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**ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF TOP MANAGEMENT
COMMITMENT ON ADOPTION OF COMPETITIVE
STRATEGIES IN PARASTATALS IN KENYA; A CASE OF
KENYA BROADCASTING CORPORATION**

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Strategy

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF TOP MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT ON ADOPTION OF COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES IN PARASTATALS IN KENYA; A CASE OF KENYA BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of top management commitment on adoption of competitive strategies in parastatals in Kenya.

Methodology: The target population of this study was 36 employees in its headquarters in Kenya, the sampling frame of this study was derived from the database of CAK and media council of Kenya which regulates and licenses broadcasters in Kenya, stratified sampling was used in selecting the respondents from their respective management level. Data was collected using questionnaire method, which was self-administered questionnaire. Financial data was obtained from financial statements of KBC records. Multiple regression analysis was used to give an insight into the relationship between factors and competitive strategies. This was done with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for production of graphs, tables, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Results: The study established that manager's lack of commitment to performing their roles lead to the low ranks of employees having support and guidance through the strategy implementation process. It can be concluded from this study that when holding other factors constant top management commitment was found to have a positive and significant relationship with strategy implementation.

Recommendations: The study recommends that parastatals should urge the top management to be willing to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process strategies because they play a pivotal role in the adoption and implantation process.

Keywords: *Top management, commitment, parastatals, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Creating a sustainable competitive advantage may be the most imperative goal of any organization and may be the most important single attribute on which each firm must place its most focus. This entails developing successful competitive strategies that focus on assessing unique strengths, identifying growth opportunities, collecting competitive intelligence, and responding to competitive threats. It will effectively support a company's top-line growth objectives by helping a company develop a differentiated and sustainable competitive position. The demands and needs of the environment are also constantly evolving and management is more concerned with adjusting the company according to the needs and demands of the environment. The strongest competitive force or forces determine the profitability of an industry and so are of the greatest importance in strategy formulation, different forces take on prominence in shaping competition in each industry. Sustainable competitive advantage is born out of core competencies that yield long-term benefit to the company. Competitive strategy comprises of all those moves and approaches that a firm has and is taking to attract buyers, withstand competitive pressure and improve its market position (Thompson & Strickland, 2002).

1.1.1. Concept of Competitive Strategy

Competition is at the core of the success or failure of firms and it determines the appropriateness of firm's activities that can contribute to its performance. Scholes and Whittington (2008) defined competitive strategies as the search for a favorable competitive position in an industry, the fundamental arena in which competition occurs. It aims to establish a profitable and sustainable position against the forces that determine industry competition. According to Thompson et al. (2008) the main objective of competitive strategy is to knock the socks off rivals companies by doing a better job of satisfying buyer needs and preferences. By adopting a winning strategy a firm is able to gain competitive advantage which grows fundamentally out of value a firm is able to create for its customers that exceed the firms cost of creating it.

1.1.2 The Broadcasting Industry in Kenya

According to the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK, 2015) report, changes in government, politics, the economy and society have opened up big markets with huge potential for growth and expansion in the Kenyan broadcasting industry. Regional markets have evolved into significant market segments because of the value and the ability to address specific customer needs and aspirations. The markets have experienced changing market needs, wants and preferences. Similarly, the customers have become enlightened and are exposed to many choices hence will no longer accept delays, variations in product performance and sloppy services. This implies that markets have to be constantly monitored so as to undertake reviews on performance of the organization in the market (CAK, 2015)

1.1.3 Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation is a state owned corporation that has a rich history dating back to 1928 when the first Radio Broadcasting Service was launched. With one TV channel, three

national and 17 vernacular/regional radio services, KBC is currently the largest electronic media organization in the East and Central African Region. Even with this rich history, extensive infrastructure throughout the country and Government connections as a parastatal in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as the National Broadcaster, KBC has come under intense competition from new commercial entrants in both radio and TV broadcasting which have been launched since the Government deregulated and liberalized the electronic media industry in 1989. (CCK, 2010)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The broadcasting industry has traditionally operated in a relatively stable environment for decades. However, today the industry is facing dramatically aggressive competition in the environment (Reynolds, 2005). Since the linearization of the Media industry in Kenya, market barriers have fallen creating intense competition from the new entrants. The broadcasting sector is experiencing rapid innovations which require media firms to constantly reinvent themselves so as to stay relevant in the market. KBC rapidly lost market share to new competitors such as KTN, Citizen and NTV resulting in decreased audience and revenues. (Ngugi *et al* 2005). Broadcasting stations in Kenya are realizing that stiff competition within the Broadcasting industry necessitates the design of competitive strategies to guarantee their performance. Successful strategies lead to superior performance and sustainable competitive advantage (Porter,2004). The ability of a firm to command a competitive advantage depends on the sustainability of the competitive advantages that they command. The business environment in the country has drastically changed resulting in some media houses opening a number of radio stations in the country and across borders and thus increasing competition in the industry globally (Porter, 2004). Dulo (2006), states that every media house has to consider how to enter a market and then build and protect its competitive position. Guided by these facts, there is a need, to formulate a study on broadcasting sector in Kenya, specifically to understand the effects of combined strategies in broadcasting sector of Kenya.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation embarked on implementing various competitive strategies, according to its 2010 – 2014 strategic plans, in response to the entrance of new competitors. These competitive strategies were geared towards turning the fortunes of the organization around and repositioning itself in the changing environment. However, the impact of these competitive strategies and their effectiveness in bringing the desired benefits is a subject that needs to be reviewed. Smith and Graves (2009) conducted a study to produce useful predictors of corporate success using the information contained within companies' annual reports. Francis and Desai (2008) also conducted a study, testing the ability of situational variables, manageable predestine resources and specific responses to decline, to classify performance outcomes in declining firms. According to the authors there are many unanswered questions about what characteristics differentiate successful organizational from failure. Most of the determinants identified by Francis and Desai (2009) and Smith and Graves (2009) are similar except that Smith and Graves (2005) included the role of senior management adoption of competitive strategies process. Francis and Desai (2008), Smith and Graves (2009) and Scherrer (2003)), all found that the severity of the financial distress significantly affects the outcome of the competitive strategies.

Kiragu, (2014) Assessment of challenges facing insurance companies in building competitive advantage in Kenya. Media firms are operating under increasing competitive environment that puts them under pressure to continually reinvent them by becoming innovative and developing new competitive strategies to remain relevant in the market. In pursuit of its mandate to provide information and educate the public, KBC has embraced competitive strategies which have not been without challenges.

Previous research studies have concentrated on the implementation of the competitive strategies adopted by various institutions like banks. These includes Chege (2008) researched on the competitive strategies adopted by Equity Bank Limited. Warucu (2004) studied the competitive strategies employed by commercial banks. Nyakang'o (2007) carried out a researched on the competitive strategies adopted by audit firms in Nairobi. Gakenia (2008) survey on the strategy implementation in Kenya Commercial Bank. None of the studies has concentrated on assessment of the factors affecting effective adoption of competitive strategies adopted by the media industry in response to demand by the public. The researcher intends to bridge this gap by carrying out a survey that will assess effects of top management commitment on adoption of competitive strategies in parastatals in Kenya

1.3 Objective of the Study

To assess the effects of top management commitment on adoption of competitive strategies in parastatals in Kenya

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. It introduces and describes the theory which explains why the research problem under study exists. Torraco, (2007) asserts that theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge, within the limits of the critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of the research and that will relate it to the broader fields of knowledge in the class you are taking. The selection of a theory should depend on its appropriateness, ease of application, and explanatory power. The theoretical framework connects the researcher to existing knowledge (Kennedy, 2007).

2.2.1 Michael Porter Generic Strategies Model

Competitive advantage is the ability of an organization to add more value for its customers than its rivals and therefore attain a position of relative advantage. By adopting winning competitive strategies, a firm is able to gain an edge over its rivals within the industry it is operating in. porter argues that competitive strategy means taking offensive or defensive actions to create a defendable position in an industry, to cope with the competitive forces and thereby yield a superior return for the firm. He identified three generic strategies that can be adopted by a firm to

achieve competitive advantage that include; cost leadership, differentiation and the focus strategy. They are referred to as generic strategies because they are not specific to a firm or an industry.

In cost leadership, a firm sets out to become the low cost producer in its industry. The sources of cost advantage are varied and depend on the structure of the industry. They may include the pursuit of economies of scale, proprietary technology, preferential access to raw materials and other factors. A low cost producer must find and exploit all sources of cost advantage. If a firm can achieve and sustain overall cost leadership, then it will be an above average performer in its industry, provided it can command prices at or near the industry average. Low costs allow firms to sell relatively standardized products that offer features acceptable to many customers at the lowest competitive price and such low prices will gain competitive advantage thus increasing market share. Whether a cost leadership strategy is sustainable depends on the ability of another competitor to match or develop a cost base than is lower than the cost leader.

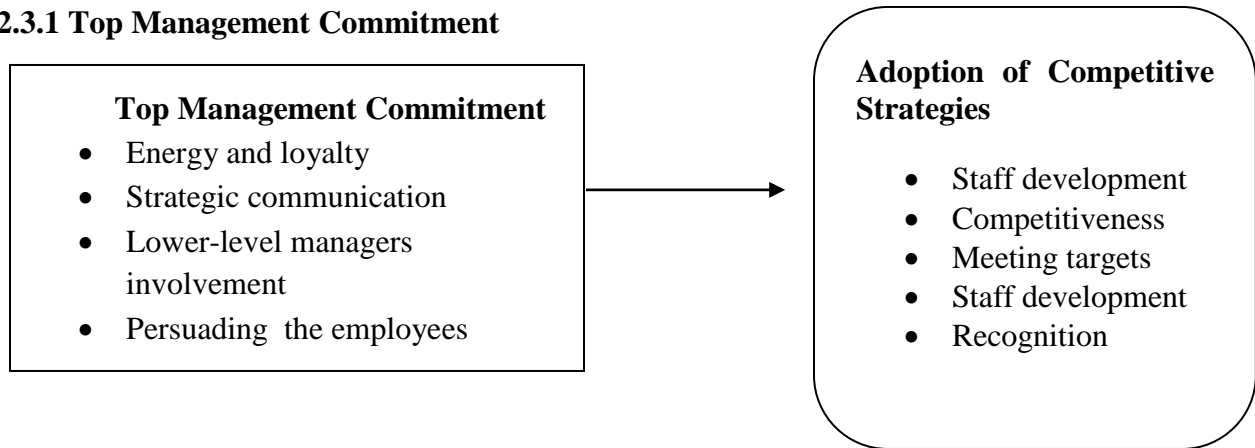
Differentiation strategy is related with the development of a product or service that offers unique attributes that are valued by customers and that are perceived to be better and offer more value than those of other competitors. The value added by the uniqueness of the product may allow the firm to charge a premium for it. This price is expected to cover all extra costs incurred in adding the unique features. In a differentiation strategy a firm seeks to be unique in its industry along some dimensions that are widely valued by buyers. It selects one or more attributes that many buyers in an industry perceive as important, and uniquely positions itself to meet those needs. Differentiation recognizes that customers are too numerous and widely scattered, with heterogeneous needs and adequate spending power, for them all to prefer the same product or service will move products from competing based primarily on price to competing on non-price factors, or promotional variables. If customers value a firm's offer, they will be less sensitive to aspects of competing offers; whereby price may not be one of these aspects. Focus or niche strategy involves segmenting markets and appealing to only one or a few groups of customers or industry buyers. It is hoped that by focusing the marketing efforts on one or two narrow market segments and tailoring the marketing mix to these specialized markets, it is possible to better meet the needs of that target market. At the same time it aims to achieve either a cost advantage or differentiation. The generic strategy of focus rests on the choice of a narrow competitive scope within an industry. The firm selects a segment or group of segments in the industry and tailors its strategy to serving them to the exclusion of others. The premise is that the needs of the group can be better serviced by focusing entirely on it and this enables the firm enjoy customer loyalty.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

A concept is an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances (Kombo and Tromp, 2009, Miles and Huberman, 1994 and Reichel and Ramey, 1987). Unlike a theory, a concept does not need to be discussed to be understood (Smyth, 2004). A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). A conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop awareness and understanding of the situation under

scrutiny and to communicate it. When clearly articulated, a conceptual framework has potential usefulness as a tool to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings. It forms part of the agenda for negotiation to be scrutinized, tested, reviewed and reformed as a result of investigation and it explains the possible connections between the variables (Smyth, 2004). Top management commitment factors on adoption of competitive strategies in parastatals in Kenya will be considered.

2.3.1 Top Management Commitment



Independent Variables

Dependent variable

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework

2.4.1 Factors Affecting Strategy Implementation

Competitive Strategy adoption involves organization of the firm's resources and motivation of the staff to achieve objectives. The environmental conditions facing many firms have changed rapidly. Today's global competitive environment is complex, dynamic, and largely unpredictable. To deal with this unprecedented level of change, a lot of thinking has gone into strategy formulation. Strategic management is about managing the future, and effective strategy formulation is crucial, as it directs the attention and actions of an organization. The assessment of competitive strategy formulation processes becomes crucial for practitioners and researchers alike in order to conduct and evaluate different formulation processes (Olson et al. 2005).

In recent years organizations have sought to create greater organizational flexibility in responding to environmental turbulence by moving away from hierarchical structures to more modular forms. Responsibility, resources and power in firms has been the subject of decentralization and delaying. Given an intensifying competitive environment, it is regularly asserted that the critical determinant in the success and, doubtlessly, the survival of the firm is the successful implementation of marketing strategies, The role and tasks of those employees

charged with competitive strategy adoption duties, the mid-level managers, in these new restructured organizations is under scrutiny.(Balogun & Johnson, 2004).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study was 36 employees in its headquarters in Kenya, the sampling frame of this study was derived from the database of CAK and media council of Kenya which regulates and licenses broadcasters in Kenya, stratified sampling was used in selecting the respondents from their respective management level. Data was collected using questionnaire method, which was self-administered questionnaire. Financial data was obtained from financial statements of KBC records. Multiple regression analysis was used to give an insight into the relationship between factors and competitive strategies. This was done with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for production of graphs, tables, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

4.0 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered to all the respondents was 33 questionnaires. A total of 23 questionnaires were properly filled and returned from the KBC employees. This represented an overall successful response rate of 70%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2010), a response rate of 50% or more is adequate. Babbie (2004) also asserted that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response Rate	Frequency	Percent
Returned	23	70%
Unreturned	10	30%
Total	33	100%

4.3 Demographics

4.3.1 Gender of the participants in percentages

The study established that the male employees were more (53.5%) than the female (46.5%), this although it was fair representation of the employees in the company. This agrees with the gender rule in Kenya in terms of male-female representation (Kenyan constitution 2010)

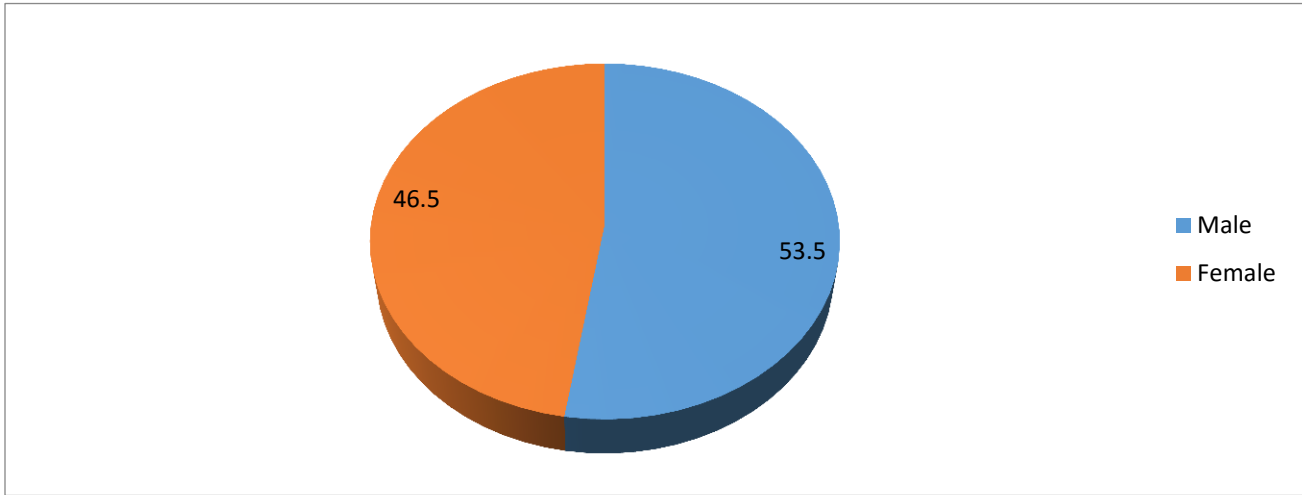


Figure 2: Composition of Gender

4.3.2 Education level

Investigating on the education level of the employees in KBC, the study revealed that most of the employees were of degree level (65%) and masters at (25%) while a few had diploma education. The study conquers with the findings of Pazarskis, et al., (2006) who explored the improvement of business Performance after adoption of quality management strategies and found out that education level plays a key role in implementation of quality management strategies.

Table 2 Education level of the participants

Education	Frequency	Percentages
Diploma	2	10
Degree	15	65
Masters	6	25
Total	23	100

4.3.3 Area of specialization

To effectively deliver well after introduction of competitive strategy implementation is try to match their employees with their specialization. Figure 3 shows the result of the areas that were represented in the study for better performance. It was discovered that marketing was the area that the companies had put more emphasis at 27.5% with finance and strategy and operation being at 20%. The study by Epstein (2004) found out that for effective move in organization performance, the companies had to do more marketing so that the market can be informed of products and new changes they bring to the market. This can be the reasons why the KBC

decided to put more effort in marketing by employing more human personnel to reach greater market while developing more competitive strategies.

Table 3 confirms to this by showing that only (10%) of the employees are the one who are working in different area of specialization. But still if the company wishes to achieve more efficiency in delivery of they should make sure that employees work on their area of specialization. (Moretti & Florian 2012)

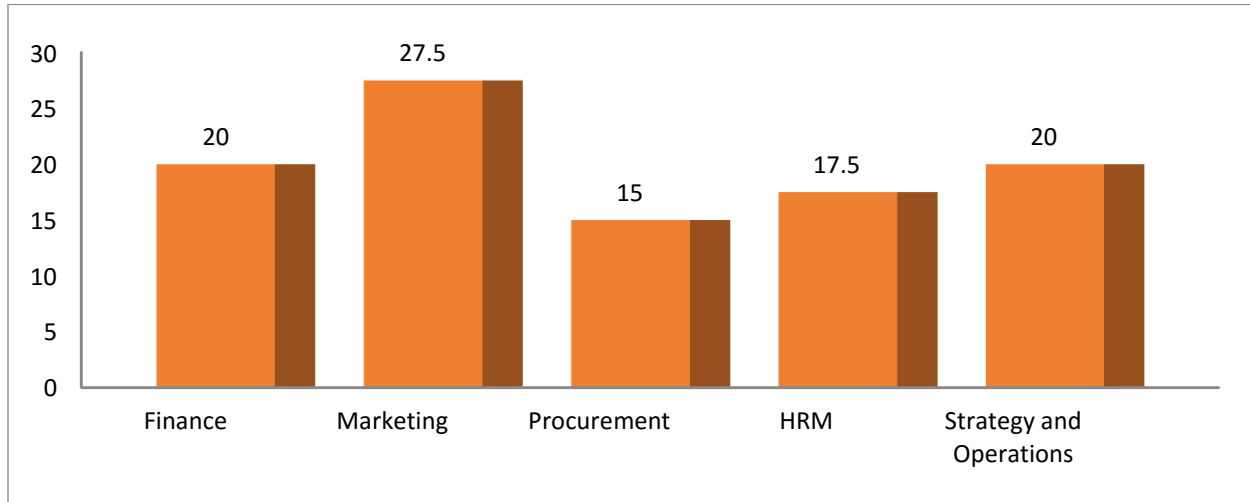


Figure 3: Area of specialization

4.3.4 Working experience

The respondents have worked with the companies for a period of five years with the majority having worked for the companies for between five and ten and ten to fifteen years and they have been able to witness the transition of the company from manual systems to computerized system. It was found out that above 50% of the respondents have worked with the companies for a period of more than ten years and a smaller percentage have been there for between 5-10 years hence giving us a 25% experience. However, though most of the respondents have worked with the manual systems and now with the computerized systems they are able to distinguish between the two systems and give the values and the challenges they have experienced. The table below shows the respondents, their experience.

Table 3: Response experience

Year category	No. of respondents	Percent
Below 5 years	9	37%
5-10 years	10	44%
10-15 years	4	19%
Total	23	100%

4.4 Factors influencing adoption of competitive strategy implementation

This section attempts to analyze the findings of the various factors affecting adoption of competitive strategy implementation in parastatals in Kenya as were hypothesized by the researcher. They include; top management commitment, organization culture and financial resources.

4.4.1 Top management commitment

The first objective of the study was to establish if top management commitment affects adoption of competitive strategy implementation in parastatals. A reliability test, factor analysis, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were done in respect of this variable.

4.4.1.1 Reliability Test for Top management commitment

The reliability results for Top management commitment attracted a coefficient of 0.71 hence the statements were good for analysis as shown in table 4.5.

Table 4: Reliability Test for Top management commitment

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Competition	6	0.71

4.4.1.2 Factor Analysis for Top management commitment

Factor analysis in respect of Top management commitment was conducted and the results were as shown in Table 5 The results of the analysis for statements regarding Top management commitment and competitive strategy implementation and all the six statements attracted a coefficient of more than 0.3, which is the minimum required, (Zikmund, et al 2010) hence were retained for further analysis.

Table 5: Top management commitment factor analysis Component Matrix

Statement	Component
Top level management influence on strategy implementation	0.778
Top management have a pivotal role	0.599
Willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process.	0.538
Top management does not allow employee participation in decision making	0.555
The top level managers always determine the degrees of authority needed	0.536
The organization selects the right people for key positions	0.667

4.4.1.3 Descriptive Analysis for Top management commitment

The first objective of the study was to establish if Top management commitment affects adoption of competitive strategy implementation of KBC. Table 6 shows that 81% of the respondents agreed that top level management influence on strategy implementation. 65% agreed that top management play a pivotal role in strategy adoption and implementation, 85% disagreed that top management Willingness to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process 73% of the respondents agreed that Top management does not allow employee participation in decision making 83% disagreed that The top level managers always determine the degrees of authority needed to manage each organizational unit during strategy implementation and 76% disagreed that To enhance strategic implementation success, my organization selects the right people for key positions

The findings of this study are in agreement with those of Aaltonen and Ikåvalko (2002) that inappropriate organizational structure and lack of top management backing are the main inhibiting factors to effective strategy implementation.

Table 6: top management commitment and competitive strategy

Statement	strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	strongly agree (%)
Top management influence	8	2	9	67	14
Pivotal role	5	22	8	45	20
Willingness and loyalty	19	66	5	8	2
No Employees in decision making	6	16	5	51	22
Determine the degrees of authority	20	63	6	10	3
Selects right people for key positions	31	45	7	12	5

4.4.1.4 Correlation Analysis – Top management and competitive strategy implementation

Table 7 displays the results of correlation test analysis between the dependent variable (competitive strategy implementation) and top management commitment. The results show that adoption of competitive strategy implementation was positively correlated with top management commitment with a weak correlation coefficient of 0.151. This reveals that any positive change in top management commitment led to improvement in adoption of competitive strategy implementation.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation – Top management and competitive strategy implementation

Variable		Competitive strategy	Top management
Competitive.strategy implementation	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Top management	Pearson Correlation	0.151	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.013	

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of major findings of the study, relevant discussions, conclusions and the necessary recommendations. The study sought to establish the effect of top management commitment on adoption and implementation of competitive strategy of parastatals in Kenya a case of KBC.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

5.2.1 Top management commitment and strategy implementation

The first objective of the study was to establish if top management commitment affects competitive strategy adoption and implementation in parastatals. Various methods were used to arrive at the findings. These methods included descriptive statistics, parametric analysis and regression analysis. The findings indicated that there was high influence of top management on adoption and implementation of strategy. This observation was arrived at since the employees agreed that top level management had a lot of influence on strategy adoption and implementation because the top management play a pivotal role in strategy adoption and implementation, in addition to that most employees disagreed that top management were Willing to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process.it was also noted that Top management do not allow employee participation in decision making and also most employees disagreed that to enhance strategic implementation success, the organization selects the right people for key positions

The results reveal that top management commitment is statistically significant in explaining implementation of strategies in KBC.

5.2.2 Implementation of competitive strategies

The study sought to establish the benefits of Implementation of competitive strategies in parastatals in Kenya and especially in KBC. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were conducted. Results indicated that it was now easier dealing effectively with rapidly changing circumstances and providing employees with Clear Objectives and Directions for the Future of the Organization .Specifically, the results indicated that there was increased teamwork and expertise among employees in the organization.

5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 Top management and strategy implementation

From the findings the study concludes that top management commitment positively affects Strategy implementation at KBC. The study established that manager's lack of commitment to performing their roles lead to the low ranks of employees having support and guidance through the strategy implementation process, It can be concluded from this study that when holding other factors constant top management commitment was found to have a positive and significant relationship with strategy implementation. This implies that top management commitment in KBC was statistically significant in explaining competitive strategy implementation.

5.3.2 Implementation of competitive strategies

It was possible to conclude from the study findings that the organization had a competitive strategic plan and that all management levels worked towards its achievement. The study also conclude that the organization had not moved a significant step as far as competitive strategy implementation in the organization is concerned although there were some visible benefits like teamwork and expertise among employees. This implies that the management of KBC had embraced the idea of adopting and implementing competitive strategies.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Top management and strategy implementation

The study sought to establish the influence of top management commitment on competitive strategy implementation in Kenya. The study recommends that parastatals should urge the top management to be willing to give energy and loyalty to the implementation process strategies because they play a pivotal role in the adoption and implantation process. They should also ensure that they engage the employees views whenever making strategic changes in the organization so that there will be smooth operations of the activities. The parastatals should also ensure that right people for key positions in the organization are selected so as to enhance strategic adoption and implementation success.

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