



EFFECTS OF STRATEGIC SUPPLY CHAIN RESPONSIVENESS ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY, NAIROBI CITY COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to determine the effects of Strategic Supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Nairobi City County. The study was anchored on Value Chain Theory. A descriptive research design was used in this study. Employees of selected Kenya Power and Lighting in specific functional divisions, such as information technology, human resource, finance, sales and customer service, and marketing, were surveyed using standardized questions. The study's target population was 1004 people, with a sample size of 100. Stratified simple random sampling was used in the investigation. SPSS version 26.0 was used to analyze the qualitative data. Data was presented in tables, graphs and pie-charts. Majority of the respondents indicated that the level of competitive advantage was moderately used in Kenya power and lighting company. It was clearly indicated business's advantage over competitors was moderately as a result of differentiation and cost savings. Based on statistical results the study concluded that strategic supply chain responsiveness had no significant effect on competitive advantage. Strategic supply chain partnership had a significant positive effect on competitive advantage. The study recommended that businesses must create a flexible supply chain, regardless of whether they handle their own logistics or rely on third-party providers. Monitoring the response-required elements is the initial stage in developing a responsive supply chain. Businesses must create a flexible supply chain, regardless of whether they handle their own logistics or rely on third-party providers. KPLC must anticipate changes in demand, yet conventional methods are insufficient.

Key Words: Strategic Supply Chain, Responsiveness of Supply Chains, Kenya Power and Lighting Company

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INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades, consumer preferences have evolved and have drastically changed. Modern day consumer is more educated, informed and has all the resources at his disposal to seek a better and superior alternative. They have the wisdom and the knowledge of the product they seek and the available alternative for the same product. It appears that consumers are much more price and quality sensitive and are always on the lookout for a better value product and service. For businesses to succeed in this competitive environment, they need to be more agile and adaptive and should be able to sense and respond in real time to changing global business environment (Enyinda & Szmerekovsky, 2008). As these businesses seek to create greater value for their customers by changing the way they do business, within this environment supply chain is one area that has gained immense importance as a result.

The energy industry in Kenya has undergone significant changes in recent years, with the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) becoming a major player in the market. The study aims to examine the strategic supply chain and competitive Advantage of KPLC in Kenya. Barney (2002). of the company highlighting its creation, growth and development over the years. The study will then delve into the current state of the energy industry in Kenya and analyze the key players and trends in the market. It will focus on KPLC's business, including its key products and services, target market and customer base. In addition, the study analyzed KPLC's supply chain and examined its sourcing and procurement strategies, logistics and distribution systems (Lyson, 2012). It identified the company's challenges in managing its supply chain, including logistics, inventory management and distribution.

Competitive Advantage According to Godfrey and Hill (1995) in (Storer et. al, 2014) asserts that excellence is the company's ability to use resources in conjunction with strategies to achieve the desired end goal. The capacity that affects the

supply chain and industrial output is, by default, greater and superior to normal business processes (Zokaei K., 2007). Simply put, excellence is the strategic ability of the supply chain to combine capabilities such as integrated information exchange, system-level coordination, integration of activities between companies and supply chains. According to Hitt et. al. (2001) in (Storer et. al, 2014), competition or competitiveness is a condition of rapidly increasing competition based on the quality-price position, competition to create or attack existing geographic products or markets, and competition based on the number of funds. and create even bigger fund alliances. Competitive advantage is also the ability to attract superior attention compared to competitors who carry out similar activities. This must be adjusted to the functions that exist within the company, such as the production function, marketing function, manufacturing function, and human resource function which must be able to synergize in an integrated and integrated manner to support the company's goals in winning the market competition (Storer et. al, 2014).

Supply chain responsiveness has been dealt simultaneously with risk management. This is mainly due to the fact that responsiveness is required as a first step towards developing adaptive capabilities for mitigating environmental uncertainties. Consequently, the literature on supply chain responsiveness is largely fragmented. Supply chain responsiveness is defined as the extent to which channel members respond cooperatively to environmental changes (Wu et al., 2006). It enables a firm to utilize its competencies and capabilities to ward of negative effects of the changing environment and therefore respond better to such shifts (Teece et al., 1997). Recent market requires firms to develop and elicit collaborative response from their supply chain.

To service Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, the East African Electricity and Lighting Company Limited, formerly known as the KPLC, was founded in 1922. Its name was changed to KPLC Limited in 1983.

Currently, the Kenyan government owns 50.1% of the corporation, and investors own the remaining 49.9%. KPLC also handled all energy stations on behalf of the federal government until a significant restructure in 1997. It now oversees a small number of government-owned hybrid and diesel power plants that are not wired into the main grid. KPLC is in charge of planning for adequate energy transmission and generation infrastructure and functions as the nationwide system operator, As of June 2020, the network for power transmission and distribution is being built, maintained, and electricity is being sold to over 8 million users. The company's mission is to become Kenya's top provider of energy solutions by offering dependable, high-quality service. KenGen, KETRACO, Equator Energy, Viesgo, and other businesses are some of its rivals.

The study looked at how the KPLC's performance is impacted by supply chain integration. In addition to the data presented in the article, the study will look into the effects of KPLC's interactions with important stakeholders on the integration and performance of its supply chain. It looked at KPLC's methods for establishing and upholding ties with its partners, clients, and suppliers, as well as how it uses these connections to enhance supply chain integration. The investigation also examined how the business chooses and manages its suppliers, as well as how it makes sure that they satisfy its performance and quality criteria. The study also looked into KPLC's strategy for customer interaction and how it leverages consumer feedback to enhance the efficiency of its supply chain.

Statement of the Problem

Remaining competitive is one of the goals that drive existence of organization in the presently turbulent business environment (Namada, 2018). The drive for competitive advantage helps the firm to remain viable in the environment. However, gaining competitive advantage require firms to adopt relevant strategies in supply chain management that have raised debate among the scholars and policy makers. The business environment that

energy sector operate in is not constant but keeps on changing and this pose a challenge to the way KPLC carry out the activities and survival. There has been a rise in the number of new entrants in energy sector besides the advancing forces of technologies and the changes in regulatory environment. KPLC is faced with a challenge of ensuring there are good customer care relationship and an improvement in market share (KAM, 2019). Achievement of competitive advantage is a challenge. It is important for KPLC to remain competitive since it is among the pillars of Big 4 agenda of the national government

Despite previous studies conducted on the competitive advantage of companies in the energy industry, there needs to be more research on the specific strategic supply chain management on competitive advantage of the KPLC in Kenya. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing KPLC's procurement and sourcing strategies, logistics and distribution systems and identifying the company's challenges in managing its supply chain. Additionally, it will examine the competitive landscape in the energy industry in Kenya and how KPLC's competitive advantage compares to that of its competitors.

Previous studies have focused on the general concept of competitive advantage in the energy industry Onuoga, (2015). However, they have yet to specifically examine the strategic supply chain and competitive Advantage of KPLC in Kenya. The gap in this study is that previous studies on competitive advantage in the energy industry have not specifically focused on the strategic supply chain and competitive advantage of the KPLC in Kenya and how they impact the company's performance (KPLC, 2020). Kivayilu, (2020) studied the effect of corporate social responsibility strategies on competitive advantage of soft drink manufacturing firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The implications of the findings were that manufacturers of soft drinks should continuously leverage on corporate social responsibility strategies in order to remaining competitive in their industry. This possesses a conceptual gap as it dealt

with CSA and not strategic supply chain management. Wairimu (2020) study was on competitive strategies and performance of tea processing factories in Murang'a County, Kenya. The study established a positive and significant relationship between differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy and focus strategy on organizational performance. The study concluded that differentiation strategy has the potential of creating competitive advantages to a firm which leads to improved sales performance and allows the factories to shield themselves from the competition. This also poses a conceptual and contextual gap. From the above studies none of them touched on strategic supply Chain management on competitive advantage of KPLC which this study investigated.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study was to determine the effects of Strategic Supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Nairobi City County.

The research was guided by the following question:

- What are the effects of Strategic Supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Nairobi city county

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The Value Chain Theory

The concept of value chains as decision support tools, was added onto the competitive strategy's paradigm developed by Porter as early as 1979. In Porter's value chains, Inbound Logistics, Operations, Outbound Logistics, Marketing and Sales, and Service are categorized as primary activities. Secondary activities include Procurement, Human Resource management, Technological Development and Infrastructure (Porter 1985). The value chain theory provides a framework for examining a firm's internal operations and also how they interact to produce a competitive edge. It was

first put forth by Michael Porter in 1985. The notion holds that the fundamental procedures and endeavors that characterize an organization's operations make up its value chain. These steps start, go on, and connect to the subsequent businesses in the chain within the company (Raibird, 2004).

The value chain theory and management of supply chains are closely connected ideas (SCM). The flow or conversion of products and services from of the raw materials phase to the end user is accomplished through the integration of all activities, activities, and facilities known as SCM (Handfied & Nichol, 1999). This concept applies to businesses because it unifies the numerous supply chain processes and procedures, enabling and organizing the movement of goods, resources, and information required to satisfy customers' demands for value (Rainbid, 2004). The energy view theory, which this study embraces, places a strong emphasis on, emphasizes the significance of diverse supply chain capabilities in producing imperfectly competitiveness that enable competitive advantage in product markets. This idea states that a firm's market and competitive environment determine the value of its resources and talents (Barney, 2012). The study examined KPLC's value chain and supply chains and how they supported the business's competitive edge in Kenya's energy market.

Empirical Literature Review

Al-Hawajreh and Murad (2014), sought to investigate the effect of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage in Jordanian Manufacturing Companies. It surveyed 269 responses by means of a questionnaire. Statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation, multiple regressions, were employed. To confirm the suitability of data collection instrument, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, Cronbach's Alpha and factor analysis were used. The research findings supported the hypotheses that (SCR) positively impacts (CA) of companies. The study results showed that the main hypothesis was

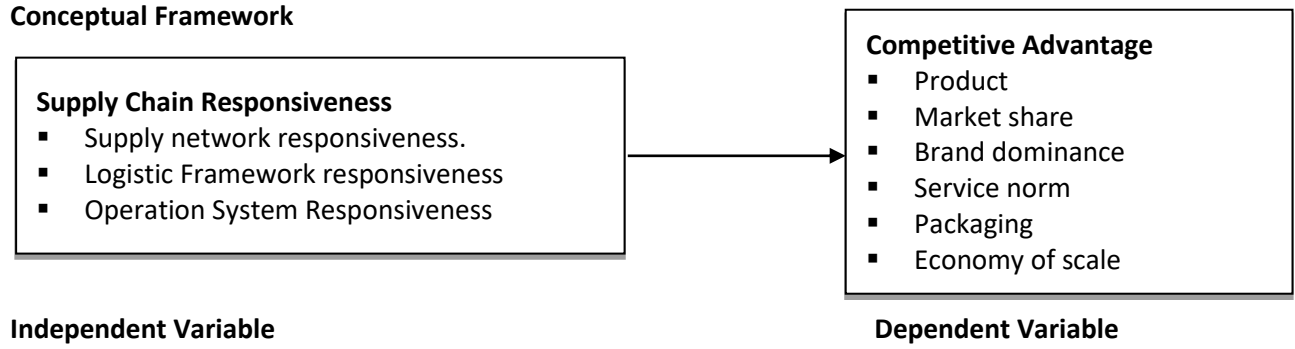
rejected and the alternative was accepted which states that the supply chain responsiveness variables (Operations System Responsiveness (OSR), Logistics Process Responsiveness (LPR) and Supplier Network Responsiveness (SNR) affect competitive advantage. The results also indicated that higher level of operations system responsiveness creates higher level of competitive advantage for companies, collectively based on low price, high delivery dependability, and low time to market. Also, it was uncovered that higher level of supplier network responsiveness creates higher level of competitive advantage for a company, collectively based low price and high delivery dependability. This study has some important implications for practitioners. This study provides suitable recommendations on the scope for improvement based on current levels of various specific impact supply chain responsiveness and its dimensions. Also, the study provides suitable recommendations on the scope for improvement based on current levels of various predominant supply chain responsiveness criteria that directly impact competitive advantage of a company, so as to make the organizations more competitive. Keywords: Supply Chain Responsiveness (SCR), Competitive. This study is different from the current study as it was done in Jordan and in manufacturing companies.

Hamid, Baharun, Alifiah (2012), conducted a study on Competitive Advantage through Supply Chain Responsiveness in Malaysia. The study also assessed the impact of supply chain responsiveness on firm competitive advantage. The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire which was

administrated to a total sample of 400 managers in Malaysia manufacturing industry. The response rate was 62% while 50% was usable questionnaires. Sample selection was based on convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and correlation between independent and dependent variables. The analyses involved statistical methods such as reliability and validity tests and multiple regressions. The research findings supported the hypotheses that supply chain integration positively impact supply chain responsiveness and competitive advantage. The finding also showed that supply chain responsiveness was positively associated with competitive advantage of a firm. Contextually the study differs from the current study as it was conducted in Malaysia.

Somuyiwa, Adebamb (2018) Supply Chain Responsiveness and Supply Chain Management Practices on competitive advantage. One hundred and fifteen (115) manufacturing companies, basically medium/large companies formed the sample of the study and data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The result revealed positive association between Supply Chain Responsiveness (SCR), SCM practices and Competitive Advantage. Finally, the study provides suitable recommendation on the scope for improvement based on current levels of various predominant SCM practices and SCR criteria that directly impact competitive advantage of a firm, so as to make the organizations more competitive. In context the study is different from the current study. The current study was done in KPLC in Kenya while this study was done in Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used in this study. The KPLC staff in the Ruaraka Complex was the target group. Employees of selected Kenya Power and Lighting in specific functional divisions, such as information technology, human resource, finance, sales and customer service, and marketing, were surveyed using standardized questions. The study's target population was 1004 people, with a sample size of 100. Stratified simple random sampling was used in the investigation. Before the questionnaires were delivered, a pilot study was done with 10% of the respondents. Content, construct, expert opinion, and pre-testing were all utilized to determine the dependability of instruments. The questionnaire's reliability, on the other hand, was evaluated using the Chronbach's alpha reliability test. SPSS version 26.0 was used to analyze the qualitative data. Data was presented in tables, graphs and pie-charts. The study used linear regression and correlation statistics to investigate the connection between the independent and dependent variables. The following formula was used to forecast the study's predictor variables, competitive edge.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \epsilon$$

Y= Competitive Advantage (CA)

Where: X1 = strategic Supply Chain Responsiveness

X2 = Strategic Supplier partnership

X3 = Strategic Supply Chain Integration

X4 = Strategic customer focus

ϵ = Error-term

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis was based on four independent variables (IV): strategic supply chain responsiveness, strategic supplier partnership, strategic supply chain integration, and strategic customer focus, and evaluate in relation to the dependent variable (DV), which was the competitive advantage of KPLC, Kenya.

Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage relates to variables that enable a corporation to produce goods or services more effectively or affordably than its competitors. These elements enable the producing unit to create greater sales or higher profits than its market competitors.

Table 1: Competitive Advantage

| Statements | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| My business's advantage over competitors is a result of differentiation and cost savings. | 4.0000 | .10000 |
| My company's brand equity is our competitive advantage | 3.4557 | 1.01017 |
| My company's low prices give the business a competitive advantage | 3.4557 | 1.01017 |
| My firm's service delivery is precise and effective, which contributes to its competitive advantage. | 3.3418 | .99854 |
| My company's products are of excellent quality, which helps it acquire a competitive edge. | 3.6313 | 1.11343 |
| The competitive advantage my company has gained through cost leadership and differentiation. | 3.6076 | 1.11422 |
| My company's low prices give the business a competitive advantage. | 4.0000 | 1.33973 |
| Aggregate Score | 3.6417 | .95518 |

Source: Researcher (2023).

The study results based on the aggregate score of 3.6417 and 0.95518 for mean and standard deviation respectively indicates that the competitive advantage of KPLC was moderate as indicated by the efficiency levels, effective

utilization of resources, brand equity, pricing, service delivery and quality services. This was supported by an individual mean ranging from 3.34 to 4.0. However, majority indicated that the level of competitive advantage was moderately used in

Kenya power and lighting company. It was clearly indicated business's advantage over competitors was moderately as a result of differentiation and cost savings. They indicated that KPLC products were of moderate quality, moderately low prices give the business a competitive advantage and moderately competitive advantage of KPLC have gained through cost leadership and differentiation. KPLC firm's service delivery was moderately precise and effective, which contributes to its competitive advantage. It is evident that the brand equity low prices moderately give the business a competitive advantage, This is supported by Marie (2019).

The result implies that KPLC lacks competitive in its operations as indicated by the proxies used such as cost savings, differentiation, cost leadership and

utilization of resources. This implies that KPLC and other industries in the same sector must be alive to effective resource utilization, cost control and differentiation strategies to remain competitive in Energy sector. These factors could help deliver projects and initiatives that will strengthen and cement Kenya Power competitive advantage and secure its profitability

Strategic Supply Chain Responsiveness

A responsive supply chain must fulfill two requirements: it must be responsive to your demands and to the needs of your consumer's Order-filling precision. In today's intensely competitive marketplace, the assurance of prompt delivery is a major selling feature.

Table 2: Strategic Supply Chain Responsiveness

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| My business understands the importance of giving customers' requests for bespoke items a prompt answer. | 3.9003 | .76833 |
| According to my organization, an elastic network is comprehensive, strategic, and goes beyond the bounds of the norm to include every aspect of the supply chain it operates in. | 3.9241 | .88847 |
| The management group considers the marketplace while implementing more adaptable adjustments. | 3.8856 | .90998 |
| My business is capable of adapting quickly to the rapidly changing environment and is market-sensitive. | 3.9114 | 1.00256 |
| My business has an informational system that includes clients and suppliers, raises knowledge and competence, and enables participants to broadly access and use information systems. | 3.9241 | .95777 |
| My business has spent money on product design. | 4.5063 | .99315 |
| Aggregate Score | 4.0086 | .92004 |

Source: Researcher (2023)

The aggregate mean scores of 4.0086 corresponds to "agree" on the likert scale. The standard deviation of 0.92004 shows a low standard deviation which is below the recommended S.D score of 2.0. The finding was supported by Al-Hawajreh and Murad (2014) that Logistics Process Responsiveness (LPR) and Supplier Network Responsiveness (SNR) affect competitive advantage. The results also indicated that higher level of operations system responsiveness creates higher level of competitive advantage for companies,

collectively based on low price, high delivery dependability, and low time to market. Hamid, Baharun, Alifiah (2012) further found that supply chain responsiveness was positively associated with competitive advantage of a firm. Additionally, Somuyiwa, Adebamb (2018) study revealed a positive association between Supply Chain Responsiveness (SCR), SCM practices and Competitive Advantage.

The result indicates that strategic supply chain in KPLC was responsive. The individual statement

scores for each indicator of strategic supply chain responsiveness ranged from 3.88 to 4.51 indicating that majority agreed with statements presented. The study found that business understands the importance of giving customers' requests for bespoke items a prompt answer. According KPLC, an elastic network is comprehensive, strategic, and goes beyond the bounds of the norm to include every aspect of the supply chain it-operates in. KPLC management group considers the marketplace while implementing more adaptable adjustments. KPLC management group considers the marketplace while implementing more adaptable adjustments. The KPLC business was capable of adapting quickly to the rapidly changing environment and was market-sensitive. KPLC business have an informational system that includes clients and suppliers, raises knowledge and competence, and enables participants to broadly access and use information systems and has spent money on product design, S supported by Al-Hawajreh and Murad (2014).

It's impossible to overstate the importance of happy customers to a company's productivity, growth, and overall competitive advantage. It key that KPLC money spent on product design and an informational system that actively engages customers and vendors, improves both parties' level of expertise, and provides participants with widespread access to such systems. It is important

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for the companies in the energy sector to consider modern consumers through communicating with retailers and do business via the web using a wide variety of portable electronic gadgets, use innovative interactions and constant feedback.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on statistical results the study concluded that strategic supply chain responsiveness had no significant effect on competitive advantage. The study recommended that Supply chain activities are essential to the success of enterprises. Regardless of a product's quality, a slow or frequently interrupted supply chain may limit a company's ability to wow clients and save costs. Businesses must create a flexible supply chain, regardless of whether they handle their own logistics or rely on third-party providers. Monitoring the response-required elements is the initial stage in developing a responsive supply chain. KPLC must anticipate changes in demand, yet conventional methods are insufficient.

Suggestions for Further Study

The study was based on strategic supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Power and Lighting Company, Nairobi City County. Other studies should consider operationalizing strategic supply chain management different and focus their studies on other sectors of economy.

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