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EFFECT OF STRATEGIC POSITIONING ON THE FIRMS PERFORMANCE IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS FIRMS IN KENYA: A CASE OF SAFARICOM LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

Strategic positioning is considered a critical requirement for the growth and profitability in the telecommunication industry. In modern competitive industry, Strategic positioning has a considerable impact on corporate performance leading to an improved market position that conveys competitive advantage and superior performance. Firms in the mobile telecommunication industry in Kenya have been operating in increasingly competitive, highly regulated and dynamic market and therefore have to formulate strategies to ensure their survival. The telecommunication industry environment has of late been affected adversely by the changing operating environment that has seen one of the four operators (YU mobile) quit the market after making huge losses and the remaining two (Airtel and Telkom) are trying to rebrand and make a strategic come back. Interestingly, while Safaricom is making the highest profits in East and Central Africa, Airtel, Telkom (Telkom Kenya) have been struggling a fact that has led to the management of both Telkom and Airtel consider leaving the Kenyan market. This study sought to find out the impact of strategic positioning on the performance of mobile telecommunication firms in Kenya, considering Firm's marketing, Research and development, Multiple Products and Resource availability as the measurement items. The study considered descriptive research design using a census approach. The target population of this study comprised of the management staffs working in the marketing and research & development departments at the headquarters of Safaricom limited in Kenya, the sampling frame consisted of Safaricom's top, middle and operational managers. Data was analyzed using the Statistical package for Social sciences (SPSS) version 18 and presented in graphs, tables and charts. The study established that marketing, research and development, resource availability and multiple products had a positive influence on the organizational performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya.

Key Words: *Organization's marketing, Research and development, Resource Availability, Multiple Products, Mobile Telecommunication Firms*

INTRODUCTION

An organization's strategy consists of the moves and approaches devised by management to produce successful organization performance. A strategy is thus a management game plan for the business (Kugun, Wanyonyi, & Sangoro, 2016). With growing business, there came the disenchantment period which was characterized by dissatisfaction planning because there was increased environmental turbulence, reduced Business opportunities and increased competition. The essence of formulating a competitive strategy is to relate a company to its environment (Ciobota & Velea, 2015). Formulating competitive brand strategy is an important problem for marketing managers but how these strategies are positioned is more important because strategies can always be replicated by competitors.
Organizations that do adopt strategic positioning tend to be more successful than others. However, research has also shown that strategic positioning can be risky and that failure is the most likely outcome of an organization (Stanley et al., 2013). Siregar & Toha, (2012) argued that the benefits of strategic positioning vary and may not accrue at all. Moreover, from his study Cooper and Brentani, (2010) have argued that the relationship can be U-shaped, with high and low levels likely resulting in the highest performance.

An organizational strategy is the sum of the actions a company intends to take to achieve long-term goals. Together, these actions make up a company's strategic plan. Strategic plans take at least a year to complete, requiring involvement from all company levels. Top management creates the larger organizational strategy, while middle and lower management adopt goals and plans to fulfill the overall strategy step by step, (Sophie & Johnson, 2017). Strategy is therefore concerned with long term direction, meeting challenges from the firm's business environment such as competitors and changing g needs of customers and using the organizational internal resources and competencies effectively and building on its strengths to meet environmental challenges. Whatever the interpretation is put on strategy, the strategic actions of an organization a widespread and long term consequences for the position of the organization in the market place, its relationship with different stakeholders and overall performance.

Strategic positioning is concerned with the way in which a business as a whole distinguishes itself in a valuable way from its competitors and delivers value to specific customer segments, (Wickham, 2011). "Organization strategic position is concerned with the impact on strategy of the external environment, internal resources and competences, and the expectations and influence of stakeholders. According to (Janiszewska, 2012), a consideration of the environment, strategic capability, the expectations the purposes within the cultural and political framework of the organization provides a basis for understanding the strategic position of an organization. In support to this, (Tamirisa, Johnson, Kochhar, & Mitton, 2013). Strategic positioning provides a vehicle for creating organizational focus and a framework for considering resource-allocation questions, when an organization articulates its perceptual location, the complexities surrounding these decisions are significantly reduced.

Organization strategic position is concerned with the impact on strategy of the external environment, internal resources and competences, and the expectations and influence of stakeholders. Gu & Baomin, (2009) states that a consideration of the environment, strategic capability, the expectations the purposes within the cultural and political framework of the organization provides a basis for understanding the strategic position of an organization. In support to this, Strategic positioning provides a vehicle for creating organizational focus and a framework for considering resource-allocation questions. Moreover, when an organization articulates its perceptual location, the complexities surrounding these decisions are significantly reduced.

The goal of positioning is to locate the brand in the minds of consumers to maximize the potential benefit of the firm. (Kotler & Keller, 2006). When a firm or provider establishes and maintains a distinctive place for itself and its offerings in the market, it is said to be successfully positioned. Hassan, George, & Craft, (2005) Positioning must establish a position for the product firm in the customers mind should be distinctive providing one simple consistent message and must set the product/firm apart from competitors. It should be noted that a firm cannot be all things to all people and therefore must focus. To be successful in the long term, the operations of a firm must be completely different from those traditional business counterparts.

Strategic Positioning is one of strategic management most critical tasks, for some marketers (Bridoux, 2003), positioning is strictly a communications issue. The product or service is given and the objective is to manipulate consumer perceptions of reality. Positioning is more than just advertising and promotion. Positioning strategies can be conceived and developed in a variety of ways. It can be derived from object attributes, competition, application, types of consumers involved or the characteristics of the product. Manhas, (2010) all these attributes represent a different approach in developing positioning strategies, even though all of them have the common objective of projecting a favorable image in the minds of the consumer.

Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs or goals and objectives. According to Richard et al. (2009) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of organizational outcomes: Financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment,); Product market performance (sales, market share,) and shareholder return (total shareholder return and economic Things are moving fast in Kenya's telecommunications sector. There has been enormous growth in the mobile communications industry in Kenya (Siregar & Toha, 2012).

Kenya has seen fast internet and mobile phone growth since the beginning of the liberalization of the telecommunications sector, (Gertz, (2007). Between 2000 and 2006, the number of mobile phone users rose from 180,000 to 7.3 million people, an increase of more than 4,000 percent. The fast-growing sector is characterized by competition between two operators: Safaricom, a 60/40 percent joint venture between the government-owned Telkom Kenya and Britain's Vodafone, accounting for a market share of 67.4 percent; and Airtel, accounting for 22.6 percent. Communications Authority of Kenya (CA) is a regulatory body that licenses and regulates all systems and services in the telecommunications industry, manages competition, regulates tariffs for communications services, and monitors the activities of licensees to enforce compliance with the license terms and conditions, (Ndiku, 2014).

Telecom is a booming industry. GSM alone (which is about 85% of world-wide wireless market). Contributes about $ 3 Billion revenue every day. While all sectors of economy are getting badly impacted by the economic recession and liquidity crunch, impact on telecom is a little less severe, at least in countries like India & China. Some people even argue that as the organizations tighten their belts and reduce their expenditures, it may possibly lead to accelerated growth in some segments of telecom industry. Tightening economic conditions are likely to make 'work from home' preferred option – both for employers as well as employees. At the same time, video conferencing is becoming preferred mode of communication & relation building with customers. All this is resulting in need for better & reliable communication leading to accelerated up-gradation to IP networks, further penetration of Fiber in the access network and rapid development & deployment of other associated technologies, (Patel, 2015).

The landscape of the Kenyan Telecommunication industry has seen dramatic changes in the last decade. New companies both local and foreign have emerged some as start-ups others through mergers or acquisitions. Kenya's mobile market has four key players - Safaricom, Bharti Airtel (was Zain), Telkom Kenya (Orange/France Telecom) and Essar Telecom Kenya (known as the brand Yu); all virtually offering similar products in the industry. Moreover, the realization of the fact that the telecommunication companies in Kenya tend to compete each other when it comes to innovation and invention has resulted to offering same products to the target population (Kugun et al., 2016). This would enable them to easily build up proper strategic choices and as such apply relevant strategic actions if they are to ensure they have an equitable share of the market and as such turning the industry into a perfectly competitive one. Moreover, the study was conducted in Nairobi since majority if these organizations main offices are situated in Nairobi hence ease in data collection.

Kenya has seen rapid internet growth and even faster mobile phone growth. Encouraged by this development, the government has plans to turn Kenya into East Africa's leader in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Since 1999, Kenya has experienced radical changes as the liberalization process of the telecommunications sector began. Of vital importance to the process, was the establishment of the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) in February of that same year through the Kenya Communications Act, 1978. CCK's role is to license and regulate telecommunications, radio communication and postal services in Kenya. Since then a visible boost has gripped the industry (Mutula, 2008).

Statement of the problem

Explaining why organizations in the same industry and markets differ in their performance remains a fundamental question within strategic management circles in Kenya. The telecommunication industry in Kenya is characterized by many players in the market offering similar products to the consumer, this has called for vigorous product differentiation and heavy investment in technology which is the major industry driver (Noreen, 2015). Initially, there was no stiff competition as such due to limited number of players. With entry of competitors, for these firms in the industry to remain competitive and be able to attract new customers as well as retain them extensive marketing of products being offered is required. The dismal performance in some of the participants due to competition calls for the application of new strategic positioning moves to compete for the market by Kenyan telecommunication industries, Ndiku (2009).

With a strong strategic position, an organization is poised for ongoing success, sustainability and distinct competitive advantage (Turner, 2008). Some of the parameters around which strategic position is defined as advanced by Howard (2003) to include service, access, innovation and demographics and also quality. Kugun et al., (2016)Kenya has experienced radial changes as the liberalization process of telecommunications, organizations are occasionally faced with challenges that force them to adjust from their normal ways of doing things, the cost of failure if very high when some of the participants fail to change for survival with specific reference to their ownership.

Junqueira, (2016) carried out a study on the strategic responses by TKL in a competitive environment. His findings were that in 2001, TKL was faced with financial, technological, overstaffing, bureaucratic processes and procedures, attitude and culture change, pension liability, planning, strategy challenges and Competition from new entrants in the Market, Alexandre (2009) conducted a study on Entry Mode Influence On Strategic Positioning: Analysis Of Two Telephone Operators In Brazil and established that The strategic positioning of both companies was to offer the best product based on differentiation.

Both target the niche of richer customers, especially for value-added products and services, where they both faced competition, Chang, Fernando, and (2015), in there study an Empirical Study of Strategic Positioning and Production Efficiency the strategic positioning of both companies was to offer the best product based on differentiation. Both target the niche of richer customers, especially for value-added products and services, where they both faced competition (Mugoga Gachagua, 2010). While Studies have established a direct relationship between strategy and performance, the influence of strategic positioning has not been investigated. In addition, the difference in financial performance of telecommunication firms remains to generate questions, thus this study intended to establish the impact of strategic positioning on the organizational performance in the telecommunications industry in Kenya.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to find out the effect of strategic positioning on the organization performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya. A case of Safaricom Kenya Limited. The specific objectives were:-

- To establish the effect of marketing on the organizational performance in the telecommunications industry in Kenya.
- To find out the impact of research and development on the organizational performance in mobile companies in Kenya.
- To determine the effect of resource availability on the organizational performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya.
- To determine the effect of multiple products on the organizational performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical review

Diffusion theory

Barnely and Hesterly (2008) suggested that a good strategy is one that actually generates a competitive advantage that differentiates an organization with its competitors by giving it sustainable edge that is valuable, rare and not easy to imitate. Strategy ensures continuity in an organization by giving coherence and direction to growth of the entire organization (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990). The relationship between strategic positioning and firm’s performance can be explained by diffusion theory and theory of planned behavior.

Diffusion Innovation Theory (DIT)

Diffusion is the process by which innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period of time among members of certain social system. An innovation is “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived to be new by an individual or other unit of adoption”. “Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another to reach a mutual understanding” (Sahin, Rogers, Rogers, & Rogers, 2006). The theory of DIT has five basic elements which are ideal for this study. The characteristics of an innovation which may influence its adoption; decision making process that occurs when individuals consider adopting a new idea, product or practice; characteristics of individuals that make them likely to adopt an innovation; consequences for individuals and society of adopting an innovation; and communication channels used in the adoption process.

Resource Dependency Theory

The resource-based view of the firm suggests that firms‟ derive competitive advantages from their preferential access to idiosyncratic resources, especially tacit knowledge-related (based) resources. Approaching alliance formation from a resource-based perspective has, traditionally, meant a focus on existing competencies (or lack thereof) that may propel firms to enter into new alliances rather than the conditions that determine the opportunity set firms may perceive (Gulati, 1999). This internal, static focus implicitly considers firms as atomistic actors engaging in strategic actions in an a social context, thereby encapsulating the external context within measures of competitiveness in product or supplier markets

Organizational success in resource dependency theory (RDT) is defined as organizations maximizing their power (Kyengo, 2016). Research on the bases of power within organizations began as early as Weber (1947) and included much of the early work conducted by social exchange theorists and political scientists. Generalization of power-based arguments from intra-organizational relations to relations between organizations began as early as Selznick (1949). RDT characterizes the links among organizations as a set of power relations based on exchange resources.

RDT proposes that actors lacking in essential resources will seek to establish relationships with others in order to obtain needed resources. Also, organizations attempt to alter their dependence relationships by minimizing their own dependence or by increasing the dependence of other organizations on them. Within this perspective, organizations are viewed as coalitions alerting their structure and patterns of behavior to acquire and maintain needed external resources. Acquiring the external resources needed by an organization comes by decreasing the organization’s dependence on others and/or by increasing other’s dependency on it, that is, modifying an organization’s power with other organizations (Mudambi, & Perderson, 2007).

RDT rest on some assumptions that Organizations are assumed to be comprised of internal and external coalitions which emerge from social exchanges that are formed to influence and control behavior. It also assumes that the environment contains scarce and valued resources essential to organizational survival. As such, the environment poses the problem of organizations facing uncertainty in resource acquisition. Organizations are assumed to work toward two related objectives: acquiring control over resources that minimize their dependence on other organizations and control over resources that maximize the dependence of other organizations on themselves. Attaining either objective is thought to affect the exchange between organizations, thereby affecting an organization’s power. (Isoherranen & Kess, 2011).

Resource Based View Theory

RBV as a basis for the competitive advantage of a firm lies primarily in the application of a bundle of valuable tangible or intangible resources at the firm's disposal (Wernerfelt, 2007). To transform a short-run competitive advantage into a sustained competitive advantage requires that these resources are heterogeneous in nature and not perfectly mobile (Ciobota & Velea, 2015). Effectively, this translates into valuable resources that are neither perfectly imitable nor substitutable without great effort (Barney, 1991).

The concern is how does a business achieves and maintains a superior competitive position in a market. This question is at the heart of the strategy development process and largely defines the field of strategic management. Simply superior competitive strategic position means higher returns and profitability. It is relevant to consumers' willingness-to -pay. Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is an important concept in strategic management literature. It is often observed that companies position themselves based on their strength, or the advantages they possess compared to their competitors. Therefore, SCA is playing a major role in company's strategic positioning against its competitors.

The resource-based view (RBV) emphasizes the firm's resources as the fundamental determinants of competitive advantage and performance. It adopts two assumptions in analyzing sources of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991 and Peteraf and Barney, 2003). First, this model assumes that firms within an industry (or within a strategic group) may be heterogeneous with respect to the bundle of resources that they control. Second, it assumes that resource heterogeneity may persist over time because the resources used to implement firms' strategies are not perfectly mobile across firms (i.e., some of the resources cannot be traded in factor markets and are difficult to accumulate and imitate).

Organizational Learning Theory

The theory argues that in order to be competitive in an ever changing environment, organizations must change making it easier to reach those goals. To allow learning to occur the organization must make a conscious decision to change actions in response to a change in circumstances, there must be a conscious link to action and outcome. Organizational learning has many similarities to psychology and cognitive research because the initial learning takes place at the individual level, however, it does not become organizational learning until the information is shared and stored in organizational memory in such a way that it may be transmitted, accessed and used for organizational goals (Cha et al., 2008).

Conceptual framework

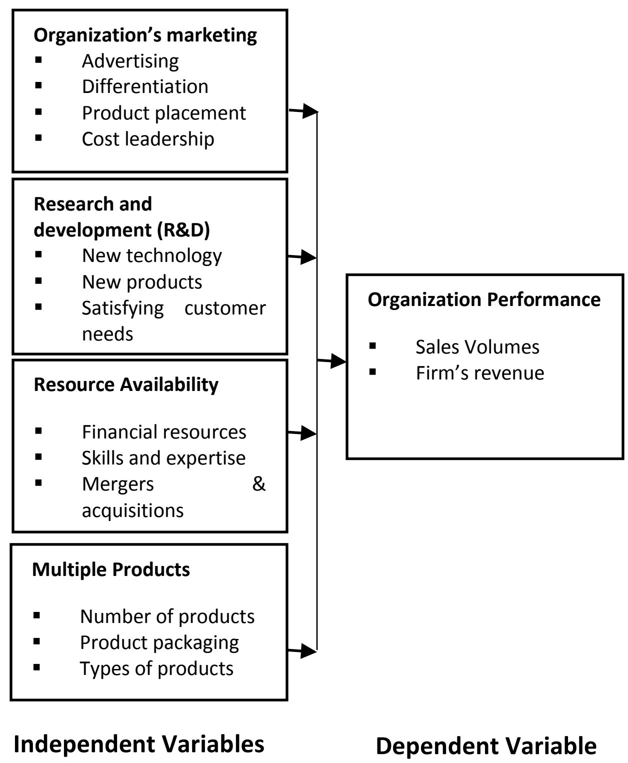

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Organization's marketing and the effects on the performance

Organization's marketing mix influences an organization's performance in the telecommunication industry to a great extent. The telecommunications companies were using advertisements in radio, television, twitter, Facebook, bill boards and promotion activities as their marketing strategies. Product differentiation influences products' performance in the telecommunication industry to a great extent. In addition, cost leadership was found to influence firm's performance in the telecommunication industry to a great extent. Further, the study found that product placement influences products' performance in the telecommunication industry to a great extent. Additionally, advertising was found to influence organization's performance (Noreen, 2015).

The price of mobile telephone services in Kenya is determined to a greater extent by market forces of competition (Afande & Uk, 2015). However, Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) has a direct regulatory role including carrying out research on the most appropriate pricing behaviors for the industry. It enforces interconnection charges which in turn dictate the tariffs charged by each firm. Mobile tariffs reduced significantly over (Mutua, 2012). Safaricom is the leading Mobile Telephone Operator in Kenya. Over the last 9 years, Safaricom has experienced a massive rise in its subscribers, form a mere 17,000 subscribers in 2000 to an amazing growth of over 15 million subscribers in June 2009 (www.safaricom.com). It was registered in 1997 as a fully owned subsidiary of Telkom Kenya Limited. In May 2000, Vodafone Group Plc, the world's largest telecommunication company, acquired a 40% stake and management responsibility for the company, and in early 2008 the government shed 25% of its shareholding to the public through an initial public offers to raise 50 billion shillings (Afande & Uk, 2015).

When an organization or a network provider establishes and maintains a distinctive place for itself and its offerings in the market, it is said to be successfully positioned. In the increasingly competitive service sector, effective positioning is one of marketing's most critical tasks. For some marketers (e.g., Ries and Trout 1981), positioning is strictly a communications issue. The product or service is a given and the objective is to manipulate consumer perceptions of reality. As Love- lock (1984) rightly points

Positioning can be defined as an organized system for finding a window in the mind. It is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances(Oliver, Maria, & Sudhaeshan, 2007).

Market intelligence helps Managers especially sales managers to tailor their marketing strategies to suit consumer demands in a fast-moving vertical market place. According to Fleisher (2003), Positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market. The goal is to locate the brand in the minds of consumers to maximize the potential benefit of the firm (Kotler & Keller, 2006) in strategy terms competitive positioning is described as "...creating brand superiority in the minds of customers. Fundamentally, positioning convinces consumers of the advantages or point of difference a brand has over competitors, while at the same time alleviating concerns about any possible disadvantages (establishing points of parity)" (Keller, 2008).

Research and development (R&D)

Telecommunication companies in Kenya conduct research and development of products. Telecommunication companies have established research development facilities to improve their products. Research and development facilities influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent. In addition, meeting customers' needs influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent (Chang, Fernando, & Tripathy, 2015). The use of new technology influences products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent. Additionally, successful products influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent.

During the last few decades scholars have increasingly stressed the importance of research and development (R&D) in the manufacturing sector. Technology-based companies in this sector put forth large expenditures for R&D in order to maintain their competitive advantage and ensure their future viability (Lee et al., 2011). This implies that due to increasing competition, firms should innovate at an extraordinary pace by developing and improving new products and services, and by generating ideas expressly intended to become commercially viable and profitable business ventures (Ehie and Olibe, 2010). Innovativeness is one of the fundamental instruments of growth strategies to enter new markets, to increase the existing market share and to provide the company with a competitive edge (Gunday et al, 2011). Companies have become more motivated to carry out R&D as a result of the fact that most of the world`s economies have embarked policies reforms on market-oriented liberalization aimed at promoting economic performance (Salim and Bloch, 2009). Additionally, the spillover effects from R&D are beneficial not only to firms but also to economies. Therefore, corporate R&D activities as well as public R&D activities will produce R&D spillovers that will eventually yield benefits to the entire society (Bednyagin and Gnansounou, 2012).

Due to the rising costs of R&D and the increasing dependence of companies on technology for competitive advantage, managers seek evidence of the impact of R&D on performance. Past studies have documented that a firm’s R&D investment consistently and positively affects its market value (Chauvin and Hirschey, 1993; Bae and Noh, 2001). Corporate R&D investment also plays a vital role in a firm’s future growth (Bae and Noh, 2001). As firms and industries continue to evolve, R&D has increasingly become a critical element of firm success and survival (Jimenez and Sanz-Valle, 2011; Bell, 2005) and sustainable competitive advantage (Johannessen, 2008; Mumford and Licuanan, 2004).

Taking 883 firms in the United States during 1957-1965 as sample and using Cobb-Douglas production function, Griliches (1980) found that R&D was positively correlated with operating performance. Then, Jaffe (1986), Hall (1993) and Klette (1996) used similar methods to study the same subject; they all supported the conclusions of Griliches (1980). The evidence, suggests that R&D investment creates value for the firm because it provides competitive advantage through differentiation strategies that produces new and better products and services. In the last few decades a large number of studies have attempted to map the channels and mechanisms through which new knowledge is transformed into better performance (Hashi and Stojcic, 2013). The evidence from this literature is inconclusive thus calling for further research.

Resource Availability

Telecommunication companies have formed strategic alliances with other organizations. These organizations include mobile phone manufacturing companies, public institutions like Kenya Power & Lighting Company (KPLC), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) among others, private institutions as well as learning institutions. Combining of resources with other organizations help in the market penetration of a product (Oliver et al., 2007). Inter-organizational relationships create the opportunity to share the resources and capabilities of firms while working with partners to develop additional resources and capabilities as the function for new competitive advantages. Bringing together expertise and capabilities from various organizations improves the performance of a product. Further, combining financial resources and strategic alliances help in improving the performance of a product. The strategic resources, however, which are generally of an intangible nature, are neither easily identifiable nor rapidly developed, (Onguko & Ragui, 2014).

The four firms are interdependent in the sense that the behaviour of one firm affects the others, in the recent past, price wars have led to reduction of tariffs across the industry; the pricing of the various products is relatively the same. Although Safaricom ltd has continued to lead the industry through innovations such as electronic money transfer and data services, among others, the four firms employ almost similar business practices and the products offered are similar; all these firms use similar marketing strategies; promotional activities such as free airtime on top-up are witnessed across the firms (Mutua, 2012).

Financial resources is the money available to a business for spending in the form of cash, liquid securities and credit lines. Before going into business, an entrepreneur needs to secure sufficient financial resources in order to be able to operate efficiently and sufficiently well to promote success, (Bentz, 2008).Managers may be inclined to say that their problems would be solved if they just had more money to work with. And having more money to use is certainly better than having too little. But more money may not always result in greater impact if the money is not well managed. There may be little connection between quality of programme delivery and an organization's system for managing money. Organizations that are effective tend to know how their money is being spent, (Junqueira, 2016).

Organizational managers must have enough skills and expertise keep track of financial resources and spend on profitable programs. The function of management is to plan, organize, staff, lead, and control. Every one of these functions is influenced to a great degree by how much money there is. Managers and programme staff simply cannot carry out their assigned responsibilities effectively without understanding their financial constraints, (Noreen, 2015). Managers need to have some means for knowing what is happening with respect to their financial resources if they are to make informed management decisions. This responsibility is carried out by installing and managing a financial accounting system. That system may well be automated at some point, but a manual system will serve most needs at the outset. But regardless of how reports are produced and records maintained, they should be accurate and produced in a timely fashion so that staff can base their decisions on good information.

Mergers refer to the joining of two companies where one new company will continue to exist. The term acquisition refers to the purchase of assets by one company from another company. In an acquisition, both companies may continue to exist (Patel, 2015). Mergers and acquisitions are very easy and the only option for small or less profit making organizations to stay and survive in the emerging market. Mergers and acquisitions are a global business strategy that enables firms to enter into new potential markets or to a new business area. Merger and acquisition are not the same terminologies but often it is used interchangeably. In acquisition one organization purchase a part or whole another organization. While in merger two or more than two organizations constitute one organization (Alao 2010).

Merger is the legal activity in which two or more organizations combine and only one firm survive as a legal entity (Horne and John 2004). As per the definition of Georgios (2011) in a merger, two or more firms approach together and become a single firm while in acquisition big and financially sound firm purchase the small firm. Khan (2011) presented a definition of merger as two or more firms close together and form one or more firms. Durga, Rao and Kumar (2013) defined mergers and acquisitions as activities involving takeovers, corporate restructuring, or corporate control that changes in ownership structure of firms.

Multiple Products

The use of multiple products influences a firm performance in telecommunication companies, multiple products influence firm performance in telecommunication companies to a great extent. Product differentiation influences products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent (Chowdhury & Uk, 2013). In addition, types of products were found to influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent. Further, the number of products influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great ex tent. In addition, packaging of the products influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent.

Empirical Literature Review

Strategic positioning was a marketing term that described how a company configured the 4 Ps of marketing (product features, price, place, and promotion) so that they appeal to a specific market segment or niche. Primarily, strategic positioning is a differentiation tactic by customer segment, with the goal to dominate one market niche as much as possible, thus matching production costs, locations, price and product to maximize the returns on investment (ROI) on that combination (Onguko & Ragui, 2014). The primary benefits are to gain market share dominance, and keep margins as high as possible to maximize profits. Fundamentally, the strategy acknowledges that for most companies 'one size does not fit all'. By matching the combination of the four factors to market niches, a company can optimize its market penetration and its operations to serve those market niches. Strategic positioning requires a more complex business operation, and managing this complexity increases overhead, and requires more sophisticated management techniques, tools and information. If not done properly, one product configuration can cannibalize another in the marketplace, and launching a new product may actually not marginally improve the businesses ROI because it just siphons customers and resources from other products by the same company.

Companies use strategic positioning when they consciously decide to expand their business into different market segments than they are in currently, the best case is when a company produces a unique product or service that is universally desired by all market segments without regard to price or location, and so the company doesn't have to worry as much about strategic positioning. Various studies have been conducted on strategic positioning and emerging markets both locally and internationally. (Hassan et al., 2005) examined world market segmentation and brand positioning strategies. The study examined the conceptual as well as empirical linkages between segmentation bases and brand positioning strategies in the context of discussing practical implications for firms operating in increasingly globalizing markets, the study suggested that a combined use of macro and micro bases to segment worlds markets is significantly linked to the perceived positioning strategies of global top brands, whereas the firms seeking more localized positioning strategies use only micro-bases to segment.

Nina Isoherranen and Kess (2011) observed that orientation analysis in the mobile phone industry. The focus on this research was to evaluate the characteristics of technology orientation (technology push), market orientation (market pull), customer focus and product focus in business strategy. In addition to plotting the dynamics of these four strategy dimensions over time, the four way analysis framework was developed. This development was based on Nokia's mobile phone business. Its past successful business and product transformations contribute to its success.

Kasyoka (2010) posts that good execution cannot overcome the shortcomings of a bad strategy or a poor strategic planning effort (Hrebiniak, 2006). Gupta (1987) classifies Strategic Business Units (SBU's) strategic contexts into two dimensions: strategic mission (such as a "build ‟strategic mission and a "harvest‟ strategic mission) and competitive strategy (such as differentiation and low cost). Chimhanzi (2004) suggests that cross-unit working relationships have a key role to play in the successful implementation of marketing decisions. Implementation effectiveness is affected negatively by conflict and positively by communication and specifically, interpersonal, not written. In turn, these interdepartmental dynamics are affected by senior management support, joint reward systems, and informal integration. Chimhanzi (2004) also points out that the marketing and R&D interface remains the most extensively researched dyad within the specific context of the New Product Development (NPD) process Chimhanzi and Morgan (2005) findings indicate that firms devoting attention to the alignment of marketing and human resources are able to realize significantly greater successes in their strategy implementation.

Effectiveness of strategy implementation is, at least in part, affected by the quality of people involved in the process (Janiszewska, 2012). Quality refers to skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other characteristics of people required by a specific task or position (Peng and Litteljohn, 2001) believe that an organization must first persuade its employees about the importance of the strategy before turning to customers (Chang et al., 2015). Severi & Ling, (2017) considers brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty to be the most important dimensions of consumer-based perspectives.

Janiszewska, (2012) indicates that customer-based brand equity consisted of two dimensions, brand knowledge and brand image. Marketing decisions affect brand equity and purchase intention. Managers need to evaluate the marketing activities and reduce or avoid brand-hurting activities. Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000) indicate marketing activities such as price, slogans, symbols, packaging, company image, country of origin; store image, advertising expenditures, and promotional events have important influence on the brand equity and purchase intention. High brand equity levels lead to higher consumer preferences and purchase intentions Cheng and Chang (2004). Firms with high brand equity usually have good performance (Pappu, Quester and Cooksey, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

This research study considered a descriptive research design using a census approach because all the firms in the mobile communication industry were studied and data obtained at a specific time and to describe the study problem. A descriptive research design determines and reports the way things are (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population of this study comprised of the staffs working in the marketing and research & development departments at the headquarters of Safaricom limited. A multivariate regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. The regression model in this study was;

$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4+\varepsilon$

Whereby Y = Film's performance in the telecommunications industry.

X1 = Resource Availability

X2 = Firm's marketing

X3 = Research and development

X4 = Multiple products

ε = Error Term

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Effect of Organization's marketing on Organization performance

Table 1: Effect of Organization's marketing on Organization performance

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Our organizations invests in advertising with the aim of expanding the markets knowledge and understanding on the products	10	7	20	50	127	4.12	0.94
Advertisement has been made to be sophisticated with the presence of global companies	4	13	19	45	133	4.41	1.21
Product differentiation is vital in Kenyan market as innovation is almost largely exploited	13	4	11	41	145	4.76	1.66
Differentiation remains the best tool for our product positioning in the market	7	13	18	54	124	4.82	1.79
Strategically placing our products in the market is important in this technology dominated market	6	8	23	61	118	4.88	1.93
Quality service, feedback and efficiency is key in product positioning	4	7	20	70	113	4.65	1.43
Cost leadership determines the market position in telecommunication Industry	2	4	22	67	120	4.46	1.25
Superior technology has contributed to Safaricom' s success in the Kenyan market	4	6	29	61	124	4.68	1.46

On the respondents' level of agreement on statements related to the effect of organization's marketing on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that majority of the respondents agreed that increase in organizations invests in advertising is a factor that affects the performance of organization as shown by a mean of 4.12, advertisement sophistication is a factors in the current business environment that affects the performance as shown by a mean of 4.41, product differentiation affects the performance of telecommunication firms organization as shown by a mean of 4.76, In this firms differentiation as competition organization low inflation rate is beneficial to organization performance as shown by a mean of 4.82, In telecommunication organization strategic placement of products is important in the technology market as shown by a mean of 4.88, In telecommunication industry organization increase quality service, feedback and efficiency is key in product positioning as shown by a mean of 4.12. The study findings were in agreement with the findings of Fleisher (2003), who states that Market intelligence helps Managers especially sales managers to tailor their marketing strategies to suit consumer demands in a fast-moving vertical market place. In addition, Positioning can be defined as an organized system for finding a window in the mind. It is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances.

Effect of Research and developments on Organization performance of Firms

Table 2: Effect of Research and developments on Organization performance of Firms

Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
Research and development is a major determinant in ensuring safaricom's survival	5	8	3	187	11	4.65	1.43
The organization has to constantly invest in the modern technology to stay relevant in its service delivery	17	5	6	177	9	4.53	1.27
New products are developed on the basis of intense research and developing products that meet constantly changing market needs	7	13	10	164	20	4.59	1.34
Customer satisfaction is in connection to the feedback and commitment Safaricom has in always address customer concerns	6	24	33	124	27	4.47	1.23
Strategically placing our products in the market is important in the technology dominated market	0	7	22	154	41	4.76	1.66

On the respondents' level of agreement on statements related to the effect of Research and developments on organization performance in telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that majority of the respondents agreed that organizations prefer research and development as a major determinant in ensuring firm's survival to maintain good performance as shown by a mean of 4.65, The organization has to constantly invest in the modern technology to stay relevant in its service delivery as shown by a mean of 4.53, In the industry new products are developed on the basis of intense research and developing products that meet constantly changing market needs as shown by a mean of 4.59, In the industry organization Customer satisfaction is in connection to the feedback and commitment Safaricom has in always address customer concerns as shown by a mean of

4.47, In the telecommunication industry Strategically placing our products in the market is important in the technology dominated market as shown by a mean of 4.76. The study findings were in agreement with the findings of Chang, Fernando, & Tripathy, (2015) who stated that research and development facilities influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent. In addition, meeting customers' needs influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent.

Effect of Resource availability on Organization performance

Table 3: Effect of Resource availability on Organization performance

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
The firm has sustainable financial back up to sustain the development plan for the organization	22	18	3	24	147	4.88	1.93
The firms budget always focuses on the business expansion as compared to investors returns	82	2	10	100	20	4.76	1.66
The organization has got the skills and manpower that is necessary for the firms long-term growth	16	6	32	86	74	4.94	2.08
Mergers and acquisition is part of growth plans but not a necessity for its growth	10	9	20	73	102	4.82	1.79

On the respondents' level of agreement on statements related to the effect of the firm has sustainable financial back up to sustain the development plan for the organization on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that financial back up helps an organizations performance as shown by a mean of 4.88 there has been continuous resource mobilization in the telecommunication industry that attracts strong budget measures by firms, The firms budget always focuses on the business expansion as compared to investors returns as shown by a mean of 4.76, skills and man power investment is a main focus for the firms in the telecommunication industry, The organization has got the skills and manpower that is necessary for the firms long-term growth as shown by a mean of 4.94, for the firms future growth, mergers and acquisitions are an important tool for growth, Mergers and acquisition is part of growth plans but not a necessity for its growth as shown by a mean of 4.82, Bringing together expertise and capabilities from various organizations improves the performance of a product. Further, combining financial resources and strategic alliances help in improving the performance of a product. The findings are in agreement with those of Noreen, (2015) that stated that Organizational managers must have enough skills and expertise keep track of financial resources and spend on profitable programs. The function of management is to plan, organize, staff, lead, and control. Every one of these functions is influenced to a great degree by how much money there is. Managers and programme staff simply cannot carry out their assigned responsibilities effectively without understanding their financial constraints.

Effect of Multiple products On Organization performance

Table 4: Effect of Multiple products on organization performance

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation
In the competitive market, it is most necessary telecommunication firms continue to have multiple products to handle the market competition	14	18	38	64	80	4.18	1.43
Product packaging and presentation is the best approach telecommunication firms have in handling the consumers perception	12	6	47	55	94	4.12	1.53
The organizations are best placed by continuously creating a portfolio products in the market to contain the industry cycles	23	4	13	86	88	4.29	0.21

From the findings on statement relating to the effect of Multiple-products on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya, the study found that majority of the respondent agreed that In the competitive market, it is most necessary telecommunication firms continue to have multiple products to handle the market competition, in these companies, Multiple-products adds value to the company as shown as mean of 4.18, these companies employ more Multple products since they are more likely to have a high market competition countered by Product packaging and presentation is the best approach telecommunication firms have in handling the consumers perception as shown by mean of 4.12, the study further established that the organizations are best placed by continuously creating a portfolio products in the market to contain the industry cycles these companies use Multiple-products which will attract more investments as shown by mean of 4.29 The use of multiple products influences a firm performance in telecommunication companies, multiple products influence firm performance in telecommunication companies to a great extent. The study agrees with that of Chowdhury & Uk, (2013) that stated that types of products were found to influence products performance in the telecommunication industry in Kenya to a great extent.

Organization performance of Firms

Table 5: Factors affecting organization performance of firms

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard deviation
The sales performance of the organization is a determinant on the industrial performance of the industrial potential	0	0	8	20	186	4.88	0.38

The organization's revenue generation is key in strategic positioning of the organization	4	10	4	24	172	4.59	0.28
The organization's revenue would determine the firms survival in terms of technology acquisition and resource mobilization in future	0	4	6	44	160	4.18	0.28

The study sought to establish factors affecting organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya; from the findings, the study revealed that majority of the respondent agreed that Organization's marketing, Research and developments and Multiple-products affects organization performance as shown by mean of 4.88, 4.59 and 4.18 respectively, respondent also agreed that sales performance, revenue generation and technological acquisition affect organization performance. This is an indication that Organization's marketing, Multiple-products, Turn-over growth and Research and developments affect telecommunication organization performance in Kenya.

Regression Analysis

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.888[a]	.789	.773	.05120

Adjusted R squared is coefficient of determination which tells us the variation in the dependent variable due to changes in the independent variable. From the findings, the value of adjusted R squared was 0.773 an indication that there was variation of 77.3% on organization perfomance due to changes in macro economic organizations marketing, Research and developments, Resource availability and Multple products at 95% confidence interval. This shows that 77.3% changes on organizational perfomance could be explained for by changes in economic factors , Research and developments, Resource availability and Multple products. R is the correlation coefficient which shows the relationship between the study variables. From the findings, the study found that there was a strong positive relationship between the study variables as shown by 0.888.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Residual	1.629	4	0.543	4.114	.002[b]
	Regression	9.768	209	0.132		
	Total	11.397	213			

From the ANOVA statistics, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.02 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value) is less than 5%. The calculated value was greater than the critical value (2.76<4.114) an indication that organization's marketing, Research and developments, Resource availability and Multple products significantly affect organization performance. The significance value was less than

0.05, an indication that the model was statistically significant.

Table 8: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.538	0.453		3.395	.001
	Organization's marketing	0.432	0.159	0.297	2.717	.009
	Research and developments	0.497	0.176	0.131	2.824	.004
	Resource availability	0.501	0.178	0.014	2.815	.003
	Multiple-products	0.423	0.143	0.253	2.958	.010

From the data in the above table the established regression equation was $Y = 1.538 + 0.432\ X_1 + 0.497\ X_2 + 0.501\ X_3 + 0.423\ X_4$

From the above regression equation it was revealed that holding organization's marketing, Research and developments, Resource availability and Multple products to a constant zero, organization performance would be at 1.538.

The results on table above reveal that organization's marketing had a significant coefficient (B= 0.432, p value=0.009). This implies that organization's marketing had positive significant effect on organization performance. The study findings were in agreement with the findings of Demir (2009), who found that an increasing exchange rate and capital flow volatility are also found to raise inflation uncertainty and encourage financial investments while discouraging fixed investments.

The finding of the study on table above reveal that Research and development had a significant coefficient (B= 0.497, p value=0.004). This implies that Research and development had positive significant effect on county organization performance. The study findings were in agreement with the findings of Stanley, (2013) who revealed that Organizations that do adopt strategic positioning tend to be more successful than others. However, research has also shown that strategic positioning can be risky and that failure is the most likely outcome of an organization.

The findings revealed that resource availability had a significant coefficient (B= 0.501 p value=0.003). This implies that resource availability had positive significant effect on organization performance. The study findings were in agreement with the findings of Hassan, George, & Craft, (2005) who argues when a firm or provider establishes and maintains a distinctive place for itself and its offerings in the market, it is said to be successfully positioned.

The study finding further revealed that Multple products had a significant coefficient (B= 0.423, p value=0.010). This implies that national politics had positive significant effect on organization performance. Richard, (2009) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of organizational outcomes: Financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment,); Product market performance (sales, market share,) and shareholder return (total shareholder return and economic Things are moving fast in Kenya's telecommunications sector.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the effect of organization's marketing on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that increase in marketing is a factor that affects the performance of an organization, advertisement is a factor in the current business environment that affects the performance, differentiation affects the performance of an organization, in organizations, cost leadership is beneficial to organization performance.

From the findings on the effect of Research and developments on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that organizations have optimal level of advancing to new technology which maintain relevance in the competitive market, new products act as a niche of capturing new customers and also retaining the existing customers which in turn acts a s an avenue of satisfying the customers in terms of being effective in the market.

From the findings on Resource availability on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study found that financial resources helps a company to remain the very important factor in the organizations performance, there has been continuous growth in these companies revenue which has improved their performance, the expertise and skills is also a factor that is continuously grown and invested on by the telecommunication firms in order to remain relevant in the competitive market. Income growth for these companies have led to improvement in their liquidity levels and has led to new modes of survival and way of staying in the markets, mergers and acquisition is setting up opportunities for firms to stay relevant in the market.

From the findings on statement relating to the effect of Multiple-products on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya, the study found firms that have a number of products in the market are of higher value, in these companies Multiple-products adds value to the company, these companies employ more products since they are more likely to have a wide market scope and an extensive market niche, these companies use Multiple-products which will attract more investments and better product packaging that also offer better differentiation use of debt results into good results which positively influence shareholders value and gives a versed ground for establishing a number of products.

Conclusion

The regression results revealed that organization’s marketing had a significant. This implies that organization’s marketing had positive significant effect on organization performance. From the finding the study revealed that organization’s marketing positively affect the organization performance of firms telecommunication firms in Kenya, thus the study concludes that organization’s marketing positively affect the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. When an organization or a network provider establishes and maintains a distinctive place for itself and its offerings in the market, it is said to be successfully positioned. In the increasingly competitive service sector, effective positioning is one of marketing's most critical tasks.

The finding of the study on regression results revealed that Research and development had a significant. This implies that Research and development had positive significant effect on county organization performance. From the findings the study concludes that Research and developments positively affect the organization performance of firms listed in Nairobi Securities Exchange. Companies have become more motivated to carry out R&D as a result of the fact that most of the world`s economies have embarked policies reforms on market-oriented liberalization aimed at promoting economic performance.

The findings revealed that turnover had a significant. This implies that turnover had positive significant effect on organization performance. The study found that Resource availability positively affect the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. From the findings the study concludes that Resource availability positively affect the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. Bringing together expertise and capabilities from various organizations improves the performance of a product. Further, combining financial resources and strategic alliances help in improving the performance of a product. The strategic resources, however, which are generally of an intangible nature, are neither easily identifiable nor rapidly developed.

The study finding further revealed that Multiple-products had a significant. This implies that national politics had positive significant effect on organization performance. The study established that national politics significantly affect organization performance. From the finding the study concludes that Multiple-products affects the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. When an organization or a network provider establishes and maintains a distinctive place for itself and its offerings in the market, it is said to be successfully positioned. In the increasingly competitive service sector, effective positioning is one of marketing's most critical tasks.

Recommendations

The study recommended that there is need for the management of safaricom to factor marketing when making in decision on organizations performance as the study found that organization's marketing positively affect the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

There is need for management of safaricom to use more of retained earnings in their investment as the study found Research and developments, since this has positive effects on organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

The study established that Resource availability positively affects the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. Thus, the study recommends that there is need for management of safaricom to enhance their Resource availability as this will lead to organization performance.

The study revealed that Multiple-products positively affects the organization performance of telecommunication firms in Kenya. There is need for safaricom to use Multiple-products as it improves their value.

Areas for Further research

The study sought to examine the effect of strategic positioning on the firms performance in the telecommunications firms in Kenya. The study recommends that an in-depth study should be done on determinants of strategic positioning of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

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