 0.05$. The results of the research revealed that cost positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning have a positive significant and positive effect on competitive advantage. On the other hand, a negative but insignificant relationship was found to exist between differentiation positioning and competitive advantage by mobile telecommunication companies. The study recommends top management of telecommunication companies to invest in strategic positioning strategies to realize competitive advantage. Mobile telecommunication companies should make a deliberate effort to innovate products for specific market niches and prioritize on sale of goods and services in such markets.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

An organization strategy is comprised of the management activities and methods used to achieve effective results. An organization's game plan for managing a strategy (Kugun, Wanyonyi, & Sangoro, 2016). Successful organizations are those who use strategic positioning to their advantage. Strategic positioning may, however, be hazardous, and failure is the most probable result for a company, according to study (Stanley, 2013). According to Siregar and Toha (2012), the advantages of strategic positioning may be variable or even nonexistent depending on the company's circumstances. Furthermore, Cooper and Brentani (2010) claim that the link between strategic positioning and competitive advantage may be U-shaped, meaning that greater levels of strategic positioning contribute to competitive advantage while lower levels can have a detrimental impact.

Research is focused on the resource-based theory of strategy, looking at how resources and talents provide an organization advantage over other rivals (Barney, 2001). As a member of the broader family of strategic management theories, this theory is useful in understanding effective strategic plan implementation practices. As outlined by Locke (1968), the goal setting theory relies on qualities like clarity, challenge, commitment, and feedback as well as the difficulty of the job at hand. Short- and long-term objectives, as well as effective methods for accomplishing them, may all be explained using a goal-setting strategy, which is critical in business. Organizations must effectively adapt their general plans to external environmental circumstances, according to Fiedler's (1964) contingency theory of change. The concept is founded on the assumption that responding to changes in the external environment does not have to satisfy any certain criteria.

Strategic positioning is a worldwide concept and exploits brand equity and to achieve economies of scale in decision-making in a more competitive and transparent market environment. As a result, businesses looking to build strong brand presence across different markets have unique possibilities and difficulties. Customers' behavior and lifestyle segmentation may become essential in the increasingly global and technologically sophisticated marketplace, since market groups have been homogenized across national boundaries. Then there's also the segmentation based on geopolitical and economic factors in global marketplaces (Aulakh & Kotabe, 2013).

The Kenyan telecommunications sector has expanded rapidly in recent years. As the number of mobile carriers in the market has grown, competition has increased substantially (CAK, 2017). Since mobile money transfers and mobile internet access are becoming more popular, the number of customers is also rising. Demand for mobile phones has risen as more affordable smartphones have been available. Mobile phone service providers in Kenya's capital include Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, and Telkom. In their rivalry, they compete on the basis of products and services, with the bulk of them offering similar goods and services. Prior to the large infusion of money by private sector players, markets that were separate, discrete, and vertical had merged over their previous borders. Through this research, the impact of strategic positioning on telecom firms in Kenya will be determined.

1.1.1 Strategic Positioning

When a company uses strategic positioning, it differentiates itself from the competition and offers customers something more (Wickham, 2011). The company's strategy is affected by a wide range of variables, including internal resources and skills, stakeholder expectations, and stakeholder influence. Strategic position may be established by taking into consideration variables such as environment, organizational cultural and political framework, strategic capability, expectations and goals as Janiszewska mentions (2012). There are researchers who believe that strategic positioning may help create focus inside an organization and a framework for debating resource allocation issues. Tamirisa, Johnson, Kochhar, and Mitton (2013) agree. It also reduces the complexity associated with these choices when a company articulates its perception location.

In order to optimize a company's potential advantage, positioning involves getting consumers to think about the brand while making purchasing decisions. To be effectively positioned, a company or service must carve out and keep that niche in the market. The positioning of a product business must establish an identity for the company in the eyes of customers and communicate one clear, consistent message that sets it apart from competitors, according to Hassan, George and Craft (2005). One thing to keep in mind is that a company cannot be everything to everyone and must instead narrow its focus. A company's operations must be totally different from those of its conventional commercial rivals if it is to be successful in the long run.

Strategic positioning topology of Porter (1996) is widely accepted in today's literature, including online company strategy (Porter, 2001). A broad positioning strategy, according to Porter's theory, has the following two components: competition on the basis of price and differentiation. Customers like products and services that stand out from the crowd. That's what differentiation is all about. Innovating research and development can be a part of these characteristics as well as excellent engineering may be part of these features as well (Porter, 1996). Using cutting-edge scientific research, sophisticated R&D and product creation, and excellent customer service, you can stand out from the competition (Hamrick & Mason, 1984). By focusing on differentiating themselves from the competition, companies may demand higher profit margins. Target the lowest industry average unit costs via economies of scale, cost savings, and operational excellence throughout the whole business (Kald, 2003).

Strategic positioning has been operationalized differently by previous researchers. According to Aulakh and Kotabe (2013), strategic positioning may be broken down into four categories: access-based positioning, variety-based positioning, and brand-based positioning. Odede (2016) operationalized strategic positioning in terms of cost, difference, and strategy of emphasis. The current study will operationalize strategic positioning in terms of cost, differentiation, focus and brand positioning.

1.1.2 Competitive Advantage

Customer preference is based on the competitive advantage of a business, according to Porter (1985). Competitive advantage is what makes a business profitable in its field. Strategies are a company's game plan for competing in the market, according to Thompson and Strickland (1998). This definition sees strategy as a way for a company to 'fit' into its surroundings. However, strategy as a fit only explains a portion of an organization's results. Strategy, as defined by Johnson and Scholes (2002), is the allocation of a company's resources and skills in order to fulfill stakeholders' expectations. Being able to differentiate oneself from competitors' products or services is crucial for maintaining a competitive advantage (Porter, 1996).

In order for businesses to thrive in today's fast-changing environment and gain a competitive advantage, they need to implement effective innovative strategies. Competitive advantage is described as the continuing benefit from the implementation of particular distinct strategies that have been created via the integration of unique internal organizational resources and skills that cannot be copied. This provides a long-term competitive edge to a business. "Evolution that satisfies current generation demands without compromising future generations' capacity to perform their obligations" is the source of competitive advantage. Companies need competitive advantage by being better prepared to cope with challenges presented by rivals. Long-term gain-making firms have an advantage over their competitors.

Business enterprises get competitive advantages by being capable of offering similar goods and services at cheaper costs than their competitors, as well as providing superior benefits or products. Distinction advantage describes this situation. Competitive advantage allows a business to make more money and provide better value to its consumers (Barney, 1991). Customer awareness of differences in the goods provided by a company is a prerequisite for the business achieving competitive advantage, according to Oliver (1997) Businesses may get a competitive edge by developing a distinctive competitive strategy that enables an appropriate industry orientation that can be used to improve firm capabilities resources and this can be achieved via greater levels of innovation (Porter, 2006).

1.1.3 Mobile Telecommunication Firms in Kenya

Because of the worldwide crisis and intense competition among the major companies, the mobile communication sector is quite active and has significantly risen in the previous years. In terms of service delivery, communication, and service quality, the industry has seen significant transformations. Mobile device service providers provide a broad variety of goods and services, including mobile money transfer, text messaging, email, the internet, video conferencing, and telephone services. Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, and Telkom Kenya hold the majority of the Kenyan telecom market's share and domination. Despite the fact that it has been called the Silicon Valley of East Africa, Kenya's industry plays an essential part in the country's development and transformation, as outlined by Kenya's Vision 2030. Prices have dropped by more than 70% in the past four years due to fair playing field and market regulation mandated by Kenya's Communications Authority (CAK, 2015).

Mobile money transfers and mobile internet access are two examples of industry technological innovation that have resulted to a rise in the number of customers. The demand for mobile phones has risen as a result of the availability of inexpensive smartphones. Safaricom, Airtel Kenya, and Telkom are Kenya's three major mobile phone service providers. They're in a product and service arms race, with several of them providing identical goods and services. Prior to the large infusion of money by private sector players, markets that were separate, discrete, and vertical had merged over their previous borders. Research in Kenya's telecommunications sector is being conducted to examine how location affects a company's ability to compete.

1.2 Research Problem

Market share is decreasing owing to increased rivalry among companies as a result of globalization and the growth of constantly expanding and rising countries. Organizational survival is getting more challenging due to a growing propensity in a competitive marketplace. Strategic solutions are being sought by organizations in order to maintain and enhance company efficiency. They are re-engineering and restructuring procedures in order to become a more capable and enthusiastic leader. "Enterprises are altering their business models. Theoretically, strategic positioning is applied in enhancing competitive advantage but how these aspects are perceived by managers is critical. For a competitive advantage, businesses position their products based on how customers perceive and behave in order to gain and retain an edge over their rivals. Product positioning strategies are widely regarded as a powerful and effective method for improving a company's image and progress. This leads to competition. Competitive advantage in the mobile telecommunications industry requires strategic positioning. In today's competitive sectors, strategic positioning is critical for company success, since it leads to a better market position and a competitive advantage (Kugun et al., 2006).

Although there exist studies in this area, they exhibit conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps. A study conducted by Kim, Song, and Koo (2008) pursued the impact of airline strategic positioning on Korean performance globally. According to the study's findings, competitive advantage may be derived from cost advantages in production and service, pricing competitiveness, and operating costs. According to It has been shown in the research by Farhiya (2015) that organizations that adopt positioning strategies have a basis from which to build and coordinate the execution of their mission's goals and objectives. Marketers may differentiate between groups based on how they respond to market factors, as noted by Abeck (2017). Although these studies were performed in various contexts, their results cannot be applied to the Kenyan telecommunications sector as a whole because of the differences in methodology.

Locally, a study by Onyango (2014) indicated improved performance due to adoption of strategic positioning practices. The study focused on commercial banks whose operations are different from telecommunication firms and therefore a contextual gap. Njiru (2014) discovered a link between effective strategic positioning strategies and business outcomes. Because it operationalized strategic positioning based on need, access, and diversity, the research had a conceptual gap. As a result, the results reflect the proxies used. This research focuses on the performance of firms rather than competitive advantage, which is a completely distinct notion. Odede (2016) discovered a link between strategic posture and results. Due to the research's qualitative character and emphasis on a single case study, there is a methodological gap that prevents its results from being extrapolated to other contexts.

The competition in the telecommunication industry has heightened. Firms in the industry have adopted strategic positioning to remain competitive. However there exist no empirical evidence to propose that the positioning strategies have been effective. Strategic positioning and competitive advantage research in Kenya has concentrated on industries other than telecommunications. Therefore, this research will help close the information gap on how positioning tactics influence a company's competitive advantage. The study sought to answer the research question; what is the effect of strategic positioning on the competitive advantage of telecommunication firms in Kenya??

1.3 Research Objectives

The objective of this study was to establishing the effect of strategic positioning on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms.

1.4 Value of the Study

Economic authorities gained greater tools to devise new, far-reaching measures to help Kenya's telecoms companies improve their performance, according to the results. This will help them define or determine policies regulations and guidelines for Kenyan mobile telecommunications companies.

The results of this study were used to assist future academics, students, and researchers in the same area as this study was designed to. Research gaps identified by scientists and academics via reviews of the current literature to generate new research proposals on pertinent issues.

This research was helpful to telecommunications sector investors, both new and old. They'll be in a better position to assess their investing goals and portfolios, and thus they can go on with making informed choices. Investors, fund managers, and financial analysts benefited from the study's findings, as well as providing suitable client suggestions or advice.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

There are theoretical and empirical reviews in this section on strategic positioning, competitive advantage, and the relationship between the three concepts. It begins with a discussion of theoretical foundations, the conceptual framework that shows how these concepts relate to one another in conceptual terms, a review of empirical research on these concepts that reveals similarities and differences, a critique of previous research and an examination into research gaps in the field.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The section analyzed study's guiding theories. It is essential because it helps to support the premise that the independent and dependent variables are linked in this section. The Resource Based View Theory (RBVT), Goal Setting Theory, and the Contingency Theory were discussed in detail in this part of the report.

2.2.1 Resource Based View Theory

After Barney's (2001) assessment research on effective company management, the Resource Based View paradigm rose to prominence in the early 1990s.. It was his job to figure out how a company might use its resources for gaining a competitive advantage. To survive in a vastly competitive market, when it comes to building capacity in the organization, Barney (2001) says the resource-based strategy was essential, and it helped the organization's ability to thrive. Barney Because of this, the Resource-Based Theory (RBT) was born, and it is critical for evaluating business capacity and resource management in order to increase competitiveness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

The resource-based viewpoint theory has focused on the organizational resources that help create the value component, which enables the business to continue growing transactions and attracting new investment. According to Terziovski (2010), organizational strategies have a major role in determining how organizational resources are used and dispersed in order to make organizational business activities easier to carry out. The resource based viewpoint hypothesis says that a company's resources may be categorized as either tangible or intangible. All organizational resources, according to Ray et al. (2004), have a significant impact on an organization's overall efficiency. West (2012) posits that an organization or a business entity has a likelihood of achieving operational success through ensuring optimization on organizational resources' effective application and use.

All corporations want to develop by using the finest operational resources and implementing complete strategies that help them fulfill their main mission and accomplish their goals (Rosemann & Brocke, 2015). All organizational resources have a competitive component according to the Resource Based View theory, making them essential since they allow organizations to carry out procedures whose goal is to achieve operational goals. Ray et al., (2004) argues that the commencement phase, which achieves competitiveness and corporate growth, is the efficient utilization of existing organizational resources.

The RBV theory fits well with the topic of strategic posture, which is the subject of this investigation. Strategic positioning practices implementation necessitates the integration and support of many physical systems by a highly experienced and knowledgeable support staff (McKinney, 2015). The ability of mobile mobile telecommunications companies to carry out their activities is highly dependent on their human resources base. When the theory is taken into account, mobile telecommunications companies may gain a competitive edge and outperform their rivals by using all of the available strategic positioning methods.

2.2.2 Goal Setting Theory

According to Edwin Locke, who proposed the goal setting theory in 1968, (Chemjor, 2015). There are many factors that guide goal setting, including: challenge, crystal clear definition of what the objective is; commitment; difficulty of the job; and feedback. In the 1960s, Dr. Edwin Locke began researching setting and refined Kurt Lewin's aspiration levels theory. Dr. Edwin Locke is widely regarded as the father of the modern aspiration levels theory. Researchers found an inductive link between establishing objectives and improving organizational performance. One definition of a goal is the desired outcome that a person strives to achieve. In order to achieve desired results, goal-setting necessitates a continual process of benchmarking intended performance. The idea of goal setting states that the desire and purpose to achieve a goal is what motivates someone (Chemjor, 2015).

In support of the goals setting theory, Chemjor (2015) provides arguments that encourage organizational workers to establish their own personal objectives, which is critical for driving better levels of performance from them. This means stakeholders keep an eye on progress toward objectives and, if necessary, adjust or increase efforts to achieve them. As performance improves, performance management system objectives are met (Salaman et al., 2005). An organization's operational goals will be closer to being met if it uses this goal-setting strategy.

According to goal setting theory, mobile communications companies may establish both long and short-term and objectives, as well as determine the most effective methods for achieving those targets. Better results may be achieved with reliable, precise, and explicit objectives (Shahin & Mahbod, 2007). As part of particular operational strategies, mobile telecommunications companies follow well-defined strategic guidelines to achieve their set objectives. Strategic plans may be medium-term, long-term or short-term in nature. In order to achieve the high levels of operational competitiveness required to accomplish the noble purpose contained in what it takes to be a mobile telecommunications company, goal setting theory is a critical instrument for creating short and long term goals.

2.2.3 Contingency Theory

The theory assert that there exist no one optimal method to structure a business, run a company, or make choices. It is an organizational theory. Instead, the best course of action will be determined by the current internal and external circumstances before it can be determined (Daft, 2010). In a contingent leader, the appropriate leadership style is used when it's needed. Fred Fiedler created the concept of contingency leadership in the 1960s.

As a result of its strengths and limitations, every business faces unique opportunities and challenges. Organizations, according to Daft (2010), cannot have the same strategy no matter how scientific management concepts attempt to present them as similar. Not appreciating individual firms' unique capabilities may lead to wrong strategic choices and subsequently failure. This is therefore the foundation of contingency theory. According to contingency theory, businesses must effectively align their overall plans with external environmental circumstances in order to stay competitive. No particular criteria are required according to this idea for responding to external environment changes. The activities of businesses must be sensitive to daily environmental changes in order for them to function in highly dynamic settings, which almost every company does (Carlisle, 1976).

In context, the contingency theory allows to innovation of new products and services within the mobile telecommunication firms to meet the demands of the ever changing environment. For instance, mobile telecommunication firms are able to develop a variety of products that suit the standards of the customers and satisfy the requirements of the market. With the introduction of Mobile money transfer service, (i.e., M-PESA by Safaricom), the firms are able to develop an application that could connect the customer savings with M-PESA. Therefore, contingency theory remains relevant in ensuring that the mobile telecommunication firms remain flexible and are able to meet the demands of the environment.

2.3 Empirical Review

Various positioning strategies need different procedures, and a company may use any or all of them. According to Beckman and Rosenfield (2008), companies may set themselves apart by focusing on one of four key alignments: cost, distinctiveness, focus, or branding. Local and international competitive advantages of a company have been positively impacted by strategic positioning. Some of these studies discussed were conducted in different contexts and focused on variables that are related but not exactly like the variables proposed in the current study.

There was a connection found between a company's strategic attitude and its production performance in another research by Chang, Fernando, and Tripathy (2015). A cost leadership or differentiation strategy beat its rivals, according to the findings. These two studies focused on other dependent variables and therefore they are not conclusive when it comes to cost leadership strategy and competitive advantage.

Zekiri and Nedelea (2011) did a study that focused on tactics for gaining competitive advantage in Romania. According to the study, if a company wants to pursue accost leadership strategy; it must produce at a low cost. Furthermore, it is proposed that a company will benefit in production costs, economies of scale as a result of patented technologies, and low-cost raw materials, among other things. In the same way, it is mentioned that the aim of the cost management plan is for the company to produce at a cheaper cost compared to its rivals. This emphasizes the significance of productivity in the workplace. This study concludes that achieving low cost leadership leads to competitive advantage.

To find out how strategic positioning affects mobile telecommunications companies' performance in Kenya, Tharamba, Rotich, and Anyango (2018) performed a study that looked at marketing, research and development, and various goods as measuring items. The study's intended audience was management employees in Safaricom's marketing and R&D departments at the company's Kenyan headquarters; the sample frame included Safaricom's top, middle, and operational managers. According to the findings, the mobile telecommunications sector in Kenya benefited from marketing, R&D, resource availability, and a variety of goods.

Strategy, customer relationship management, and organizational performance were studied by Riasat et al (2015) Strategic positioning and strategic customer connections are directly related to an organization's performance, according to a literature review and test findings. Long-term competitive advantage comes from strategic positioning and maintenance of client relationships.

Kenya's top five oil firms were assessed based on Munene's strategic positioning and organizational performance (2013). Researchers used a cross-sectional survey design approach for the investigation. To be advantageous over their rival and generate large profits regardless of the average profitability in the energy sector when petroleum prices are controlled, the top oil companies must position themselves in the market and employ positioning tactics.

Rose (2012) conducted a survey on the positioning strategies used by major Kenyan audit companies and found that ownership has a significant impact on the approach chosen by the company. To gain a leadership position, Kenyan audit firms are employing several different positioning strategies, she said. According to the findings of the research, audit companies in a competitive audit market focus on product features, time and location price positioning.

According to Mokaya et al. (2012), market positioning strategies in the airline industry have a strong link to organizational performance. The efficacy of pricing schemes is influenced by many variables. In order to be effective in marketing, you must have the right positioning. Positioning helps organizations manage competitive threats and improve performance.

A 2011 study on strategic positioning for sustainable competitive advantage among Indian commercial banks by Ansari, Economides, and Ghosh found that the banks were attempting to differentiate themselves through hybrid strategies, head-to-head strategies, attribute or benefit strategies, quality/pricing strategies, strengthening current positions, and repositioning strategies. Competitive advantage is achieved by giving customers better goods and services than the competition, either at the same price or at a little higher price to increase profits.

2.4 Summary of Literature and Knowledge Gaps

Table 2.1 provides a summary of literature review clearly outlining the methodological approach taken by the studies reviewed, the knowledge gaps and how they will be addressed by the current study.

Table 2.1 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

Author of study	Focus of Study	Methodology	Findings	Knowledge Gaps	Focus of current study
Tharamba, Rotich and Anyango (2018)	Kenyan mobile communications companies' financial performance in light of strategic positioning	Use of a census for descriptive research. Marketing and research and development department managers were the study's intended audience.	It was discovered via the research that marketing, product development, and resource availability all had a beneficial impact on the mobile telecommunications industry's success in Kenya.	According to the findings, strategic positioning has a positive impact mobile phone companies in the country, however the present research examines how strategic positioning affects mobile phone companies' competitive advantage in Kenya.	The impact of mobile telecommunications companies' competitive advantage and strategic positioning in Kenya.
Riasat et al., (2018)	Relationship among strategic positioning, strategic customer relationship management and organizational performance	Review of empirical literature	According to the findings of the research, strategic positioning and strategic customer relationships have a significant impact on an organization's success.	The research looked at the relationship between strategic positioning, strategic customer relationship management, and organizational performance, whereas	The current investigation will not only look at strategic positioning, but also at competitive advantage and how that impacts organizational performance.

				the current study analyzes the effect of strategic positioning on Kenya's competitive advantage for mobile communications firms in Kenya.	
Munene (2013)	Top oil firms in Kenya strategic positioning and organizational performance	Cross sectional survey research design	Top oil companies use a variety of positioning strategies to get an advantage in the market.	The study was conducted on oil industry	The current study will focus on strategic positioning and competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya
Kasyoka (2011)	Case study on how Safaricom Limited's strategic positioning led to competitive advantage.	Case study	Research revealed that Safaricom Limited's resource-based perspective has a significant impact on the company's ability to gain a competitive edge.	The study was conducted in safaricom limited only The study also used qualitative data	The current study will be conducted in mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya and will quantitative data
Ansari, Economides and Ghosh (2011)	Establishing the influence of strategic positioning the for sustainable competitive advantage among banks in india.	Case study	That banks were pursuing differentiation, hybrid strategy, strengthening current position and repositioning strategy.	The study was conducted in the banking industry and in different continent context	The current study will be conducted in the mobile telecommunications industry

Source: Researcher (2021)

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the study's research approach for putting its results into action and accomplishing its objectives. The research methodology and study participants are discussed in detail in this chapter. It was followed by data collection method and instrumentation and finally the data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Khumar (2005), terms research design as a technique that allows researchers to answer questions correctly, honestly, objectively, and cheaply. The descriptive research design entails the use of either or both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches. The design determines the criteria for collection of information of the study population; the results from the survey would be analyzed.

A cross-sectional descriptive research design method was used in this study. The aim of descriptive survey design, according to Gill and Johnson (2006) is to determine the general characteristics of a given population or subjects. It also aids in the establishment of an individual's true perceptions and ideals in order to assess how the condition is in comparison to the corresponding target group.

3.3 Population of the Study

These are specific individuals or items that belong to the target demographic (Kothari, 2004). All members of the population typically share the characteristic. The study's intended population constituted 90 managers who headed the strategy, marketing manager and risk departments drawn from the three mobile telecommunications companies in Kenya namely Safaricom, Telkom Kenya and Airtel (CA, 2020). The decision is based on the top mobile telecommunications providers as listed by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK). To meet the study's objectives, a representative sample of the whole population was selected as presented in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Population Distribution

Organization	Population
Safaricom	54
Airtel Kenya	26
Telkom Kenya	25
TOTAL	**90**

Source: Communication Authority of Kenya, 2020

3.4 Sampling technique and Sample Size

The study adopted stratified random sampling. Spellman (2013) recommends stratified sampling for the reasons on the following grounds: it utilizes a smaller sample size and thus saves money; a stratified sample may be more accurate than a random sample for the same number of participants; and finally stratified sampling may help researchers to avoid getting "unrepresentative" sample, including all-male sample drawn from a mixed-gender community as shown in Table 3.2

Table 3.2: Sample Size

Organization	Population	Sample size
Safaricom	54	21
Airtel Kenya	26	15
Telkom Kenya	25	14
TOTAL	**90**	**50**

3.5 Data Collection

Primary data was gathered from the respondents through a questionnaire. Primarily, the data was helpful for demonstrating in real life the connection between the constructs.

The use of questionnaires was justified since they were an inexpensive, effective, and efficient method to collect data in a relatively short time.

Close-ended questions were used in the study. The closed-ended ones enabled the researchers to deduce precise responses. The questionnaires were distributed to all employees selected in the sample.

3.5 Data Analysis

Coding and entry of the primary data were done in SPSS. Frequencies and percentages were utilized for analysis as descriptive statistics. Generalizations about the population was drawn using correlations and regression analysis. The dependent and independent variables was connected using multiple regression analysis. The dependent variable was competitive advantage, whereas the independent factors are cost positioning, differentiation positioning, focus positioning, and brand positioning. Use of the multiple regression model:

$$Y= \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+ \beta_4X_4+\varepsilon$$

Where;

Y= Competitive advantage; α = Constant Term; β_i = Beta Coefficient of variable i

X_1 = Cost positioning; X_2= Differentiation positioning; X_3= Focus positioning; X_4= Brand positioning; and ε =Error term

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of strategic positioning on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study objectives were to explore the degree of adoption of strategic positioning strategies by mobile telecommunication firms and to determine the relationship existing between strategic positioning strategies and competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya. The findings and discussion of the results are discussed below:

4.2 Response Rate

The study had a sample of 50 participants from three mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. A total of 50 questionnaires were issued where 41 were successfully filled and returned translating to 82.5 percent response rate. This implies that the study was successful in data collection. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) suggest a response rate of seventy percent and above is good for analysis hence the findings of the study can be used to draw conclusions and infer about the entire telecommunication industry.

4.3 Demographic Information Findings

The respondents were asked questions aimed at gathering personal biodata that assisted in determining the suitability of the participants in the survey. This section contains the findings on the demographic information.

4.3.1 Gender of Respondent

The investigation sought to establish the gender of the respondents. The results were as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1. Gender

	Frequency	Percentage
Male	28	68
Female	13	32
Total	**41**	**100**

Source: Researcher, 2021

The results in Table 4.1 on the gender of the respondent reveal that 68 percent of the respondents were males whereas 32 percent were females. This was an indication that the study involved respondents from the two genders.

4.3.2 Age of the Respondent

Participants were further requested to state their ages. They were provided with age categories each one representing a certain range of age. The responses were subjected to analysis using frequencies and percentages and the findings are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age of respondent

	Frequency	Percent
18-25 years	0	0
26-35 years	22	54
36-45 years	12	29
46 and above	7	17
Total	**41**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher, 2021

The study results show that majority, 54 percent were between 26-35 years old, another 29% were between 36-45 years old whereas 17 % 46 years and above. This confirms that most of the respondents were experienced and quite conversant with the organizations' strategic positioning strategies.

4.3.3 Respondent's Level of Education

The study found it necessary to establish whether the respondents had attained the relevant education. The participants were provided with options ranging from secondary education to postgraduate level and requested to indicate the most advanced education they achieved. The data on level of education was analyzed using percentages and frequencies. The results are presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Educational Qualification

	Frequency	**Percent**
Secondary Level	0	0
Diploma Certificate	0	0
Graduate	25	62
Post graduate	16	38
Total	**41**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher, 2021

It was evident from the research findings that 38% percent had Masters whereas 62% of the respondents had Degree qualifications. This imply that most participants were educated hence possessed relevant knowledge and understood the constructs under study.

4.3.4 Duration in Current Job

The researcher wanted to find out the duration the respondents had served in their current positions. The respondents were provided with different options as per the years of served. They were required to indicate the category that best represented the duration they had served. The findings are tabulated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Duration of Service

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 year	10	24
6-10 years	11	26
11-15 years	14	35
Over 15 years	6	15
Total	**41**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher, 2021

The research findings that are presented in Table 4.4 indicate that approximately 24 percent served the organization for less than 5 years, 26 percent between 6 and 10 years, 35 percent between 11-15 years while 15 percent had been in their positions had served for over fifteen years. This was an indication that most of the respondents were individuals with adequate experience hence the information provided was reliable in drawing important conclusions regarding this study.

4.3.5 Level of Management

The study explored the managerial level which the employees targeted served. This was in a bid to ascertain if the targeted participants took part in decision making process on various strategic positioning strategies. The findings were as presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Level of Management

	Frequency	Percentage
Heads of Strategy	7	17
Marketing Managers	28	68
Heads of risk and audit	6	15
Total	**41**	**100**

Source: Researcher, 2021

Table 4.5 indicated above reveal that majority (68%) served as marketing managers, followed by 17% as Heads of strategy while 15% were the heads of risk and audit. This implies that majority of the respondents constitute key decision makers in the organization and are well articulate of the strategic positioning strategies adopted by the organization.

4.4 Strategic Positioning

Descriptive statistics was performed to address the first objective which was to measure the extent to which different strategic positioning strategies have been adopted by mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. Attributes related to the four variables namely cost positioning, differentiation positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning were measured in a five point Likert Scale whereby: -

1- Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Moderate, 4-Agree and 5 Strongly agree.

4.4.1 Cost Positioning

The study sought to establish the extent to which telecommunication companies have adopted cost positioning as a strategy to gain competitive advantage. The respondents were presented with various statements and asked to rate in the five-point Likert scale indicated above. Results are as tabulated in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Cost Positioning

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Our products are affordable and of good quality	41	4.1408	.90383
Lower operations costs due to the elimination of unnecessary costs	41	3.9789	.85443
Low cost initiative to customers	41	3.8873	.96093
Maintenance of overheads lower than industry.	41	3.6127	.95908
High asset utilization to spread fixed costs	41	3.6056	1.02423
Operation of facilities at maximum capacity	41	3.4155	1.21014
Average	**41**	**3.7735**	**0.98544**

The results reveal that majority of the respondents agree that the company's products are affordable and of high quality (M-4.141, SD- 0.903). Similarly, the respondents agree to a large extent that the firm has realized lower operational costs due to elimination of unnecessary costs (M- 3.9789, SD- 0.854) and that the firms have established low customer initiatives for the customers (M-3.887, SD- 0.961). The attributes maintenance of overheads and high asset utilization to spread fixed costs recorded a relatively similar means of 3.612 and 3.606 respectively while the facilities operate at maximum capacity recorded the lowest mean of 3.42. The grand mean recorded was 3.77 implying that cost positioning is a common practice among telecommunication firms in Kenya

4.4.2 Differentiation Positioning

The study measured the extent to which differentiation positioning has been leveraged by mobile telecommunication firms to gain competitive advantage. The respondents were presented with the statements below and asked to rate in a five-point Likert scale. The results were as depicted in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Differentiation Strategies

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our firm offer variety of goods and services.	41	4.1408	1.35055
The firm communicates the points of difference in the products /services it offers in credible ways	41	4.0000	.85053
Our firm gives customer service in a unique manner	41	3.9859	.89114
The company sells goods and services that have special characteristics that customers like.	41	3.9338	.89505
Our firm is creative and consistent in product development	41	3.7887	1.06412
We provide goods that are better in design when compared to those offered by our rivals.	41	3.6620	.94447
Average	41	3.9185	0.99931

All the attributes of differentiation as indicated in Table 4.7 above attained high rankings. The grand mean of 3.928 implies that differentiation is highly practiced by telecommunication companies in Kenya. Precisely, our firm offers a variety of gods and services and the firm communicates the points of difference in the products or services it offers in a credible manner recorded the highest means of 4.14 and 4.00 respectively. Additionally, the respondents agree that the firms offer services in a unique manner (M-3.986) and that the firm sells goods and services that have special attributes to customers (M-3.93, SD-0.895). Last but not least, the respondents were certain that the firm provides better goods than those offered by competitors (M- 3.662) while others believe that the firm is creative and consistent in product development (M-3.91, SD- 0.9444).

4.4.3 Focus Positioning

The study sought to establish the extent to which mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya have adopted focus positioning strategies. The participants were tasked with various statements and asked to rate in the five-point Likert scale indicated above. The findings results were as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Focus Positioning

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Devotion of resources for maintaining market leadership in this niche	41	4.2507	.91735
Creating brand loyalty thus charging premium prices	41	3.9366	.88498
Efficient and effective service for the narrow strategic market	41	3.9155	.89516
Innovate specific product/ service for the niche	41	3.4169	1.11482
Prioritize the sale of goods and services to a certain market niche.	41	3.2197	1.21884
Average	**41**	**3.8279**	**1.00299**

The findings indicated in Table 4.8 above reveal that majority agree the firms have devoted resources to maintain market leadership niche (M-4.251, SD- 0.917), followed by creating brand loyalty thus charging premium prices (M-3.9366, SD- 0.885), then effective and efficient service for the narrow market (M-3.912, SD- 0.895) while innovate specific product or service for the niche and prioritize the sale of goods and services to a certain market recorded the lowest means of 3.427 and 3.22 respectively. The average mean of 3.828 shows that telecommunication companies have adopted focus strategy as a means of attaining competitive advantage.

4.4.4 Brand Positioning

The study sought to establish the extent to which mobile telecommunication companies have adopted brand positioning as a means of gaining competitive advantage. The participants were issued with various statements related to branding and asked to rate in the five-point Likert scale indicated above. Results are tabulated in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Brand Positioning

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Brand positioning allows a company to reach out to its target audience and inform them about its products.	41	4.0986	.73716
The company has the financial means to achieve and retain their desired position.	41	4.0211	.83766
At my company, brand positioning affects purchase choices in such a manner that the customer perceives the company as unique, trustworthy, and capable of meeting his or her needs	41	3.6028	1.12508
The company's brand has mainly been developed as a competitive advantage.	41	3.5986	.94576
The position of the business brand in the marketplace is comparable to that of other firms.	41	3.0704	.73076
Average	41	3.7183	0.87528

From the findings, it is evident that brand positioning allows a company to reach out to its target audience and inform them about its products (M- 4.098, SD- 3.734) and that the company has financial means to achieve and retain the desired position (M- 4.021, SD- .837. Further, the respondents agree to a moderate extent that brand positioning at the affects purchase choices in such a manner that the customer perceives the company as unique, trustworthy, and capable of meeting his or her needs and that the company's brand has mainly been developed as a competitive advantage as shown by means of 3.602 and 3.5998 respectively while most were uncertain as to whether position of the business brand in the marketplace is comparable to that of other firms (M- 3.0704, SD- 0.731). The overall mean of 3.718 reveal that brand positioning is somewhat leveraged as a strategy to gain competitive advantage by telecommunication companies.

4.5 Competitive Advantage

The study evaluated the extent to which competitive advantage has been realized by telecommunication firms over the last three years. The respondents were presented with various statements and asked to rate in a Five point Likert of;

1- Not at all, 2- Small extent, 3- Neutral, 4- Large extent, 5-Very large extent.

The findings were as presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Competitive Advantage

	N	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
The firm experienced increase in market share	41	3.9718	1.07811
The firm has experienced an improvement in customer loyalty	41	3.8803	.84620
The firm has experienced an increase in customer base	41	3.8521	.86662
The firm's profitability level is on the rise every year	41	3.5155	1.01404
We are able to reach to a wider market than our competitors	41	3.4437	1.25774
The set target goals of the firm are met successfully	41	3.3718	.88280
Average	**41**	**3.7392**	**0.99092**

The above findings demonstrate that telecommunication companies have gained competitive advantage progressively over time as shown by the different indicators. The firm experienced an upsurge in market share recorded the highest mean of 3.9718.

an improvement in customer base and customer loyalty over the last three years also emerged as a big milestone as evidenced by means of 3.88 and 3.852 respectively. Additionally, the respondents were somehow convinced that the firm's profitability level has been on the rise over years (M- 3.52, SD- 1.01) while most were neutral as to whether the firm is able to reach out to wider market than the competitors or the target goals are not met successfully as shown by a mean 0f 3.444 and 3.37 respectively

4.6 Regression Analysis

The second objective aimed at establishing the effect of strategic positioning strategies on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies was achieved by undertaking a multiple regression analysis. In the model, the predictor variables were cost positioning, differentiation positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning while the dependent variable was competitive advantage. The aggregated mean for each of the variables was obtained and used for regression. A summary of the model, analysis of variance and coefficient results are provided below.

Table 4.11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.376[a]	.141	.116	.79563
a. Predictors: (Constant),				

Cost Positioning, Differentiation Positioning, Focus Positioning, Brand Positioning

The Co-efficient of Determination (R Square) indicates changes in the response variable due to modifications of the predictor variables employed in the research model. The results as illustrated in Table 4.11 revealed that R^2 value was 0.141 which implies that the four strategic positioning strategies explain 14.1 percent of the variance in the competitive advantage of telecommunication companies. The remaining percent 85. 9

variances in competitive advantage is attributed to other factors not considered in the study.

Table 4.12: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	14.240	4	3.560	5.624	.000[b]
	Residual	86.725	36	.633		
	Total	100.965	40			
a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Cost Positioning, Differentiation Positioning, Focus Positioning, Brand Positioning						

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (0.000) is less than the critical value utilized in the current study (0.05). It implied the model entailing the independent variables (strategic positioning strategies) could be reliably used to predict competitive advantage. The critical F-value for this study is 2.43 and the F calculated value is 5.624 greater than the critical value further affirming the significance of the model

Table 4.13 : Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.550	.452		7.859	.000
	Cost Positioning	.123	.056	.176	2.180	.031
	Differentiation positioning	-.105	.064	-.132	-1.648	.102
	Focus Positioning	.350	.101	.292	3.462	.001
	Brand positioning	.215	.067	.258	3.196	.002
a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage						

From the coefficients Table, the following equation is derived:

$$Y = 3.550 + 0.123X_1 - 0.105X_2 + 0.350X_3 + 0.215X_4$$

The y intercept obtained from the model is 3.550. Therefore, when all factors are held constant, competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies would be at 3.550. A unit variation in cost positioning would lead to 12.3 % improvement in the competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms. Similarly, a unit change in focus positioning results will translate to 35% positive and significant improvements in competitive advantage. Finally, if brand positioning is varied by one unit, it will translate to 21.5% positively significant changes in the competitive advantage. The model alludes that a unit change in differentiation results to a reduction in competitive advantage by 10.5% though the effect is insignificant.

4.7 Discussion of the Findings

The study purposed to establish the effect of strategic positioning strategies on the competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. The objective was achieved was achieved by performing descriptive statistics on the variables and regressing strategic positioning strategic strategies against competitive advantage. The findings reveal that cost positioning is largely leveraged by mobile telecommunication companies to gain a competitive edge through strategies such as offering affordable goods of high quality, elimination of unnecessary costs, maintenance of overheads lower than industry and high asset utilization to spread risks. The regression analysis coefficient reveal that cost positioning results to a positive and significant variation in competitive advantage. The findings agree with those of Zekira and Nedelea (2011) who concluded that achieving cost leadership leads to competitive advantage through benefits from reduced production costs, economies of scale and low cost of raw materials.

The descriptive statistics on the differentiation positioning strategy portend that firms have largely leveraged on the differentiation strategy as a means of gaining competitive advantage. Mobile telecommunication companies were observed to offer a variety of goods and services whereby the point of difference was communicated to the customers. Additionally, the firm was found to offer services in a unique manner. Further, the study established that the company sells goods that have special attributes which the customers like. However, the respondents were hesitant as to whether the firm sells goods that are better in design than those of the rivals. Overall, differentiation strategy has largely been adopted by mobile telecommunication companies as a means to attaining competitive advantage. The regression result shows a negative through insignificant association between differentiation and competitive advantage. Although some studies such as Doughlas et al,.(2011) proposed a positive relationship between differentiation and competitive advantage, others including Gebauer et al., (2011) who argue that it reduces competitive advantage due to excess focus on customer centricity and less sensitivity to customer needs that are highly complex and dynamic.

Focus positioning strategy was found to be largely used by telecommunication companies to gain competitive advantage. The study established that the companies devoted a significant amount of resources to maintain market leadership in its niche. It was also noted that telecommunication firms were committed towards creating brand loyalty thus charging premium prices and that effective and efficient services were narrowed down to the strategic market. Nonetheless, the companies were observed not to have fully innovated specific products service for the niche markets. Further, it was visible that the companies gave less priority to sale of goods to a specific niche market. With that notwithstanding, focus strategy was had a positively and substantial effect on competitive advantage which is in agreement with Ali and Anwar (2021) who concluded in their study that focus strategy can be used to significantly predict performance.

Finally, the study established that branding was largely practiced by telecommunication companies to gain competitive advantage. Whereas it was evident that branding strategies such as use of branding to reach out to target audience and informing them about products and having financial means to achieve and retain the desired position have been largely adopted, the respondents were not certain whether the position of the brand in the market place is comparable to that of other firms. A positive and significant nexus was found between brand positioning and competitive advantage implying that branding has the potential to enhance competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter entails a summary of the entire findings achieved and provides conclusions and suggestions for policymakers and practitioners. Additionally, it highlights the limitations and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary

The study was informed by two objectives. Objective one sought to find out the degree to which strategic positioning strategies have been utilized by mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. The findings reveal that all the four strategic positioning strategies have been adopted to a large extent by the companies. Precisely, matters related to cost positioning strategies such as offering affordable goods of high quality, elimination of unnecessary costs, maintenance of overheads lower than industry and high asset utilization to spread risks. The regression analysis coefficient reveal that cost positioning results to a positively significant variation in competitive advantage.

Similarly, the telecommunication companies have largely leveraged on the differentiation strategy as a means of gaining competitive advantage. Mobile telecommunication companies were observed to offer a variety of goods and services whereby the point of difference was communicated to the customers. Additionally, the companies were found to offer services in a unique manner. Further, the study established that the company sells goods that have special attributes which the customers like. However, the respondents were hesitant as to whether the firm sells goods that are better in design than those of the rivals.

On the other hand, focus positioning strategy was found to be largely used by telecommunication companies to gain competitive advantage. The study established that the companies devoted a significant amount of resources to maintain market leadership in its niche. It was also noted that telecommunication firms were committed towards creating brand with extensive use of strategies such as charging premium prices and use of branding to reach out to target audience, informing them about products and having financial means to achieve and retain the desired position.

Multiple regression analysis results showed that strategic positioning strategies have a significant association with competitive advantage at 95% confidence level. According to the model 14. 1 percent variation competitive advantage can be explained by the four strategic positioning strategies examined in the study. The coefficients results demonstrate that cost positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning have a positive and substantial impact on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies while there exists a negative but statistically insignificant nexus between differentiation positioning and competitive advantage.

5.3 Conclusion

The research purposed to establish the impact of strategic positioning strategies on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. In addition, the study evaluated the extent to which various strategic positioning strategies have been implemented by mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya. It can thus be concluded that the four strategic positioning strategies analysed namely cost positioning, differentiation positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning have been implemented by mobile telecommunication companies to a large extent. On the association between strategic positioning strategies and competitive advantage, the regression model revealed that there exist a statistically significant relationship among the variables and thus it is imperative for mobile telecommunication firms to invest in strategic companies to gain competitive advantage.

5.4 Recommendations

The research found that most mobile telecommunication facilities do not operate at maximum capacity. The study recommends the firms to consider closing down underutilized facilities and transfer operations to active centers to reduce unnecessary costs. Different companies may also combine efforts and operate under one roof to share costs such as rental charges and utilize the same service providers. Firms may also leverage on e-commerce platforms to reduce transactional costs

It was observed that differentiating telecommunication products presents a challenge since most are sourced from the same suppliers. Mobile companies should tap on the services by offering the services in a unique manner to attract more clientele through initiatives such as guaranteed phone repair, free delivery packages and engaging in extensive marketing.

Mobile telecommunication companies should make a deliberate effort to innovate products for specific market niches and prioritize on sale of goods and services in such markets. It was observed that little investment has been put towards stocking mobile products for specific markets which is an impediment to realization of maximum returns.

Mobile telecommunication firms should invest in ensuring that their brand in the market is unique by engaging in extensive advertisements and creating a good corporate image through engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives more so that touch on sustainability and offering of green solutions. Such good practices make the company more attractive thus more customers and higher competitiveness.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

The present research has solely included cost positioning, differentiation positioning, focus positioning and brand positioning as the factors that influence competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication companies. An investigation may be launched to ascertain whether there are other strategic positioning strategies that influence competitive advantage. Additionally, a study may be undertaken to find out if there exist other variables that moderate, intervine, or mediate the association between strategic positioning and competitive advantage

This research employed first hand data only, thus other researches can be pursued by employing secondary data. Hence it may either criticize or compliment the study's findings. Multiple linear regressions was used as the statistical technique. Additional methodologies such as discriminant analysis, components analysis and granger causality may be considered in further studies.

The current study has been performed in the context of the mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya. Thus the study can be carried in other contexts such as retail, banks or other contexts such as East Africa to ascertain if the same findings hold. The study may be of importance to scholars in the same field and even challenge them to partake further studies on strategic positioning strategies.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

The research was carried out solely on a few respondents selected from the three main mobile telecommunication companies (Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom Kenya) due to limited finances and time, which does not demonstrate clearly the recent outcome of the entire telecommunication industry in Kenya. Additionally, there may be more uncertainty if similar research were replicated to other sectors and industries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I is the official letter that the university gave you from MBA Office

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information on the influence of strategic positioning on competitive advantage of mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya. Reading the questions attentively and answering them honestly is very important to the success of the project. It is intended that the information collected will be used only for the purpose of academic study, and it will be handled with the strictest confidentiality..

<u>Section A: Demographic Information</u>

1. Please indicate your gender:

(a) Male ( ) (b) Female ( )

2. What is your highest level of education?

(a) Secondary ( ) (b) Diploma ( )

(c) Graduate ( ) (c) Post graduate ( )

3. Please indicate your age bracket:

(a) 18-25years ( ) (b) 26-35 years ( )

(c) 36-45years ( ) (d) 46 and above years ( )

4. What is your level of management in the organization?

(a) Head of Strategy ( )

(b) Marketing Manager ( )

(c) Head of Risk ( )

5. How long have you worked in this organization?

(a) Less than 5years ( )

(b) 6 to 10years ( )

(c) 11 to 15 years ( )

(d) Over 15 years ( )

Section B: Cost Positioning

To what extent do you use each of the following cost leadership options in response to changes in the market? Use 1- Very low extent, 2-Low extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5- Very great extent

Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Low cost initiative to customers					
Lower operations costs due to the elimination of unnecessary costs					
High asset utilization to spread fixed costs					
Our products are affordable and of good quality					
Operation of facilities at maximum capacity					
Maintenance of overheads lower than industry.					

Section C: Differentiation Positioning

Rate the level of application of the following differentiation strategies in your company. Use 1- Very low extent, 2-Low extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5- Very great extent

Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The company sells goods and services that have special characteristics that customers like.					

We provide goods that are better in design when compared to those offered by our rivals.					
Our firm gives customer service in a unique manner.					
Our firm offer variety of goods and services.					
Our firm is creative and consistent in product development					
The firm communicates the points of difference in the products /services it offers in credible ways					

Section D: Focus Positioning

To what extent do the following inform focus strategies in your company?

Use 1- Very low extent, 2-Low extent, 3-Moderate extent, 4- Great extent, 5-Very great extent

Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Prioritize the sale of goods and services to a certain market niche.					
Devotion of resources for maintaining market leadership in this niche.					
Innovate specific product/ service for the niche					
Creating brand loyalty thus charging premium prices					
Efficient and effective service for the narrow strategic market					

Prioritize the sale of goods and services to a certain market niche.					

Section E: Brand Positioning

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking at the appropriate box. Use the rating criteria: 1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Statements	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
At my company, brand positioning affects purchase choices in such a manner that the customer perceives the company as unique, trustworthy, and capable of meeting his or her needs.					
The company's brand has mainly been developed as a competitive advantage.					
Brand positioning allows a company to reach out to its target audience and inform them about its products.					
The position of the business brand in the marketplace is comparable to that of other firms.					
The company has the financial means to achieve and retain their desired position.					

Section F: Competitive Advantage

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statements by ticking at the appropriate box. Use the rating criteria: 1. Strongly Disagree (SD), 2. Disagree (D), 3. Uncertain (U), 4. Agree (A), 5. Strongly Agree (SA)

Statements	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
The firm has experienced an increase in market share					
The firm has experienced an improvement in customer loyalty					
The firm has experienced an increase in customer base					
The firm's profitability level is on the rise every year					
We are able to reach to a wider market than our competitors					
The set target goals of the firm are met successfully					

Thank you for cooperation