

**STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY AGROCHEMICAL FIRMS TO ACHIEVE
COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY KENYA.**

BY


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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

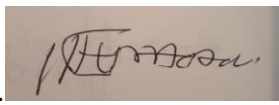
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DEDICATION

I accord high regard dedications to my family for being the beckon of prosperity. I devote specific and close consideration to my friends being the pillar of academic. Moreover, their great support and guidance throughout the process made this process successful.

God bless you all

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ACRONOMYN AND ABBREVIATIONS

CIF	Cost Insurance Freight
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoK	Government of Kenya
ROA	Return on Assets
ROI	Return on Investment
SPSS	Scientific Program for Social Sciences

ABSTRACT

Strategies adopted by the firms are the game change in the business competitive environment. The customers' demands for the products those fitting their tastes and preferences. Strategies are very fundamental in business environment. The research studied the strategies adopted by the agrochemical firms to enhance the competitive advantage in Nairobi. The research scrutinized differentiation, cost leadership, pricing strategies and market focus. The research targets 35 respondents in Nairobi City County and out of 35 questionnaires sent out 25 companies. The research findings posit that predictor variables accounted for the 84.69% of the factors that explained the competitive advantage. The four regressors' variables are differentiation, Cost Leadership, Pricing Strategy and Market Focus. The analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has a P value is 0.0012 is lower than the stipulated 0.05 thus pinpointing that it is statistically significant. This illustrate that when all factors are maintained at zero (Constant), the competitive advantage is 32.2%. Furthermore, a unitary increase in one unit of differentiation leads to an increase competitive advantage by 39.8% all factors kept constant. A unit incremental in the cost leadership led to an increase in competitive advantage by 29.8% all factors maintained constant. A unitary incremental in the pricing strategy led to an increase in the competitive advantage by 50% and finally an increase in one unit of market focus strategy led to an increase in the competitive advantage by 30% all factors kept constant. Multiple regressed showed that Differentiation had $T=1.439$ and $P=0.001$; Cost Leadership $T= 2.512$ and $P=0.013$; Pricing Strategy $T=2.813$ and $P=0.002$ and finally Market Focus $T=6.999$ and $P=0.015$. This findings show that the entire four predictor variable posted P value less than 0.05 hence statistical significant. The research concluded that; Differentiation played an integral part in the research finding, cost leadership affects the competitive advantage through the lowest-cost in the procurement of the inputs. The research also showed that from dynamic pricing strategies to fixed pricing method had a great influence on the competitive advantage. The study finding showed that strategies adopted in the market penetration were very crucial in the competitive advantage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Strategy is a paramount instrument driving the competitive firm or any business that seek to compete in a diverse environment. Kazungula (2013) opined that a strategy is roadmap enhancing the business prosperity by providing long-term plans and how they can be achieved. A strategy is how an organization plans, operates and positions itself in the market to counter market competition and remain relevant. Globally, companies use different strategies to achieve its competitive advantages, Ansoff, H. a. (2010). Companies do develop strategies to help them achieve sustainable competitive advantage and realize its set objectives.

The theories underpinning this study are institutional theory and porter`s theory of competitive advantage. Institutional theory promotes and directs a given participant to perform in a certain way, given a set of predetermined conditions of operational environment they exist in by creating norms and practices that are paramount in management of the firm and enables the firm to put in place the processes and principles that are important for survival. Porter`s theory of competitive advantage on the other hand is a yardstick for competitive strategies technique and a road map for the cost leadership, focus and differentiation., Competitive advantage therefore assist the firm to create high rating and the value superiority for its clients and to realize high turnover yields and also it predicts that accompany which operate with one of these strategies are often more successful than companies that operates with more than one of these strategies simultaneously Grant, G. a. (2015).

The Agrochemical companies have continuously improved in their innovations, broadened products diversification and spectrum to suit customer demand, enabling them to remain

competitive and realize greater turn over. The strategies adopted by these industries enhance achievement of goals in the turbulent industry. Competitive advantage is driven by technological advancement and formulation and implementation of new regulations, Kingori (2018). The engine in the prevailing strategies reinforces the ability and capability of the Agrochemical industry to withstand the fast-changing market. Therefore, firms need to embrace strategies as a modern way to outshine competitors and remain competitive. Research done previously have not been conclusive and therefore the prevailing study was motivated to close the gap on strategies adopted by agrochemicals firms.

1.1.1 Concept of Strategy

Johnson and Scholes (2002) strategic discussion aimed at countering and achieving advantages over the other competitors in the market. Ansoff and Mc Donne's (1999); the concept of strategy emanates from environmental response and acts that are needed to be adopted. Stainer (1999) acknowledges framework put in place through line formation and implementation of the strategy that are well planned and structured.

Schmitt (1999) 'we are in the middle of revolution, changes in competitiveness, firm need business strategy and thus largely depends on how objectives are set right, on what need to be achieved, and how it's being achieved and states the channel and processes, thus intima's the culture of organization on how they do things and general operations.

Wheel Wright, (2013), Business strategy depends on some of specialism and focus on changes in the trend of time and reliability that suits any unprecedented changes. Porter (1998) competition and competitiveness of the firm lies at the discretion and the care of positive returns or negative.

Competition dictates preparedness, time taken and the structured achievements that firms use to achieve its sets vision, which is in line with, cohesive cultures and countering competitors to maintain or improves its competitive advantage.

1.1.2 The Concept of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Sustainable competitive advantage is ability of an organization to retain and attract customers. Competitive advantage enables firms to earn and sustain superior performance in the market amongst other competitors and thus increasing the turn-over of the organization. The firm's level of returns achieved as output, largely depends on the strategy's organization had put in place and adopted its implementations to the later. These are long term strategies are set and planned by a firm. The end results are for the firm to satisfy the client who is the main target and also remain relevant and focus on the market competitiveness.

Porter (2020), holds the view that steps at establishing a competitive advantage of the firm is clearly stating and identifying the niche-market and research on the key success points, within the market. Thomson (1999), states that any business that is set to succeed is bounded and grounded in a competitive advantage amongst its rivals in the market and hence secure, hold and defend its customers. Thomas and Strickland (2002), Johnson et al (2008); Argued that organization in any given set of structures can only achieve its competitive advantages over others, if it has a capability and strength that others lack or rather, that other competitors are advantaged in acquiring it. Some of this include, liquidity ratio of the firm (Assets and non-assets), stable brand/name, advantaged location set up (close proximity to raw materials and to consumers, company's prosperity is dependent on how powerful, consistent and adopting the competitive advantages over others (Tilson, 2002).

Huskisson (2004) states the use of upper hand advantage in the firm and hiring the burden that is incurred on the course or process or reaching the desired goal and accomplishing the set mission in place. Porter (2010), states that there are two species of greater indicator of strategy that an organization can integrate to achieve the set mission. “Bring or lower the cost that other competitors cannot come down beyond the set limits or cannot execute the same process (products that are not regulated or controlled by regularly bodies such as (KAM) and (CAK) among others. Reed and Filipa (1990), state that for the firm to increase competitive advantages, it needs to have versed resources and control assets (monopolies) that would enable it to counter and efficiently employ competitive advantage over the other and assure of upper hand advantage. This continued process of adopting and implementing the growth ideas and plans for an organization result in the increase in output and assets turnover, thus reflective in the good returns of competitive advantage at the firm (Day and Wesley, 1988).

1.1.3 Overview of Agrochemicals firms in Nairobi City County

Agrochemical firms have reinforced and promoted agricultural efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Agricultural sector in Kenya and globally the backbone of the countries` economy and for the healthy growth of a country, the agricultural sector therefore needs to be given higher budgetary in financial allocation. The sector contributes to approximately 33% GDP and employs higher than 40% of the aggregate population. Additionally, it provides jobs majority of the rural population up to 70% (GoK, 2020). The Kenyan vision of 2030 (2007), for the country to realize and have great and rapid economic growth, the agriculture sector needs to be empowered by creating more budget and investing in vast research and development (Claudine and Ricardo, 2010). Agribusiness is the new trend in the business and each firm that needs to compete and work effectively needs to develop good and advanced strategies that guide on good agribusiness operation and thus realizing increased returns as opposed to traditional ways of

doing farming for household consumption and little left for commercial purposes. Horticulture which is more profitable and is short term means of acquiring fast rate of return on assets invested remains the topic of the day and contributes up to 25% of the GDP and also 18% of the wage return in business invested and 50% of income from the tracts involved in agribusiness operation (CBs, statistical abstract, 2009). (Ref. PCBP import data 2015) indicates that Kenya Agrochemicals imports as by December 2015 stood over USD 52.4 billion .The highest consumer of Agro-chemicals is the horticulture sector whose aim is to have high Returns on Investments (ROI). Competition in the Agro-chemicals industry has evolved due to high and tremendous changes as a result of the entry of international firms from China in addition to India to the Kenyan market. The entry of the said foreign products have changed clients` (farmers) desires, taste and preference (Humphrey 2013). The measure of any agrochemical firm`s success is by use of ROI, ROA, ROE, self-enabling besides efficiency to run the operational firm liquidity ratio. Kenya agrochemical firms are valued at 80Million USD. At Cost Insurance Freight (CIF) value (Wildlife Kenya 2010) Key players in the field is multifunctional firms, research and development companies like, Bayer, Syngenta, Dow Agrosiences, Monsanto, among others and control up to 60-70% of the total global market (croplike 2009).

1.2 Research Problem

The competitive advantage of any given company is achieved through prudent implementation of good strategy, Porter (1985). The competitive strategies to be employed through any given firm are comparatively informed by the competitive forces found in the market environment by way of firm`s operations and must match the dynamics in the business setting, King`ori, (2018). Furthermore, the firms need to understand how and when to manage risk and threats and take advantage of the available opportunities, Ansoff, H. a. (2010). This calls for constant and

frequent evaluation of strategies that are up to date and matches the changes in the external environment of the firm.

There are several Agrochemical companies operating in the agrochemical industries, the competition in this industry is stive and thus companies in these industries have to developed strategies to counter this competition with the aim of being competitive and improving its weak institution capacity through resource allocation, improvement and modernized technology leading to product diversification, ACFC-cooperate strategy plan (2010). It embraces strategies as a modern practice for them to help remain relevant and survive in the diverse market environment as well as have competitive advantage. Agrochemical firms in Kenya have for time faced with number of challenges due to aggressive Market this includes intense captives, entry of new members in the market (especially China and India) which has lower prices and thus decline in sales and returns. Customer taste, preference, and expectation are critical factors for consideration. In addition good scheduling, packaging of the products and distribution channels are paramount blueprint for meeting the client anticipations (Size to meet client's budget) (David, 2011).

Various research have been done with respect to strategies employed by firms to achieve competitive advantage in Africa region and locally in Nairobi Kenya but have resulted in mixed and inconclusive outcomes. Bridging the research gaps is therefore the fundamental progress. This study will focus on the strategies adopted by the agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County. From previous studies that have been done on competitive strategies, Patricia (2009) hints that companies do develop strategies to achieve competitive advantage. In addition, it is clear that wide-spectrum of firms adopt wide-array of strategies to realize competitive advantage. Its' expected that agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County should adopt strategies to achieve

competitive advantage.in the market. What strategies did agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County adopt to achieve competitive advantage?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research was to explore the strategies adopted by agrochemicals firms to achieve competitive advantage in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The study will assist firm policy makers in evaluating the effectiveness of their strategies for competitive advantage as compared to the investment at hand and future projections of the return on investments. The policy makers can make best use of up to date information.

The resulting output of the study will be used by managers and stakeholders in the Agro-chemicals industry in Nairobi city county Kenya, to assist them identify the deficiencies in their strategies already in place. This will enable them develop progressive and informed strategies to counter the environmental turbulence and compete effectively in the market.

The study is also significant since it will enhance references for the academicians. The study is an eye-opener for the scholars in their further studies. The study creates vast knowledge relating to agrochemical firms. It will help them expand their knowledge in the Agri-business field and Agro-chemicals sector at large and especially in regards to competitive advantage that exist in business market in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter appreciates the already preceding studies on strategies. In addition, the study concentrated on the theories building a strong foundation for the competitive advantages. The tenets of business stability is associated with business competitive advantage, Ansolts marketing matrix (1987). The literature review of this study is within the literature of differentiation strategy, cost strategy, price strategy and corporate growth/market focus.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The strategies alignments for competitive advantage is well rooted and appreciated in various theories. The theories that underpin this study are the Institutional Theory which advances the mobilization and utilization of the firm's resources, the Porter's Generic View which advances the uniqueness of products based on differentiation and focus.

2.2.1 Institutional Theory

The theory credits that organizations ought to fit in to the process and belief in the systems that are prevalent in the environment so as to survive the competition (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Berger and Luckmann (1966) define the term 'institution' as a scenario as to where a given participant is anticipated to perform in a certain way, given a set of predetermined conditions). Institution is where great minds of thoughtful strategist are setting firm mission and vision into realizable goals.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) Remain focused on the fact that norms practiced in the companies are mainly tailored in making the environmental operation of the firm legal, conducive, and favorable to work in amidst strong competition in the proliferated markets.

In the current competitive market, most of the companies will adopt different terms of operations with specified niche market and adopt diverse roles which are not mainly targeted to bring the organizational environment into well-versed competition with other firms efficiently.

The targets and pressures that the firm's management and stake holders put among the employees are mainly tailored to make them perform beyond the set targets and achieve more productive outcomes for enhanced of firms' goals and objectives sets and thus profitability as main concern is achieved. However, as DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue, the pressures should be within the limits and promote professionalism and core values that would motivate both employees and end user of the product.

Institutional theorists emphasize that the operational environment adopted in any given organization undertakes substantial role in bringing out the way the firm is operating and to some extent, the norms practiced at the internal organizational environment develop to be the way of things and this becomes the real measure of how the continuity of the firm is drawled. Through such strategies employed however, the firm can have a unique operational environment which in turn becomes the actual of the entity's competitiveness and it's positioning in the market.

Jackson (2010), institutions are mostly the seal deal power relationships by firms which outline responsibilities, rights and align goals, accordingly, mold the personalities of societal individuals and customs that are resilient over long periods of time. Such acts of institutionalization have the biggest tendency of bringing up firm consequences that the organization may not be able to accommodate in its totality. This mean that as the organizational management plan to prevent some behavioral character from having their way in the firm operation, more new norms and

work culture get their way in and this keeps on being the system throughout incurable condition (Jackson, 2010).

2.2.2 Porters Theory of Competitive Advantage

Competitiveness of an organization depends largely on the strategies that a firm adopts to use to be effective in the market and enjoy competitive advantages by appreciating the strength they have, opportunities at hand and also learning from the weakness and threats from the outside environment. In 1980, Michael Porter became the initiator of the competitive strategy technique, amongst business firms. In his submission, he stated that, strategies that firms use have a given direction that guides its principles, that include, cost leadership, focus or differentiation and that any given firm success must choose the niche market to be attained and the strategy to be used in its competitive advantage. Porter (1980), the most superior position a firm can occupy is being competitive in its market amongst its immediate competitors. For any firm to enjoy its market competitive advantage and outsmart its competitors, a firm needs to develop some generic strategies which include, differentiation strategies for example in product or service they offer, cost strategy and focus strategy being guided by the vision of the firm. Hence, firm choice relies on its stability in the market and the set objective in place. A firm can choose to maximize output and minimize input and employ cost strategy that would in turn result in economies of scale and thus become lowest cost producer in the market, therefore attracting mass sells due to more customers coming due to low prices of the product or services they deal with. Differentiation strategies are employed by the firm to distinguish themselves in terms of product or service the produce or give and thus uniqueness is key. The target market here is the niche identified and hence price is not a factor here but rather the uniqueness of their product or services. Focus strategy is where a firm choose a given niche market and chooses to entirely serve the market to its end for instances of children boutique, shoe shops, among others.. However due the critics in

the literature that asserts those strategies are mutually exclusive and thus use of a single strategy may lower the returns and market share (O'Regan et al (2012), and Ansost (1965

2.3 Strategy and Organization

King'ori (2018) stated that strategy enhances the firm's ability and capability. Strategy relating to the firm's competitiveness, would bargain for products (goods as well as services) that have unique and distinctive traits and are different from the one the competitors are having or offering in the market (slack, 2010). Differentiation helps organization to build good brand and quality improvement and protect the organization from external attack and rivalry from competitors (Porter, 2010). Koski (2013), spots that there are numerous organizational characteristics which dictates the high- end quality of competitive approaches.

Cost leadership strategy indicates that firms compete effectively and efficiently in cost positioning that's makes the products in the market, competitive and abstract high tumult content (Owino 2011). Porter (2000), Indicates, cost authority that firms need to put as restriction cost and stand firmly, this world reduce excessive number of costs cut by firms to allow firm compete effectively

Dough Poacher (2012), indicates that cost is a key feature which influences the demand and supply and brings about the equilibrium of competitiveness. Salim, 2011, cost is being used to outsmart the competitor in the market and it relays most in firm's financial stability to sustain the effects of changes in price. Among the four P's price is the central point that gives firms a given direction on strategy that need to be affected to give out competitive advantage again and Carter (2014). Cost is an offer an organization is willing to offer and beat the lancet competitors and still remains competitive Santonin (2011)

Cost changes any time and customers need to adapt dynamic valuing and price changes which would help the organization to remain consistence in its sales or output Haws and Bear din (2011).

2.4 Competitive Advantage and Organization

The entities are the tenet of productivity, prosperity, transformation and stability through competitiveness. The competitive advantage is the epicenter for the prosperity of the organization (Ansoff, 1984). Moreover, the competitive is critical in enhancing organizational performance. The competitive is advantage reinforces market penetration, distribution and diversification. It is imperative to opine that competitive advantage promote business stability, increase market share, market development and product improvement. The organization formulates area of the competitive advantage to reap big from the promotion of capital growth and values (Lynch, 2009). It fuels the organization to meet the objective within the stipulated time. Moreover, it illustrates the importance of strategic policies and competitive advantage in fueling accomplishment of shareholders interest.

2.5 Strategy and Competitive Advantage

The business strives to remain informed, ahead and focus in the commercial environment. Competitive advantage is the art of remaining in-front, leading, presenting quality potential future rivalry. Moreover, it addresses the competition that may attack or put the firm at the market and understanding that assets held by the firm are adequate efficient and cannot affect producing thereby having the upper hand in the market. The interrogation on how entities achieve as well as sustain competitive advantage is the most fundamental question that is in strategic management (Remelt, Schedule and Teece, 1994). Porter (1980) purposes that a company needs a clear and developed competitive strategy that makes it to accomplish

competitive advantage in the market and economy at large. This entails strategy entails, clearly and careful evaluation of its resource's availability and capability portfolios and limit reflects market influence and resources are scarce, rare, valuable and inability to be substituted. (Barney 1991). Derain 2004, states that most organizations are using a lot of money in various training and research in the firm in the hope it will be competitive and have advantages in the local and international market. Batool and Batool (2012), found out that there is a good and promising reaction between training and development and competitive advantage.

2.6 Empirical Studies and Research Gaps

Many research undertakings have been executed in within the field of competitive strategies that firms employ in their daily and long-term operations. According to Case and Shiller (2004) the longevity of the firm depends on its identified strategies to achieve competitive advantage. It is a powerhouse that enhances improvement. Strategy has enabled firms to achieve value addition plans and objectives. The tactical and strategic plans redefine revamp the organization's structure. The firm's competitive advantage incorporates business approaches and initiatives.

Burnes (2000) managerial inefficiency causes the collapse of many firms. The operation challenges cause immense problems. Defensive and offensive plans of the company result from the tactical and strategic approaches. The fast-paced proliferation of firms has been adopting various strategies for expansion and growth. The competitive forces that cause actions and reactions in the market provide unique products that sustain competitive advantage.

Bhandari et al, (1999) illustrated a complexity in market entry. Companies must spearhead the unique factor differentiating the firm from others. Porter's Model scrutinizes the competitive market and operation under the five principles. It is very paramount to improve quality, quantity,

branding, and features that demonstrate the firm. It is great step in achieving the significant results. Competitive advantage can be realized if a good strategy is in place.

Karanja (2002) stated that real estate firms in Nairobi and its environment uses focus as strategy to advance competitive advantage in the marketplace. Murage (2001) institute out that affiliates of the petroleum firms and brokers used cost leadership as their strategy through pricing their products at inferior prices compared to competitors.

Muturi (2000), found out that East African Breweries are implementing the use of differentiation on their products amongst its competitors, and this would bring uniqueness in the market it's the driving engine that has promoted unique product and large market segment. Differentiation in east African breweries has continuously enhance improvement and re-engineering of the products. This has enabled the firm to outshine their competitors.

Kabura (2002), states that 82% of all agrochemical companies in Kenya cast-off a combination of media apparatuses and journals to generate impact on their doings. Santon (2011) states cost as portrayal of a bid given the undertaking that outsmart the market. Furthermore, it reflects the fiscal inducement whereby the merchant can trade for a something (Agbonifoh, 2012). On the other side, Haws and Bearden (2011) deliberate on revealed changes and valuing as a classification in which costs is varied.

The finding on competitive strategies gives blueprint in a case that, competitive strategies amongst firms in the developing countries and small growing firm still have limited scope (Mukukaa, 2007)

Kazungula (2013) on his study focuses on effect and response from strategies that firms in agrochemicals firms adapts to the challenges of distribution channels which on the other sides

affect the firm's competitive advantage. Firms in Kenya (agrochemicals) have not fully utilized the modern research on the importance of adopting new and changing strategies to suit the current market competition but rather depend on old methods that are not conforming to current market that would make them more competitive in the market.

Most agrochemical companies have the great minds and ideas, but implementation of the same is a challenge and the experienced human resource to capitalize on its competitive advantages is lacking. Thus, the research is tailored to find out better competitive ideas and skills that would enhance competitive strategies that need to be applied by the agrochemical firm in Kenya (Nairobi) and improve on them.

The elaboration that blueprints the competitive strategies stipulates studies undertaken previously that acts as a yardstick towards holistic and more elaborate research. Competitive advantage is at advance stages in developed countries and has enhanced their differentiation, cost leadership and differentiation creating innovation and creative disruptions. However, in developing countries for instance Kenya, the study relating to competitive advantage is still developing and no special improvement that matches the unique standards of developed countries.

Mutukaa (2007) execute a research study of competitive strategies utilized through the international firms specialized in agrochemicals. Kimunguyi, (2013) did a research on 30 agrochemical companies and the prevailing challenges. Nevertheless, it is paramount to note that the majority of Agro-chemicals in Kenya has not expedite the competitive strategies. The Agrochemical companies in Kenya are very entrepreneurial, innovative, and creative; however, they have not implemented competitive advantage as the engine to the business success. In nutshell, this research focused on competitive strategies adopted by agrochemical companies in Nairobi City County.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section looks and also establishes research design that has been utilized in the project. It also considers the targeted population. In addition, it stated the sample design in place. Additionally, data collection as well as analysis was executed in this sub chapter. It is this method that is utilized as part at research. (Irny, & Rose, 2005)

3.2 Research Design

Research design is layout, strategy and plan design in a way that assists in obtaining research questions (Breakwell, Hammon, Fife-Schaw & Smith, 2007). This research embraced the utilization of cross-sectional survey research design. This design is useful for facts finding and result formulation. Its offers significant principal information and solution to vital problems (Orodho, 2003). It provides guideline and road map to planning and executing the study. Methodology is for intention of getting data concerning the research question and thus gives substantial result and informed determination of the outcome of research within short time frame (kochari 2003)

3.3 Population of Study

Population entails the aggregate entire group of events and objects. In addition it also pinpoints the individuals exhibiting similarities in their observable characteristics, Mugenda (2003). This includes person, events, objects, or items at hand that are under research and sample are drawn from (or are reference made from (cooper and chandlers 2014)

Population under the study is all agrochemical companies located within Nairobi City County. As at August 2020 a total number registered agrochemical companies in Nairobi City County were 35 and all these companies were studied (Agrochemical Database, 2020).

3.4 Data Collection

The data collection utilized first-hand technique which is the primary method to assemble quality information. The data collected were guided by differentiation, cost leadership, pricing strategy and the market focus. Primary data provides the first-hand information for the study. It is critical for the undertaking of this study.

The study used the questionnaires as instruments for collecting data. Questionnaires provide clarity and captures quality information. It provided answers to questions that had been posed. Questionnaires were critical in drawing inferences and making the informed decisions on what was considerable to be factual.

Data collection techniques combined primary on top of secondary data. The survey was crucial since all the 35 agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County were explored. The questionnaire provides the avenue for collection via the maximization of questionnaires. On top of that, secondary data was sourced from Kenya Association of Agrochemicals (KAA). Survey was paramount in the extractions of significant information. It provided the access to vast agrochemical firm information.

The target respondents were employees of these firms, and the questionnaires were tailored towards CEO, senior management, middle levels and low level management. The questionnaires are supreme because the employees provide up to date information. It captures quality information. It expedient the data collection while allowing first-hand information.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis entails procedural undertaking, placing an orderly, structured and clear arithmetically calculation to aid the interpretation and exhaustive output. These results was presented through, tables and percentages. The data employed the use of computer software to analyze data, to increase accuracy (Mugenda, 2003). It used descriptive statistics (i.e.) mean, percentages and frequencies.

The regression model used was.

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

where α - intercept,

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ - regression coefficient

(i.e. Y by each X_1 - X_4)

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter investigated the analysis of the collected data within study area. The research incorporated a descriptive statistics to accentuate the dataset uniqueness. Moreover, regression computation and correlation analysis advanced the understanding. The outcomes from the study were presented in tables forms as shown below. The chapter was integral for data analysis, detailing the results, summarizing the discussion and the presentation n of the assumptions. The research aimed at finding the strategies adopted by agrochemical companies.

4.2 Response and Profile

The research targets 35 respondents in Nairobi City County and out of 35 questionnaires sent out 25 companies filled the questionnaires and sent the results back. This gave response rate of 71% which is in line with Mugenda (2003) which states that results of above 70% is excellent.

Table 4.1: Response rate

Questionnaires	Frequency	Percent %
The Responded	25	71.4
Non responded	10	28.6
Total	35	100

4.2.1 Demographic Profile

This was done by the researcher to confirm the demographic information of the respondents in to clearly indicate their output possibility and estimates.

This demographics information includes the position they hold in the company, period of service, and the aggregate staffs in the company and the gender

Table 4.2: Demographics Response Rate

Position in company	Frequency	Percentage %
CEO	3	12
Director	7	28
Senior managers	5	20
Managers	8	32
Technical staff	2	8
Total	25	100

According to the findings 32% who are the majority are managers, 28% are directors, 20% are the senior managers, 12% are the CEO and 8% are technical staffs.

The results imply that the respondents were fairly distributed in relation to their positions and roles they play in the play in the organization.

4.2.2 Gender for Respondents

Table 4.3: Gender Response Rate

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	16	64
Female	9	36
Total	25	100

Based on the results 64% respondents composed of male whereas 36% were female. This draws the attention of gender balance that need to ne practiced in organization as per Kenyan constitution of 2010 about 1/3 gender rule.

4.2.3 Work Experience

The researcher further wanted to determine the duration and length on time working in the company by the respondent.

The timeframe for years (Period) worked in the Agro-chemical firms is indicated in the table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Work Experience

Year	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	5	20
6-10	13	52
11 and above	7	28
Total	25	100

From the outcome, it's clear that 52% of the respondent have work with this Agrochemicals companies, for a period of 6-10 year, 28% have work for 11 years and above and 20% have worked 5 years and below.

These results however indicate that majority of the respondent have adequate experience in the agrochemicals firms and its operation and insightful knowledge and information on which strategies do the firms do employ to achieve competitive advantage and also this show great loyalty of the employees.

4.3 Strategies Adopted by Agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County to achieve Competitive Advantage

The data obtained were analyzed to determine the association on the strategies adopted by agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County to achieve competitive advantage. The data was collected and reviewed to ensure completeness. The quantified data collected was summarized for the in depth understanding. It provides greater and insightful information. The summarized data blueprints the composition and specific distribution pattern that inform the findings. The research stipulates the key determinants (Predictor variable) and the regressed variables.

4.3.1 Differentiation strategies

The undertaking was driven to evaluate the degree at which differentiation strategies help the firm to achieve competitive advantage amongst other competing agrochemical companies in a Nairobi city county.

The respondents were asked to write and indicate their response rating on every question presented to them spanning from a scale of (1-5). Whereas, 5 – strongly agree, 4, agree, 3 neutral, 2 dis agree, 1, strongly disagree.

Table 4.5: Differentiation

To which level do these statements correlate to your Business undertakings	Mean	Std. Dev
Strategy: Differentiation by		
Providing quality and superior products	3.875	1.120
Building products brand	2.758	0.014
Use of company image	3.575	1.239
Developing customer tailored products	2.175	0.374
Developing various packaging in every product	3.426	1.101
AGGREGATE	15.809	3.848

The descriptive statistic analyzed was the mean and the standard deviation. Therefore, the mean was crucial in the assessment of the average. The standard deviation was paramount for the evaluation of dispersion in the data. The higher the average explains the broader the level of concurrence with the statement of the business undertaking. Additionally, the lower the standard deviation, expound the lower the level of dispersion. The output indicates that substantial number of the respondents concurred that providing quality and superior products was paramount in the competitive advantage as indicated by 3.875 and a standard deviation of 1.120.

Moreover, the use of company image followed with a mean (average) of 3.575 and a standard deviation of 1.239 while developing various packaging in every product, building product brand, and developing customer tailored product had an average (mean) of 3.426, 2.758 and 2.175 respectively.

King'ori (2018) opined that differentiation blueprint the performance of the business. Furthermore, it advances the competitive advantage and promotes the customer loyalty. The research indicated the supremacy of quality productivity. The study also postulated the importance of brand name and company image to build a longevity foundation that can be easily utilized to enhance the competitive advantage. In a nutshell, differentiation is important in the competitive advantage of the business.

4.3.2 Cost Leadership

The study examined and assessed the degree of influence of cost leadership on the competitive advantage of the agrochemicals. The research spearheaded an integral part in the clarification and establishment of the facts. The research scrutinized several parameters to arrive at the far-reaching findings.

Table 4.6: Cost Leadership

To which level do these statements correlate to your Business undertakings	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strategy: Cost leadership		
Purchase of raw materials at lower-cost hence advantage on prices.	3.871	1.101
Advantage to control overhead and variable costs.	3.991	1.007
The company emphasizes on product customization.	3.923	0.651
The firm strives to improve effectiveness productivity	3.949	0.532
AGGREGATE	15.734	3.291

The research optimized the standard deviation and the mean to look critically while providing in depth fact finding. The research mean stipulated the average figure where the immense value fall. The standard deviation (SD) was crucial in the analysis and determination of dispersion. The findings indicated that the purchase of raw material at lower cost recorded a mean of 3.871 and the SD of 1.101. The firm taking advantage to regulate the overhead and variable cost posted the highest mean of 3.991 and SD of 1.007 while the ability of the firm to promote product customization had a mean of 3.923 and standard deviation of 0.651. The firm struggle to improve effectiveness and productivity accounted for mean of 3.949 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.532.

Kotler and Armstrong (2012) indicated the importance of cost leadership in the performance. King'ori (2018) stated that cost leadership is the yardstick towards competitive advantage. The firms should try to obtain the raw materials at the lowest cost possible. The research advocates for the taking advantage of the variable cost to reduce expenditures and eliminate the unnecessary and costly processes. The product customization and effective productivity should be the driving engine of the agrochemical firms.

4.3.3 Pricing Strategies

The study examined the pricing strategy in the analysis and findings. The objective was to arrive at a conclusive finding o the existing association amid the pricing strategy and competitive advantage. The several parameters were analyzed. The respondent's information was crucial in the building the foundation of this data.

Table 4.7: Pricing Strategies

To which level do these statements correlate to your Business undertakings	Mean	Standard Deviation
Use of dynamic pricing strategies	3.821	0.532
Use of fixed pricing strategies.	1.671	0.522
Firm practice cost plus pricing strategies in pricing the products.	3.371	1.152
Use Market penetration pricing strategies	3.413	0.082
Uses tailored and niche penetration pricing strategies	2.111	0.653
AGGREGATE	14.387	2.941

The research utilized the descriptive statistics to find the mean and also the standard deviation.

The mean was crucial in the establishment of the average whereas the standard deviation was the onset for the dispersion. The greater the mean explains the higher the agreement and vice versa.

The findings indicates that the use of dynamic pricing in the agrochemical firms accounted for the highest mean of 3.821 and the standard deviation of 0.532. The study further found out that the usage of fixed pricing strategies had a lowest mean of 1.671 and the standard deviation of 0.522. The firm practice cost plus pricing strategies posted a mean of 3.371 and the SD of 1.152.

Furthermore, the use of market penetration pricing strategies by the agrochemical firm had a mean of 3.413 and the SD of 0.082 which was the lowest. Finally, the use of tailored and niche penetration pricing strategies had a mean of 2.111 and the SD of 0.653. Kotler and Amstrong (2012) opined that pricing strategies plays integral role in the competitive advantage. The research was in concurrence with the findings by Agwu (2014) which stipulated that pricing strategies enhance the performance of the firms.

4.3.4 Market Focus

The research sought to scrutinize association between the market focus and competitive advantage. Researcher focusses on the numerous parameters of pricing strategy that informed the

competitive advantage. The critical factors were inquired from the respondent to get the first-hand information. The study was important in the determination and establishment facts to anchor the study.

Table 4.8: Market Focus

To what level do these statements relate to your firm’s strategies on	Mean	Std.
Market focus		Dev.
Focus one Market for our products.	3.999	0.201
Company procedure does not credit dealers to sell competing products in the market.	3.875	1.101
This company have strict policy on control of dealer activities and operations	3.833	1.473
The company strategies to make a choice of customer segment is key	1.612	0.987
The firm provided own distribution channel to our target clients	1.802	0.789
AGGREGATE	15.121	4.551

The descriptive statistic provided both the mean and the standard deviation to elucidate the average and dispersion respectively. High mean stipulates the strong agreed with the provided statement. The ability of the agrochemical firms to focus on the market with their own products accounted for the greatest mean of 3.999 as well as the SD (standard deviation) 0.201. The study further analyzed the agrochemical policies in strict adherence to the dealers’ activities and operation and with the mean of 3.875 as well as standard deviation of 1.101. Furthermore, the study indicated that agrochemicals’ strategies to choose the customer segment posted the least mean of 1.612 and the standard deviation of 0.987. The research concluded on the market focus that channel of distribution selected to target client recorded a mean of 1.802 and the SD of 0.789.

Ansoff (2010) stipulated the importance of market focus in the competitive advantage and financial performance. This research was in agreement with the preceding findings such as Agwu (2014) postulation that market focus is the engine for the competitive advantage. The research advocates for the continuity in the market focus to anchor the performance. The study is integral in establishing the key determinants of the competitive advantage.

4.4 Data Analysis

The research findings have summarized to show the association between the strategies adopted and the competitive advantages. The agrochemical firms play paramount roles in the economy. Notwithstanding the advantage on the agricultural sector, the agrochemicals innovate strategies periodical to achieve long term goals.

4.4.1 Pearson Correlation

The researcher undertook numerous analyses to examine the connection amid the variables of the study. The findings are summarized. In addition, the coefficient of determination was useful in the determination of changes experience as a result of the varying adjustment on the predictor variables. The four regressors' variables were differentiation, cost leadership, pricing strategies and market focus.

4.4.2 Regression

Table 4.9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.8469	0.717	0.708	12.4936

The model summary under table 4.9 elucidates that a coefficient of correlation R of 0.8469 is a clear indication of a strong and significance association. It further illustrated the great positive

correlation which is crucial for the study. The research findings postulated that the found predictor variables accounted for the 84.69% of the factors that explained the competitive advantage. The four regressors' variables are differentiation, Cost Leadership, Pricing Strategy and Market Focus.

4.4.3 ANOVA

ANOVA is crucial for analysis. The F critical 5% level of significance is postulated in table 4.10. It shows how the predictor variables significantly contribute to the competitive advantage.

Table 4.10: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Df	Mean	F	Sig.	
	Squares				
Regression	36.12	4	10.95	50.64	0.0012
Residual	10.48	21			
Total	46.60				

The findings from Analysis of Variance processed data to finalize on the level of significance. F calculated figure of 50.64 was a postulation that the predictor variables were significant in the forecasting of relationship. The P value is 0.0012 is less than the stipulated 0.05 hence opining that it is statistically significant.

4.4.4 Coefficient of Determination

Coefficient of determination is fundamental in exploration of the existing associations. It explains how changes in one variable are reflected on the other variable. It explains the analytical model in the equation and useful for study of many predictor variables.

Table 4.11: Regression Coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.322	2.122		0.210	0.159
Differentiation	0.398	0.172	0.289	1.439	0.001
Cost Leadership	0.298	0.168	0.470	2.512	0.013
Pricing Strategy	0.500	0.069	0.281	2.813	0.002
Market Focus Strategy	0.300	0.084	0.799	6.999	0.015

From the study the analytical modelled equation is

$$Y=0.322+0.398X_1+0.298X_2+0.500X_3+0.300X_4+\varepsilon$$

The equation can be elaborated as Y=Competitive advantage, X₁= differentiation; X₂=Cost Leadership; X₃=Pricing Strategy, X₄=Market Focus +ε= Error Term. This illustrate that when all factors are maintained at zero (Constant), the competitive advantage is 32.2%. Furthermore, a unitary increase in one unit of differentiation leads to an increase competitive advantage by 39.8% all factors kept constant. A unit incremental in the cost leadership led to an increase in competitive advantage by 29.8% all factors maintained constant. A unitary incremental in the pricing strategy led to an increase in the competitive advantage by 50% and finally an increase in one unit of market focus strategy led to an increase in the competitive advantage by 30% all factors kept constant.

4.4 Discussion of the Research Findings

From the study the findings stipulate that all four independent variables exhibited a statistically significant association as shown by analysis of variance. The strategies under the study accounted for 84.69% of all the variables influencing the competitive advantage. The descriptive statistics posits that majority of the respondents concurred that differentiation; cost leadership, pricing strategy and market focus influence the competitive advantage of the agrochemical firms. The study indicated that this predictor variable had positive association with the competitive advantage.

Regression analysis elucidated under the regression coefficient Table 4.11 show that Differentiation had $T=1.439$ and $P=0.001$; Cost Leadership $T= 2.512$ and $P=0.013$; Pricing Strategy $T=2.813$ and $P=0.002$ and finally Market Focus $T=6.999$ and $P=0.015$. These findings show that the entire four-explanatory variable had P-value less than 0.05 hence statistically significant. In a nutshell, the four independent variables informed the competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The chapter gives comprehensive summary, detailed conclusion with prospective recommendation. The research was guided by research objective of findings and of the strategies adopted by the agrochemical firms to achieve competitive advantage in Nairobi City County. The conclusion is anchored by the findings. The recommendations are advocated as per the current prevailing facts. The recommendations give policies key consideration while suggestion for more analysis presents a hint for the futuristic undertakings.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to assess the strategies adopted by the agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County Kenya to achieve competitive advantage. Additionally, it is worthwhile posting that the study subdivided the strategies into four; differentiation, cost leadership, pricing strategy and market focus. On top of that, the population of the study was 35 agrochemical firms located in Nairobi City County. Therefore, the research was integral in fact-findings. The findings indicate that differentiation is an important strategy adopted to realize competitive advantage.

Cost leadership is part of the strategies adopted by the agrochemical firms in Nairobi City County to realize the competitive advantage. Pricing strategy and market focus was also pivotal area for study. They were incorporated to anchor the competitive advantage. The research scrutinized the strategies which indicated a positive association in the realization of competitive advantage to the research evaluated strategies at hand .The study showed an integral role undertaken by the use of market penetration pricing strategies to remain relevant and competitive.

5.3 conclusion

Differentiation played an integral part in the research finding. The analysis of use of company image, development of customer tailored product created uniqueness. This reinforced the competitive advantage. The development of standardized packaging of the numerous products demonstrated a bold way of differentiation. The study showed that differentiation is paramount in the competitive advantage.

The research concludes that cost leadership affects the competitive advantage. The research findings stipulate that the lowest-cost in the purchase of raw material was crucial in the competitive advantage. The elimination of unwanted overhead cost as well as variable cost enhances competitive advantage. The research further stipulated that agrochemical firms must strive to efficiently and effectively optimize the resource to achieve the competitive advantage. The unimportant cost has to be gotten rid of.

Pricing strategy played a key role in competitive advantage. The study showed that from dynamic pricing strategies to fixed pricing method had a great influence on the competitive advantage. Pricing strategies are lubricants towards market domination. The research findings demonstrate that competitive advantage is realizable when the good pricing methods are put in place. Customers are motivated by the pricing methods.

Market focus was paramount in the realization of the competitive advantage. The study finding showed that strategies adopted in the market penetration were very crucial in the competitive advantage. Furthermore, the company sells policies geared towards the achievement of the competitive advantage. In addition, firms' capability to sustain its operation was anchored by the market focus. It is a yardstick towards futuristic accomplishment and competitive advantage.

5.4 Recommendations

The research recommends for the execution of the key drivers of competitive advantage. The key drivers are the differentiation, cost leadership, pricing strategies and market focus. The provision of superior products that meet the customer taste and preferences should be a key determinant. The agrochemical firms must undertake frequent market check to adjust to changes and provide the quality product. The agrochemical management must have a strong company image anchor by the product brand name to realize the competitive advantage.

Cost leadership must be analyzed critically to eliminate wastage and increase productivity. Agrochemical must initiate cost leadership measures to increase growth and financial productivity. The agrochemical management should critically analyze the current market trend and optimized the use of technology to achieve cost leadership. Pricing strategy should be innovative to make profit while at the same time gain wide customer market. The customer friendly pricing strategy enhances the productivity and competitive advantage.

Market focus is useful in driving the competitive advantage. The use of hire purchase, discount and market focus penetration enhances the continuity of the business. Agrochemical firms should develop a clear roadmap to support the business strategies while enhancing the competitive advantage. In summary, differentiation and cost leadership are fundamental in a comprehensive scrutiny. Additionally, market focus and pricing strategy also represent good avenues for the competitive advantage scrutiny.

5.5 Limitations

The research drawbacks include the Covid-19 which made some meeting impossible hence researcher resolved to use electronic methods in some instances. The researcher was guided by the convenient of each of the respondent. This indicated that researcher was to utilize time

allocated by each of the respondent hence inconvenience to the researcher. The researcher had to assured the respondent that the data collection and findings were solely for academic purpose.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher recommends the study of the effect differentiation strategies on the expansion and growth of the Kenyan agrochemical entities. Furthermore, the effect of market focuses on the competitive advantage of the agrochemical industries. In addition, the use of content analysis in the research of impact of differentiation on the strategic competitiveness of agrochemical can advance a solid foundation on the same. Last the use of secondary data in the study of impact of pricing strategies on the competitive advantage of agrochemical companies in Nairobi City County.

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

The objective of using questionnaire is directed towards gathering of data on the various competitive strategies that influences total output of Agro-chemical companies within Nairobi, Kenya and the end results obtained are useful for scholarly and academic purpose only.

Kindly answer the questions decisively and appropriately in the space provided by put a tick (✓) or a cross(X). The elaboration and clarity can be written end of each section.

PART 1: Personal Information

1. Which is your gender? Tick one Male () Female ()

2. Which is your education level?

Secondary school certificate level ()

Diploma Certificate level ()

Graduate Degree Holder ()

Master's degree level and/or above ()

Any other

(specify).....

3. How long have you worked in this firm?

Years	
0-5 Years	
5-10 Years	
10 Years and above	

Part II: Differentiation Strategy on Competitive advantage

4. To what extent are you responsible in the development of differentiation strategy?

4 = completely responsible 3 =mostly responsible, 2 =somewhat responsible, 1 = not at all responsible.

RATE	TICK [✓]
4	
3	
2	
1	

With the scale 1-4 place your firm based on efforts to have exceptional product over the other players? 4 = excellent, 3 = Reasonable, 2 = Normal, 1 = poor

RATE	TICK [✓]
4	
3	
2	
1	

6. Why.....

In this section, please tick the right option that best portray degree to which the following variables influence your competitiveness.

5= strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

To which extent do the following statements relate to your Business	5	4	3	2	1
Strategy: Differentiation by					
providing quality and superior products					
building products brand					
Use of company image					
developing customer tailored products					
developing various packaging in every products					

Part III: Cost leadership strategy and Competitive advantage

5= strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

To what extent do the following statements relate to your firm	5	4	3	2	1
Strategy: Cost leadership					
Through Purchase of raw materials at lower-cost hence advantage on prices.					
The firm takes advantage to control overhead and variable costs.					
The company emphasizes on product customization.					
The firm strives to improve effectiveness productivity					

Part IV: Pricing strategy and competitiveness

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

5= strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Firm employ use of dynamic pricing strategies	5	4	3	2	1
Firm emphasize use of fixed pricing strategies.					
Firm practice cost plus pricing strategies in pricing the products.					
company use Market penetration pricing strategies					
Our company uses tailored and niche penetration pricing strategies.					

Part V: Market focus strategy and competitive advantage

In this segment, tick the appropriate part that best reflects the degree to which this variables affect your firm competitiveness.

5= strongly agree, 4= fairly, 3= Neutral 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

To what level do this statements relate to your firm’s strategies on	5	4	3	2	1
Market focus					
This firm focus one Market for our products.					
Company policy does not credit dealers to sell competing products in the market.					
This company have strict policy on control of dealer activities and operations					
The company strategies to make a choice of customer segment is key					
The firm provided own distribution channel to our target clients					

Part VI: output of Agro-chemical Firms

Insert your sales

Years	2018	2019	2020
Sales Growth			

On your firm, to what level does new strategies contributes to increase on sales growth?

5= strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

SCALE	TICK [✓]
5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

Predominant strategy

1, cost, \different, focus, others

APPENDIX II: AGROCHEMICAL FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY

Syngenta, Kenya,	Norbook chemicals limited
Basf,	Ultra-Vertis east Africa
Osho chemical industries,	Chemraw east Africa
Bameda, limited	Nairobi Vetinery centre
Murphy chemicals east Africa	Pest gon limited
Amiran Kenyan limited	Insecta chemical limited
Monsanto	Jilas chemical industries
Bayer	Rentokil initial kenya
Spectra, chemical limited	Tropical farm management
Juanco	Koppert biological systems limited
Orbit, agrochemicals	Agriscope African limited
Greenlife crop protection Africa	Dow agrochemicals
Farm chem/agrichem	Biomedical laboratories limited
Arista life science corporation	Export trading co-inputs kenya limited
Ckl Africa limited	Fibro chem
Uchumi chemicals limited	Pioneer industrial chemical limited
Nordox as limited	Orbit, agrochemicals
Twiga chemicals	