



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

10TH DBA-AFRICA MANAGEMENT REVIEW (DBA-AMR) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“Upscaling Research, Innovation, and
Enterprise Development”

PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



22nd
OCTOBER 2025



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
LOWER KABETER CAMPUS AND
UoN TOWERS, 14TH FLOOR-MAIN CAMPUS



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Department of Business Administration

Faculty of Business and Management Sciences

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P.O. Box 30197 Nairobi 00100, Kenya

General Conference Information: dept-busadmin@uonbi.ac.ke

Official Conference Website: <https://researchweek.uonbi.ac.ke/>



KENYA NATIONAL ANTHEM

O God of All Creation
O God of all creation,
Bless this our land and nation,
Justice be our shield and defender,
May we dwell in unity,
Peace and liberty,
Plenty be found within our borders.

Let one and all arise,
With hearts both strong and true,
Service be our earnest endeavour,
And our homeland of Kenya,
Heritage of splendour,
Firm may we stand to defend.

Let all with one accord,
In common bond united,
Build this our nation together,
And the glory of Kenya,
The fruit of our labour,
Fill every heart with thanksgiving.

Ee Mungu nguvu yetu,
Ilete baraka kwetu,
Haki iwe ngao na mlinzi,
Natukae na undugu,
Amani na uhuru,
Raha tupate na ustawi.

Amkeni ndugu zetu,
Tufanye sote bidii,
Nasi tujitoe kwa nguvu,
Nchi yetu ya Kenya,
Tunayoipenda,
Tuwe tayari kuilinda.

Natujenge taifa letu,
Ee, ndiyo wajibu wetu,
Kenya istahili heshima,
Tuungane mikono,
Pamoja kazini,
Kila siku tuwe na shukrani.



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY ANTHEM

1. Ee Mungu twaomba ulinde
Jumuiya Afrika Mashariki
Tuwezeshe kuishi kwa amani
Tutimize na malengo yetu.

Chorus
Jumuiya Yetu sote tuilinde
Tuwajibike tuimarike
Umoja wetu ni nguzo yetu
Idumu Jumuiya yetu.

2. Uzalendo pia mshikamano
Viwe msingi wa Umoja wetu
Natulinde Uhuru na Amani
Mila zetu na desturi zetu.

3. Viwandani na hata mashambani
Tufanye kazi sote kwa makini
Tujitoe kwa hali na mali
Tuijenge Jumuiya bora.

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Dr Margaret Kariuki	Member
Dr Edward Odundo	Member
Dr Peter Kiilu	Member
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Ms Willimina Netia	Secretary



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Laban Ndegwa	ICT
Peter Juma	ICT
Ronald Nyangau	ICT



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Prof Kennedy Ogollah	Editor in Chief
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BIOGRAPHY OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



MICHAEL ANTHONY MACHARIA

Founder & Host – Founders’ Battlefield
Founder & Group Chief Visionary Officer – Ponea Health
Founder – Seven Seas Technologies | Entrepreneur
Systems Thinker | Builder of Order in Chaos

Michael MACHARIA is the Founder and Host of Founders’ Battlefield, a multimedia learning and storytelling platform redefining how African entrepreneurship is taught, documented, and experienced. Through its podcast, masterclasses, and digital portal, Founders’ Battlefield unpacks the emotional, strategic, and spiritual battles behind African enterprise—helping founders, investors, and policymakers understand what truly sustains innovation and resilience. The platform has evolved into an educational and cultural movement, curating raw, founder-led narratives that inspire the next generation of builders and reformers across the continent.

He is also the Founder and Group Chief Visionary Officer at Ponea Health, a health technology aggregator connecting patients, providers, payers, and governments through an integrated digital platform. Ponea’s ecosystem embodies a reimagined model of healthcare delivery—data-driven, transparent, and inclusive—shaping the future of health access in Africa and beyond.

Earlier in his career, Michael founded Seven Seas Technologies (SST), one of East Africa’s pioneering IT infrastructure and digital transformation firms. Launching it at just 25, he built SST into a regional powerhouse delivering enterprise and national-scale technology solutions, and catalyzing Kenya’s early digital revolution.

A qualified accountant with over 25 years of entrepreneurial experience, Michael has served as Chairman of the Kenya Information Technology & Outsourcing Society (KITOS), Chair of the ICT Sector Committee at KEPSA, and Vice Chair and Founding Board Member of Endeavor Kenya, part of the global Endeavor network that supports high-impact entrepreneurs. A World Economic Forum Young Global Leader (2014) and YPO Kenya member, he continues to mentor founders and advise boards navigating growth and complexity.

Michael’s own journey through public-sector innovation, litigation, and recovery forged his belief that authentic entrepreneurship is an act of systems reform. Founders’ Battlefield stands as his response—a living archive of courage, clarity, and the pursuit of integrity in enterprise. “Timing matters more than talent. Clarity, integrity, and resilience are the true currencies of leadership



BIOGRAPHY OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



DR. SHIKOH GITAU
CEO of Qhala

Dr. Shikoh is the visionary CEO of Qhala, a leading Digital Innovation company transforming Africa. With over a decade of expertise in digital technologies, she drives digital transformation for organizations in Africa and Emerging Markets, focusing on sectors like Agriculture, Education, Health, Payments, Retail, and Renewable Energies.

She established Safaricom Alpha, Africa's first corporate innovation hub, serving as Head of Products – Innovation and Chief Innovation Officer, leading Safaricom's digital transformation. At the Africa Development Bank, she guided governments in adopting ICT for service delivery, developing the Digital Government Blueprint. Her experience at Google and Microsoft in emerging markets further bridges business, government, and technology.

Dr. Shikoh influences ICT companies, steering committees, and think tanks across Africa and technology. She advises governments on data and digital development policies and serves on the boards of WiDEF, Longhorn, OpenInstitute, ANU, and IPSL, amplifying her impact in technology and the digital economy.

With a PhD and MSc in Computer Science from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, she blends academic expertise with practical acumen. Honored with awards like the ASEB Summit award and Women in STEM Champion, she is dedicated to empowering women in tech and building a robust startup ecosystem in Africa. Dr. Shikoh's commitment to innovation drives Qhala's success and makes her a trusted advisor in digital transformation.



BIOGRAPHY OF KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



DR. WALTER ONGETI, PhD, MBA, B.Ed., CS, FCG, FKIM
Chief Executive Officer, Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS)

Dr. Walter Ongeti is a distinguished academician, strategist, and corporate governance expert with over fifteen years of senior leadership experience across public, private, and non-profit sectors. He currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS), where he provides strategic leadership to promote accreditation as a driver of global competitiveness, trade facilitation, and sustainable development.

Dr. Ongeti holds a Ph.D. in Business Administration (Strategic Management & Corporate Governance), an MBA in Strategic and Change Management, and a Bachelor of Education in Economics and Business Studies, all from the University of Nairobi. He is also a Certified Secretary, Certified Governance Auditor, and Certified Strategic Leadership professional.

Beyond his role at KENAS, Dr. Ongeti has served as Chairman of the University Council of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, a Board Member of the Kenya Animal Genetics Resource Centre and Naivasha Water & Sewerage Company and he sat on the Boards of Oasis Mental Hospital and NHC Maisha Hospital. He has also been a member of the Tax Appeals Tribunal of the Judiciary.

A recognized thought leader, Dr. Ongeti is widely seen as a transformational speaker on governance and strategy, having spoken at conferences and professional forums including ICPAK, iCPAR, IHRM, and UUKI. He also actively participates in mission work at CITAM and PAG Churches.

PROGRAMME

Wednesday, 22nd October 2025

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Arrival and Registration
9:00 AM – 9:15 AM	<p>National Anthem Prayer Welcoming Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Lydia N Zachary, MC <p>Welcoming Address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Ben Mkalama, DBA AMR Committee Prof Mercy Munjuri, Ag. Chair, Department of Business Administration Prof Peterson Magutu, Ag. Associate Dean, FOBMS GBS&R Prof Kennedy Ogollah, Dean, Faculty of Business and Management Sciences
9:20 AM – 10:40 AM	Moderator: Dr Ben Mkalama
9.20 AM – 9.40 AM	<p>Keynote Addresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Mike Macharia, Founder and Group CEO, Ponea Health Holdings “Decoding an Entrepreneur's DNA: A Practitioner's Perspective”
9.40 AM – 10.00 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Shikoh Gitau, CEO Qhala Limited “The Nexus of AI, Emerging Technologies and Research”
10.00AM – 10.20 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Walter Ongeti, CEO, KENAS “Accreditation in the Age of Disruption: Safeguarding Research Integrity and Fuelling Innovation for Enterprise Growth”
10.20 AM – 10.40 AM	Q & A
10.40 AM – 10:45 AM	HEALTH BREAK
10:45 AM – 1:00 PM	<p>Research Seminar I Moderator: Dr Raymond Musyoka</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PhD Game: Navigating the Politics of the Doctoral Journey - Prof Evans Aosa From Curiosity to Clarity: Framing a Research Problem That Matters – Dr John Bosco Kisimbii Designing Discovery with Integrity: Research Blueprints for Emerging Frontiers – Dr Ben Mkalama From Evidence to Policy and Products: Driving Societal Impact - Dr Abutu Ogeto Harnessing AI and Big Data for Scientific Research Dr Elizabeth Wamicha

TIME	ACTIVITY
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK
PARALLEL SESSION 1 –CONFERENCE PAPER PRESENTATION (VIRTUAL)	
2:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Breakout to Parallel Sessions Session 1 Moderator: Dr Edward Odundo Discussant: Dr Mbadi Olila Session 2 Moderator: Dr Peter Kiilu Discussant: George Ndhiwa Session 3 Moderator: Dr Margaret Kariuki Discussant: Dr Paul Olendo Session 4: Moderator Dr Raymond Musyoki Discussant: Mr Sam Ochieng
PARALLEL SESSION 2 – AI MASTERCLASS PHYSICAL – LOWER KABETE CAMPUS	
2.00PM – 4.00PM	Artificial Intelligence 101 Conducted jointly with Qhala Limited Moderator: Joshua Baru
4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Closing Session: Ms Lydiah N. Zachary

Certificates of Attendance and Participation will be issued for different sessions of the Conference and Seminars.

LIST OF PRESENTERS

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1.2	Long-term Impact of Entrepreneurial Financing on Job Creation in Kenya: The Role of Venture Capital and Angel Investment	Powel Murunga
1.3	The Influence of Big Data Analytics on Innovation Outcomes in Medium Enterprises In Nairobi County, Kenya	Eddah Mwangi
1.4	Assessing the Influence of People and Planet-Centered Strategies on Prosperity in County Governments in Kenya: The Mediating Role of Peace and the Moderating Effect of Partnerships	Erick Kipkirui
Strategic Innovation and Competitive Advantage		
Session 2: Chair - Dr Peter Kiilu Discussant: George Ndhiwa		
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2.2	Incremental Predictive Effects of Strategic Leadership, Digitalisation, and External Environment on Sustainable Organisational Performance of State Corporations in Kenya.	Kennedy P. Odhiambo
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3.2	Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Talent Acquisition: Implications for HR Strategy and Enterprise Growth in Kenya's Digital Economy	Martha Serah Lankisa, CHRP (K).
3.3	The Influence of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on Employee Performance Among Commercial Banks in Kenya	Lemushen Michael Nakurro
3.4	Influence of Information Technology and Organizational Characteristics on the Relationship Between Human Resource Analytics and Organizational Performance: Implications to Kenyan Context	Tabitha Mutheu W. Mwangangi
3.5	Work-Life Balance, Employee Wellbeing, Individual Characteristics and Career Growth: A Critical Review of Literature	Salah Abdirahman Farah
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4.3	The Effect of Demographic Characteristics on the Relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Loyalty among Passengers of Railway Transport Services in Kenya	Dr. Amos Musili King'ola
4.4	Enhancing Brand Equity Through Sports Sponsorship among large commercial banks in Kenya	Nyakeru Mary
4.5	Impact of Strategic Management Decisions on Organisational Growth: A Case Study of Safaricom's Expansion into Ethiopia	Kavithi Victor Kiamba
4.6	Strategic Innovation as an Antecedent of Firm Performance: A Case Study of HACO Industries in Kenya	Beth Kinya Ndumba

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Session 1: Innovation Ecosystems, Entrepreneurial Development and Financing

Paper 1.1

Emerging Technology Adoption and Performance of Medium and Small Enterprises: Evidence from Nairobi County, Kenya

Abstract: Medium and small enterprises (MSEs) play a critical role in economic development globally, contributing significantly to employment creation, GDP growth, and poverty reduction, particularly in developing economies. In Kenya, MSEs account for over 50% of employment and approximately 25.6% of GDP. However, these enterprises face substantial challenges in adopting emerging technologies, which are increasingly recognised as essential drivers of competitive advantage and sustainable performance in the digital economy. Despite the acknowledged importance of technology adoption for business success, empirical evidence on the direct relationship between emerging technology adoption and MSE performance remains limited, especially in African contexts.

Keywords: Technology adoption, MSE performance, Kenya, emerging technologies, small enterprises, developing economies, digital transformation.

Lydia Nyaboe Zachary

University of Nairobi

Email: lydiahyaboe@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 1.2

Long-term Impact of Entrepreneurial Financing on Job Creation in Kenya: The Role of Venture Capital and Angel Investment

Abstract

This study examines how angel investment and venture capital affect long-term job creation. It also looks at how executives' financial backgrounds influence this relationship. The study is based on firm-level unbalanced panel data from 2015 to 2023 comprising 33,190 observations. Using fixed effects estimation and Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) to address possibility of endogeneity concerns, the analysis shows that both venture capital and angel investment improve job creation especially when startups are led by executives with prior financial expertise. Both funding types significantly boost job creation. However, this influence varies between profitable and non-profitable firms. The GMM framework is then introduced to account for persistence in employment growth and mitigates omitted variable bias. The financial background of executives moderates this effect. Executives with financial backgrounds strengthen this positive impact. In profitable firms, the effect is greater, while in non-profitable firms, the influence is weaker. These findings mean that investors should consider executive financial skills when funding startups. The findings extend prior literature by implying that executive-level capabilities are not merely control variables but active enablers of funding effectiveness. In contrast to mature markets, where venture funding ecosystems are well-developed, the Kenyan context reiterates the importance of targeted financial literacy and governance capacity as preconditions for entrepreneurial growth. Policymakers may support financial training for entrepreneurs to improve job creation outcomes.

Key words: GMM, Angel, Venture Capital, Entrepreneurial financing, Job creation

Powel Murunga

University of Nairobi

Email: powelmurunga@gmail.com;
powelmurunga@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 1.3

The Influence of Big Data Analytics on Innovation Outcomes in Medium Enterprises in Nairobi County in Kenya.

Abstract

Organisations that effectively utilise big data can analyse consumer behaviour, optimise supply chains, and predict market trends, leading to improved innovation performance. Despite its growing importance, the extent to which big data enhances innovation outcomes varies depending on factors such as industry type, firm size, and technological readiness. Medium-sized firms play a remarkable role in developing Kenya's economic growth through support for employment, innovation, and competitiveness. However, despite having the potential, most medium enterprises cannot sustain innovation due to various challenges, such as limited access to finance, adverse technological adoption, and poor use of data and data-driven decision-making. The general objective of this study was to examine how big data adoption influences innovation outcomes in medium enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya. A case study research design was adopted in the study. This study adopted a purposive case selection strategy to identify and engage medium-sized enterprises in Nairobi County, Kenya. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used as key data collection instruments in the research. This study employed the Gioia Methodology to analyse qualitative data, ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to theory-building. Additionally, content analysis was applied to document analysis to triangulate findings and identify patterns in firms' big data strategies. The study findings revealed that big data analytics plays a transformative role in fostering innovation among medium-sized enterprises in Nairobi County. Firms reported tangible benefits such as accelerated product development, enhanced customer insights, and improved operational efficiency. However, the extent of these benefits was largely dependent on organisational readiness, including infrastructure, data talent, and strategic alignment. Leadership emerged as a critical enabler, with visionary, data-literate executives driving adoption and cultivating a culture of experimentation and agility. Moreover, the analysis highlighted that contextual factors such as regulatory compliance and ethical considerations significantly influenced adoption patterns.

Eddah Wambui,

University of Nairobi

Email: Eddah_mwangi@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 1.4

Assessing the Influence of People and Planet-Centred Strategies on Prosperity in County Governments in Kenya: The Mediating Role of Peace and the Moderating Effect of Partnerships

Abstract

Sustainable development has been conceptualised through multiple perspectives, emphasising the intricate interconnections between social, environmental, and economic dimensions. Within the contemporary globalised and fast-paced governance environment, the pursuit of sustainability increasingly demands the harmonisation of current societal well-being with long-term ecological stewardship. Consequently, people- and planet-centred strategies have gained prominence as critical determinants of prosperity within devolved governance structures. These strategies prioritise inclusive growth, social equity, and environmental conservation, forming the foundation of sustainable prosperity. Multi-stakeholder partnerships among public institutions, private entities, and civil society enhance collective capacity to address cross-sectoral sustainability challenges and achieve shared development goals. The general objective of this study is to assess the influence of people- and planet-centred strategies on the prosperity of county governments in Kenya, examining the mediating role of peace and the moderating effect of partnerships. Specifically, the study seeks to: examine the effect of people-centred strategies on prosperity; assess the relationship between planet-centred strategies and prosperity; investigate the impact of people-centred strategies on peace; determine the effect of planet-centred strategies on peace; examine the influence of peace on prosperity; establish the mediating role of peace in the relationship between people-centred strategies and prosperity; assess the mediating effect of peace between planet-centred strategies and prosperity; and evaluate the moderating role of partnership on the relationship between people- and planet-centred strategies and prosperity. Anchored on the positivist philosophy, the study assumes that reality is objective and measurable through empirical, quantifiable data. It emphasises cause-and-effect relationships and applies statistical techniques to test the proposed hypotheses. A combined cross-sectional descriptive and explanatory research design was adopted, allowing the collection of data at a single point in time to capture prevailing perceptions and practices among county government officials. The study targeted all 47 county governments in Kenya, as established under the Constitution of Kenya (2010). Each county was represented by one top management officer, resulting in a total of 47 respondents. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires aligned with specific indicators of each study variable. Empirical results revealed that both people-centred ($\beta = 0.395, p < 0.05$) and planet-centred ($\beta = 0.398, p < 0.05$) strategies had positive and statistically significant effects on the prosperity of county governments. Similarly, people-centred ($\beta = 0.397, p < 0.05$) and planet-centred ($\beta = 0.322, p < 0.05$) strategies significantly influenced peace, which in turn positively affected prosperity ($\beta = 0.347, p < 0.05$). Regression analysis further confirmed that peace partially mediated the relationship between both people- and planet-centred strategies and prosperity. Additionally, partnership demonstrated a significant moderating effect on the relationship between these strategies and prosperity ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that collaborative networks and resource-sharing enhance the impact of sustainable strategies on county development outcomes.

Key Words: Planet, People, Partnership, Peace and Prosperity

Eric Kipkurui,

University of Nairobi.

Email: ngenoeric01@gmail.com

Session 2: Strategic Innovation and Competitive Advantage

Paper 2.1

Strategic Agility for Innovation and Competitive Advantage of Firms

Abstract

Strategic agility has become a pivotal capability enabling firms to navigate volatile, uncertain, and complex environments while achieving sustained competitive advantage. Despite its growing prominence in management literature, research on the synergy between strategic agility, innovation, and competitive advantage remains fragmented and under-theorized. This paper presents a critical and integrative review of literature, examining how strategic agility encompassing strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and leadership unity acts as a catalyst for organizational innovation and superior performance. By synthesizing evidence from cross-industry and cross-country studies, the review situates strategic agility within the broader landscape of competitive dynamics, exploring its role as both a proactive and adaptive strategic mechanism. Drawing on the resource-based view, knowledge-based view, diffusion of innovation theory, and Porter's Theory of Competitive Advantage, this paper offers a multi-theoretical perspective on how firms leverage agility to sense opportunities, reconfigure resources, foster innovation, and establish unique competitive positions. The analysis identifies three key gaps: (1) limited longitudinal studies that examine how agility and innovation co-evolve to deliver competitive advantage, (2) insufficient integration of emerging enablers such as digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics into agility frameworks, and (3) lack of standardized, multi-dimensional measures of strategic agility across industries. To address these gaps, the paper proposes a conceptual framework positioning innovation capability as a mediating mechanism, with knowledge and technological resources acting as enablers of sustainable advantage. The findings of this review not only contribute to the scholarly discourse, but also provide actionable recommendations for managers and policymakers seeking to enhance organizational resilience and market responsiveness in today's disruptive landscape. Ultimately, this paper aspires to bridge the gap between theory and practice, by providing a foundation for holistic strategies that integrate agility, innovation, and performance excellence.

Keywords: Strategic agility, innovation capability, competitive advantage, dynamic capabilities, RBV, organizational strategy.

Eliud Owalo

University of Nairobi

Email: owalo@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 2.2

Incremental Predictive Effects of Strategic Leadership, Digitalisation, and External Environment on Sustainable Organisational Performance of State Corporations in Kenya.

Abstract:

Empirical studies investigating the joint effect of strategic leadership and other internal and external contingent factors on sustainable organisational performance are not only limited but at times present an inconsistent set of study findings. Consequently, this study had two main objectives. First, it was to investigate the incremental predictive influence of strategic leadership, the digitalisation phenomenon, and external environment on organisational performance by conducting an analytical cross-sectional census survey targeting 250 State Corporations in Kenya. Second, and equally important, this study sought to address some of the literature and knowledge gaps associated with the above stream of research. Three key findings with respect to State Corporations can be gleaned from the study findings. First, strategic leadership significantly positively predicts sustainable organisational performance. Second, digitalisation positively and significantly predicts sustainable organisational performance. Finally, the external environment has a significant incremental predictive influence on sustainable organisational performance. Further, the findings arising from this study make important contributions across three important levels. First, is to the body of knowledge, by testing the predictions of the three theories undergirding the conceptualisation of this study. Second, is to policy, by providing useful empirical evidence that will undoubtedly assist the Government of Kenya in the formulation of specific policies aimed at strengthening the strategic leadership framework, facilitating adoption of digitalisation technologies, effectively responding to contingencies in the environment, and enhancing sustainable organisational performance in public sector organisations. Finally, the study contributes to management practice by providing useful insights into how the four variables manifest and their linkages within public sector organisations.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, digitalisation, external environment, sustainable organisational performance.

Kennedy P. Odhiambo

University of Nairobi.

Email: kpodhiambo@gmail.com

Evans Aosa

University of Nairobi.

Email: eaosa@uonbi.ac.ke

Caren Angima

University of Nairobi.

Email: kangima@uonbi.ac.ke

Githii Wainanina

University of Nairobi.

Email: wainaina.githii@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 2.3

Strategy Execution and Firm Performance: A Critical Review of Literature

Abstract:

In a world where responding to ambiguous environmental changes, such as rapid technological advancements and globalisation, is inevitable and necessary for business growth and continuity, firms struggle to execute their strategies. This study critically examines the relationship between strategy execution and firm performance, exploring how organisations can achieve sustained competitive advantages by translating strategic plans into actionable steps. The literature consistently highlights that the success of execution is often the missing link between planning and performance; this study, therefore, aims to synthesise existing research, identify gaps, and propose avenues for future inquiry. This study identifies critical factors such as resource alignment, strategic agility, performance measurement tools, digital transformation, and leadership that influence the execution process. However, there remain gaps in the literature, particularly concerning the varying execution challenges faced by firms in different industries and the impact of leadership styles on execution outcomes. The findings suggest that further research should focus on these gaps and explore how firms can optimise their execution strategies to improve both short-term and long-term performance.

Keywords: Strategy Execution, Firm Performance, Strategic Agility, Leadership Styles and Digital Transformation.

Stephen Kipruto Lel

University of Nairobi.

Email: stephenlel@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 2.4

Digital Agility in Kenyan Insurance Firms: A Systematic Review of Enablers, Barriers, and Performance Outcomes

Abstract

This paper presents a systematic review of digital agility in Kenyan Insurance firms, specifically emphasizing identifying enablers, barriers, and the performance of digital agility. The insurance sector in Kenya has undergone a major transformation by incorporating digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Blockchain, cloud computing, and mobile platforms to support digital agility, enabling it to adapt quickly to changing market forces. This study paper, therefore, focuses on the systematic review of the empirical literature aimed at identifying enablers, barriers, and the performance of digital agility within Kenyan insurance companies. A systematic review has been conducted using scholarly electronic databases and institutional repositories with keywords including 'digital adoption insurance Kenya,' 'digital Agility Kenya insurance,' and 'blockchain insurance Kenya.' This search yields a set of high-quality studies that meet PRISMA criteria. Results from the review have indicated that key enablers included innovation sandboxes, data protection regulations, expanding mobile infrastructure, and InsurTech collaborations. Conversely, digital barriers such as aging legacy systems, lack of digital literacy, organizational inertia, regulatory uncertainty around emerging technologies, and limited access in rural areas persisted. The review findings have further shown that digital agility significantly improved performance quality and customer outcomes, contributing to notable increases in performance variability, speed, consistency, and profitability of service delivery. Digital agility has thus become a strategic asset, especially when supported by robust infrastructure, policies, and leadership. The findings from this systematic review highlight the urgent need for regulatory efforts to develop adaptive frameworks concerning new technologies and for private insurers to make strategic investments in digital capabilities. Additionally, stakeholders should collaborate to foster inclusive, innovation-led growth within the Kenyan insurance sector.

Key Words: Artificial intelligence, Digital agility, Digital technologies, Insurance sector, Kenya

Theracia Mwendu Kavindu

Doctoral Student, Machakos University, Kenya

Email: thereciak@gmail.com

Prof. Robert Arasa

School of Business, Economics, Hospitality
& Tourism Management, Kenya

Email: rarasa4@mksu.ac.ke

Paper 2.5

Corporate Governance, Strategy Implementation, and Managerial Competencies on the Performance of State Corporations in Kenya

Abstract

This study investigates the interplay between strategic agility, dynamic capabilities, and sustainability integration in driving innovation up-scaling within emerging markets. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative analysis through structural equation modelling with qualitative case studies to explore these relationships. The findings reveal that dynamic capabilities significantly influence strategic agility, which in turn enhances innovation performance. Innovation capability mediates the relationship between strategic agility and performance, while openness strengthens the dynamic capabilities–agility link. Although the direct moderating effect of sustainability integration on innovation outcomes was not empirically supported, qualitative insights suggest its potential to enhance innovation capabilities. These results offer valuable theoretical contributions and practical guidance for firms aiming to leverage agility and sustainability for innovation in dynamic market environments.

Keywords: Strategic Agility, Dynamic Capabilities, Sustainability Integration, Innovation up scaling, emerging markets

Willimina M. Netia

University of Nairobi

Email: wnetia@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 2.6

Leveraging Strategic Agility to Bridge Research and Enterprise for Competitive Advantage in Africa.

Abstract

Africa's rapidly changing economic landscape presents both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges for enterprises seeking sustainable growth. In spite of the fact that academic research results tend to generate more than 100,000 publications on average every year, only a small percentage of them are commercialised, and consequently, they can hardly contribute to economic transformation. Strategic agility, defined by strategic sensitivity, leadership unity, and resource fluidity, was found to offer a viable pathway for bridging this gap by enabling firms to reconfigure knowledge and resources into market-ready solutions. Guided by the Dynamic Capabilities Framework and the Resource-Based View, this study adopted a qualitative, case-based methodology to examine how African enterprises leveraged strategic agility to commercialise research-driven innovation. Data were drawn from secondary sources, including company reports, industry publications, and academic literature, and analysed across three enterprises: Safaricom in Kenya, Flutterwave in Nigeria, and Twiga Foods in Kenya. The findings indicated that firms embedding strategic agility were more successful at converting research into enterprise growth. Safaricom's M-Pesa demonstrated how agility transformed mobile money research into inclusive financial services; Flutterwave showcased the role of leadership unity and resource fluidity in scaling digital payments across borders; while Twiga Foods illustrated how research-informed agritech solutions improved agricultural supply chains. The study concluded that strategic agility served as a critical bridge between knowledge creation and enterprise competitiveness in Africa. It recommended that enterprises cultivate agile leadership and resource reallocation mechanisms, universities strengthen partnerships with industry for research commercialisation, and policymakers design supportive frameworks for funding, intellectual property protection, and public-private collaboration. Future research directions were identified in longitudinal studies on agile enterprises, cross-sector comparisons, and deeper exploration of how partnerships accelerated knowledge transfer. By aligning research outputs with enterprise adaptability, this study contributed to Africa's innovation agenda and provided actionable strategies for inclusive, evidence-based economic growth.

Keywords: Strategic agility, research–enterprise linkage, competitive advantage, innovation, emerging markets

Mwangi Josephine Wanjiru,

University of Nairobi

d33355862015@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 2.7

Strategic Innovation, Competitive Advantage and Firm Performance: A Critical Review of Literature

Abstract

The key essential components of strategic innovation are creativity and ideation, market insights, vision and strategy. Literature suggests that firms that encourage a culture of creativity and invention are more innovative and successful. A clear vision and strategy aligned with the overall business strategy, which guides ideas and ensures adequate resource allocation, is key to strategic innovation. In light of the significant role of strategic innovation on firm performance, this conceptual study scrutinised the current empirical and theoretical literature regarding the association between strategic innovation and the performance of a firm. The study also scrutinised the mediating role of the competitive advantage on the relationship between strategic innovation and the performance of a firm. This study finds that the empirical studies conducted so far have yielded contradictory outcomes. Some findings indicate a positive association between strategic innovation and the performance of a firm. On the contrary, some studies indicate that there is no significant impact of strategic innovation on firm performance, particularly in certain industries or contexts, suggesting that strategic innovation does not always lead to measurable firm performance. The study also finds that strategic innovation leads to competitive advantage by responding to customers' needs, which in turn affects firm performance. The study concludes that while most of the literature indicates a positive association between strategic innovation and firm performance, the relationship is influenced by other factors such as industries, context and market conditions. The study makes contributions to the developing literature on strategic innovation and firm performance by analysing additional variables to include competitive advantage as a mediator variable between strategic innovation and firm performance, as most of the previous studies do not assess this variable. In addition, the study makes a contribution to the practice of how strategic innovation leads to firm performance. Further research is recommended on the complex dynamics between strategic innovation and performance across different industries and market conditions.

Keywords: Strategic Innovation, Competitive Advantage, Artificial Intelligence, Firm Performance.

Salome Mumbi Kaiba

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Business Administration
University of Nairobi,

Email: sallykaiba@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Session 3: Digital Transformation, Workforce Development and Human Resource Strategy

Paper 3.1

Trends in Mental Health and Wellness Program Implementation across Key Sectors in Kenya: A Comparative Secondary Data Analysis

Abstract:

The mental health and wellness programs are gradually recognised as a crucial element of workforce and education well-being in Kenya. The main objective of the study is to determine the trends of mental health and wellness programs Across Sectors in Kenya. This study employed a comparative analysis of the extent to which mental wellness programs are implemented across key sectors in Kenya. It also assesses the characteristics of mental wellness program implementation across key sectors in Kenya. The study also employs demographic analysis by age, gender education level across the various sectors in Kenya. These sectors are corporate firms, commercial banking, high-risk outsourcing, public sector institutions, MSMEs, and educational sub-sectors, namely primary, secondary, tertiary colleges, and universities. The study is anchored on two theories, namely the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and the Ecological Systems Theory. The study used secondary data from NGO publications, academic theses, and government reports. Through descriptive statistics, mental health programs are highest implemented in tier 1 banks and universities, moderately adopted in corporate firms and tertiary colleges, and to a low extent implemented in public sector agencies, MSMEs, primary/secondary schools, and public sector agencies. Through demographic analysis, the studies found a dire need for scalable, sector-specific interventions, specifically in MSMEs, as well as education to enhance mental health and promote productivity and learner well-being. For Future researchers to address the gaps in mental and wellness program implementation, it is necessary to consider data-driven and inclusive approaches, which are crucial to promoting mental health outcomes and sustaining Kenya's socio-economic development.

Keywords: Mental health and wellness, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model and Ecological Systems Theory, implementation, MSMEs Sectors.

Dr. Margaret Muthoni Kariuki

The University of Nairobi

Email: magmuth@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 3.2

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Talent Acquisition: Implications for HR Strategy and Enterprise Growth in Kenya's Digital Economy

Abstract:

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into business processes is transforming how organisations attract, select, and retain talent. In Kenya's increasingly competitive digital economy, AI-driven recruitment has emerged as a strategic differentiator for enterprise growth. This study examined how digital enterprises in Nairobi employ AI tools in talent acquisition and the implications for human resource (HR) strategy and organisational performance. Despite widespread adoption of digital technologies, limited empirical research has explored the alignment between AI-based recruitment and HR strategic outcomes in Kenya—an area this study sought to address. Guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which argues that unique resources such as technology-enhanced HR practices can generate sustainable competitive advantage, the study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 150 HR officers across Nairobi-based digital enterprises through structured online questionnaires. Quantitative analysis using descriptive statistics and multiple regression was conducted to evaluate relationships between AI adoption, HR performance, and enterprise growth metrics. Findings revealed that 78% of participating organisations had integrated AI into their recruitment processes—primarily in résumé screening, candidate engagement via chatbots, and predictive analytics for job fit assessment. AI adoption was strongly correlated ($r = 0.67, p < 0.05$) with improved hiring quality and shorter recruitment cycles. Moreover, enterprises employing AI extensively reported superior growth indicators, particularly in innovation and market expansion. Nonetheless, key challenges included high implementation costs, limited internal expertise, and concerns over data privacy. The study concludes that strategic use of AI in talent acquisition enhances HR effectiveness and drives enterprise growth in Kenya's digital economy. It recommends that organisations invest in AI literacy among HR professionals and strengthen data governance systems. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of AI adoption on employee retention and organisational culture within digital firms.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, HR strategy, Enterprise growth, Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, Innovation

Martha Serah Lankisa, CHRP (K).

University of Nairobi

Email: lankisa@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 3.3

The Influence of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on Employee Performance among Commercial Banks in Kenya

Abstract

Technology has increasingly reshaped human resource management practices, with Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) driving major changes in organisational structures, processes, and employee performance. This study examined the influence of HRIS on employee performance in commercial banks in Kenya. The study was anchored on Systems Theory and the Resource-Based theory. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design. Primary data were collected through questionnaires. The response rate was 40 out of 42 banks, yielding a 95.24% response rate. The data was analysed using multiple regression. The findings revealed that e-performance and e-recruitment systems are widely adopted, while e-payroll and e-training are moderately implemented. Results showed that HRIS significantly enhances employee performance, with E-Performance Management Systems (EPMS) having the strongest impact. E-Performance Management Systems improved productivity through efficient, impartial, and transparent reviews, real-time feedback, and alignment with organisational goals. The study recommends that banks provide continuous training to ensure effective HRIS use, customise systems to organisational needs, and integrate them with existing processes to boost efficiency and adoption. It further suggests that future research employ mixed-method designs to capture deeper contextual insights and strengthen triangulation.

Keywords: Human Resource Information Systems, Employee Performance, Commercial Banks

Lemushen Michael Nakurro

MBA Student, Faculty of Business and
Management Sciences,
University of Nairobi.

Email: lemushen@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Dr. Margaret Muthoni Kariuki

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business and
Management Sciences,
University of Nairobi.

Paper 3.4

Influence of Information Technology and Organisational Characteristics on the Relationship Between Human Resource Analytics and Organisational Performance: Implications for the Kenyan Context

Abstract

This study sought to review the influence of information technology and organisational characteristics on the relationship between human resources analytics and organisational performance. To establish the relationship between the variables, the study was anchored on institutional theory, resource-based view theory and actor network theory. The variables were also discussed in detail. Human resource analytics involves the process of collecting data on human resources and analysing data to enhance human resource functions and overall business performance. Analysing data related to human resources is crucial as it improves employee performance, boosts employee retention, and enhances overall organisational performance. Information technology comprises the utilisation of electronic-based systems and communications to acquire, analyse, store, and disseminate audio, visual, written, and arithmetic information. It enhances organisational performance as it helps managers by simplifying a variety of previously tedious activities, such as evaluating and assessing business performance, making choices, creating a business plan, and establishing processes. Organisational characteristics comprise features such as ownership of the firm, board of directors' characteristics, firm size, age, and organisational culture. Organisational performance is a measure of survival and growth; a measure of how well an organisation has been able to fit into an environment. Measures of financial performance include liquidity ratio, leverage ratio, and profitability ratio, while non-financial measures include customer satisfaction and employee engagement. The study reviewed existing literature and drew the following conclusions: Human resource analytics has a positive association with performance; Information technology capacity is significantly and favourably correlated with organisational performance; organisational characteristics such as strategy, structure, culture, and operational processes are positively associated with organisational performance. Therefore, there is a need to study the joint effect of human resource analytics, information technology, and organisational characteristics on organisational performance and its implications within the Kenyan context.

Keywords: Human Resource Analytics, Organisational Performance, Information Technology, Organisational Characteristic, Resource-Based View

Mwangangi Tabitha Mutheu Wambua
PhD Student,
University of Nairobi.
Email: tmwangangi@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 3.5

Work-Life Balance, Employee Wellbeing, Individual Characteristics and Career Growth: A Critical Review of Literature

Abstract

This study sought to review the influence of employee well-being and individual characteristics on the relationship between work-life balance and career growth. To establish the relationship between the variables, the study was anchored on segmentation theory, spillover theory and career development theory, which were discussed in detail. Work-life balance is defined as a person's involvement and pleasure in work and family. To achieve work-life balance, time, involvement, and satisfaction must be balanced against one another to resolve conflict and enhance welfare. Employee well-being comprises the positive physical, psychological, and social aspects of work that contribute to the overall quality of life, which is the professional's holistic state of mental, emotional and physical health. This can be achieved by creating a friendly and flexible work environment. Individual characteristics are a set of distinctive and exceptional characteristics that may establish the identification of a human individual and the personal characteristics, specifically the quality of a person who takes part in a conduct which is relevant morally, which leads to the formation of the real nature of a person. Individual characteristics frequently influence one's work-life balance and career path. Individuals' mental health and job happiness are influenced by their psychological characteristics, values and cognitive ability. Career growth is a lifelong learning for job advancement and adaptation, which requires staying current, learning new skills, and adapting to changing job duties and responsibilities. Moving up the internal career ladder, seeing advancements within the organization, and so gaining greater responsibility and possibilities for education development. The study reviewed existing literature and concluded the following: work life balance has a positive correlation with career growth. Employee well-being is significantly and favourably correlated with career growth. Individual characteristics of value, ability, interest and attitude are positively associated with career growth.

Keywords: Work-life Balance, Employee well-being, Individual Characteristics, Career Growth

Salah Abdirahman Farah

Department of Business Administration

University of Nairobi

Email: salah_students@uonbi.ac.ke

Prof. Mercy Gacheri Munjuri

Department of Business Administration

University of Nairobi

Session 4: Data-Driven Marketing for Strategic Enterprise Growth

Paper 4.1 Digital Marketing, Service Quality and Performance of SMEs in Machakos County, Kenya

Abstract:

The objective of this research is to analyse the interrelationships between digital marketing and service quality, digital marketing and sales performance, service quality and sales performance, as well as the mediating role of service quality in linking digital marketing to sales performance. This investigation adopted a quantitative research approach, structured around the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and analytical techniques. The study focused on 100 small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) located in Machakos town, Kenya. Respondents were MSME managers selected through simple random sampling to ensure fairness and representativeness. Data was collected using an online questionnaire. The instrument was designed with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), allowing respondents to express levels of agreement or disagreement with the given statements. The responses were processed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The results indicate that: Digital marketing positively influences service quality, Digital marketing significantly enhances sales performance, Service quality has a positive impact on sales performance and Digital marketing indirectly strengthens sales performance through the mediating role of service quality in the digital environment.

Keywords:

Dr. Raymond Musyoka

Department of Business Administration,
University of Nairobi

Email: raymond.musyoka@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 4.2

Impact of Digital Marketing on the Performance of Real Estate Companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties, Kenya

Abstract:

This study sought to determine the impact of digital marketing on the performance of real estate companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties, Kenya. This was supported by the technology acceptance model by Davis (1986) and the resource-based theory by Barney (1991). The study was based on descriptive correlational research design, targeting all real estate companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties. As per the Kenya Property Developers Association (2022), there were 40 real estate companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties at the time of this study. This study sampled all 40 real estate companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties, with one top manager selected through purposive sampling. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was administered through the drop-wait-and-pick methodology. The data from the field was cleaned and edited for completeness before coding and entry into SPSS for analysis through descriptive and regression statistics. The study adopted a multiple regression model. The study found that search engine optimisation ($\beta = 0.698$; $p = 0.009$), pay per click advertising ($\beta = 0.439$; $p = 0.000$); social media marketing ($\beta = 0.859$; $p = 0.014$); and influencer marketing ($\beta = 0.725$; $p = 0.002$) had a positive impact on organisational performance. The study concluded that a digital marketing strategy has a positive impact on the performance of real estate companies in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties, Kenya. The study recommends that real estate company management increase their adoption of SEO marketing, the level of PPC advertising, investment in social media marketing, and the number of influencers involved in marketing their products in the digital space. The study recommends similar studies based on other factors influencing performance, other digital marketing strategies, other companies and counties outside the coastal region.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Organizational Performance, Search Engine Optimization, Content Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Pay-Per-Click and Influencer Marketing.

Roman Fondo Gona

University of Nairobi

Email: fondoroman@gmail.com

Dr. Raymond Musyoka

University of Nairobi

Email: raymond.musyoka@uonbi.ac.ke

Amos Musili King'ola

Open University of Kenya, Konza Technopolis.

Email: musilikingola@gmail.com

Paper 4.3

The Effect of Demographic Characteristics on the Relationship between Perceived Service Quality and Customer Loyalty among Passengers of Railway Transport Services in Kenya

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to find the effect of demographic characteristics on the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty among passengers of railway transport services in Kenya. The study employed a pragmatist paradigm and a descriptive, convergent mixed methods research design. A proportional stratified random sampling procedure was employed in picking samples from each railway service provider. Stratified sampling ensured all the subgroups were represented in the sample. A sample size of 357 respondents was realised through the use of simple random sampling. The study population comprised all railway customers who had frequently used passenger services in Kenya. A self-administered questionnaire was employed to gather data. A pilot study was carried out to test questionnaire reliability and validity. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse quantitative data. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. Factor analysis tested convergent validity, divergent validity and construct validity. The study findings hypothesised that there was no significant moderating effect of demographic characteristics on the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$, $\Delta R^2 = 0\%$). The study concluded that Demographic characteristics have no significant moderating influence on the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty. The relationship did not improve upon the introduction of the interaction term, and it was not positive and statistically significant ($P\text{-value} \geq 0.05$).

Keywords: Perceived Service Quality, Demographic Characteristics, Customer Loyalty, Railway Transport Services, Kenya

Amos Musili King'ola

University of Nairobi.

Email: musilikingola@gmail.com

Raymond Musyoka, PhD

University of Nairobi.

Email: raymond.musyoka@uonbi.ac.ke

Francis Kibera, PhD, CBS.

University of Nairobi.

Email: proffkibera@gmail.com

Paper 4.4

Enhancing Brand Equity Through Sports Sponsorship among large commercial banks in Kenya.

Abstract:

The study examined the influence of sports sponsorship on brand equity among customers of large commercial banks in Kenya. Social Identity theory and Brand Equity model are the theoretical foundations. Sports sponsorship was measured by intensity, visibility, fit and effectiveness, while brand equity was measured using brand awareness, association, loyalty and perceived quality.

Keywords: Sports sponsorship, brand equity, consumer-based brand equity. Large commercial banks

Nyakeru Mary

University of Nairobi

Email: mnyakeru@gmail.com

Dr. Njeru Winnie

University of Nairobi

Email: winnie.njeru@uonbi.ac.ke

Paper 4.5

Impact of Strategic Management Decisions on Organisational Growth: A Case Study of Safaricom's Expansion into Ethiopia

Abstract:

This study explores the impact of strategic management decisions on Organisational growth, using Safaricom's expansion into Ethiopia as a case study. Focusing on strategic management as the independent variable and organisational growth as the dependent variable, the research conceptualises strategic decisions as encompassing market entry, resource allocation, financial inclusion initiatives, and customer-centric pricing strategies. These decisions are pivotal for sustaining competitive advantage and adaptability in new environments, particularly in emerging markets like Ethiopia. Safaricom's strategic approach addresses the complexities of Ethiopia's regulatory framework, competitive landscape, and infrastructure demands, aiming to achieve both market penetration and long-term growth. The research employs both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through structured interviews with Safaricom's senior management involved in the Ethiopian expansion, providing insights into the motivations, challenges, and adaptations in strategic decision-making. Secondary data from Safaricom's financial and operational reports supplemented the analysis, offering quantitative metrics of growth, including revenue, customer acquisition, and market share. The analysis, guided by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and Resource-Based View, highlights how Safaricom's unique resources and strategic flexibility contributed to measurable growth outcomes in Ethiopia, such as increased digital financial access and enhanced network coverage. Findings indicate that Safaricom's strategic initiatives, particularly the integration of M-PESA for financial inclusion, adaptive pricing, and extensive network expansion, were instrumental in driving growth. Customer-centric approaches aligned Safaricom's services with local demands, fostering brand loyalty and sustaining market entry momentum. However, challenges such as regulatory compliance and economic volatility underscore the need for ongoing strategic adjustments to maintain competitiveness. The study concludes that strategic management decisions significantly impact growth by enabling firms to navigate complex, dynamic markets. Recommendations include expanding M-PESA's financial services, enhancing rural connectivity, and fostering local partnerships to strengthen community ties and operational resilience. While this research offers valuable insights into strategic growth in emerging markets, it is limited to a single case within a specific timeframe, suggesting further longitudinal studies and comparative research across industries. These findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the role of strategic management in organisational growth, particularly within the telecommunications sector in Africa.

Keywords: Strategic Management, Organisational Growth, Market Entry, Resource Allocation, Financial Inclusion Strategy and Customer-Centric Pricing Strategies.

Kavithi Victor Kiamba
University of Nairobi

Email: kavithikiamba@gmail.com

Dr. Raymond Musyoka
University of Nairobi

Email: raymond.musyoka@uonbi.ac.ke

Amos Musili King'ola.

Open University of Kenya, Konza Technopolis

Email: musilikingola@gmail.com

Paper 4.6

Strategic Innovation as an Antecedent of Firm Performance: A Case Study of HACO Industries in Kenya

Abstract:

This study sought to examine the influence of strategic innovations on firm performance in the context of Kenya's manufacturing sector, with a focus on HACO Industries as a case study. With national goals such as “Kenya Manufacturing 20by30” aiming to grow the sector's GDP contribution, understanding the contribution of innovation in navigating market disruptions, shifting consumer trends, and supply chain challenges is both timely and critical.

Keywords: Strategic innovation, firm performance, competitive advantage, HACO Industries, FMCG, Kenya, innovation culture.

Beth Kinya Ndumba

University of Nairobi

Email: kinyandumba@students.uonbi.ac.ke

Dr. Winnie Njeru

University of Nairobi.

Email: winnie.njeru@uonbi.ac.ke



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