DETERMINANTS OF FIRMS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG SEED COMPANIES IN KENYA: CASE OF KENYA SEED COMPANY LIMITED

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DETERMINANTS OF FIRMS' COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG SEED COMPANIES IN KENYA: CASE OF KENYA SEED COMPANY LIMITED

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate determinants of firm's competitive advantage using a case of Kenya Seed Company. The study specifically sought to establish how resource capability, marketing capabilities, research and chain supply responsiveness affect competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population comprised of the top management, middle level management and low level management of Kenya Seed Company. There were 121 employees across the three levels of management at the time of carrying out this research. The sample size was 93 employees arrived at using Yamane formula. The respondents from the strata were sampled using stratified random sampling. The research instrument used in this study was questionnaires. The researcher collected primary data using a self-administered questionnaire which were issued through drop and pick later method. Before the actual data collection, the researcher carried out a pilot study to pre-test the validity and reliability of data collected using the questionnaire. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze data. The findings were presented using tables and models. The results indicated that resources capability, marketing capabilities, supply chain responsiveness, research and development have positive effect on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company. Therefore, the study concluded that increase in these four factors, would results to significant increase in competitive advantage. Therefore, the study that Kenya Seed Company should ensure that the marketing personnel had the right marketing capabilities by bringing expert in the area to train them and also hold in-house trainings. Further, the study recommended that companies should have strategic marketing plan with well-coordinated marketing activities, which would results to better outcome.

Key Words: *Resource Capability, Marketing Capabilities, Research and Development, Chain Supply Responsiveness, Competitive Advantage*

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INTRODUCTION

As firms are faced with slower growth and stronger competition, competitive advantage becomes crucial to the maintenance of superior performance. Competitive advantage exists when a firm has a product or service that is perceived by its target market customers as better than that of its competitors (Karuoya, 2014).Competitive advantage grows fundamentally out of the value a firm is able to create for its buyers. In competitive terms, value is the amount buyers are willing to pay for what a firm provides them. All organizations have to compete with rivals to obtain scarce resources and achieve their performance goals for sustained high performance (Markku & Erlend, 2010).

Locally, as argued by Karuoya (2014) the level to which firms are enjoying competitive advantage is low. For instance, in the case of Micro finance firms, reports have indicated that competitive advantages were not highly enjoyed by the Micro finance firms (Wambugu, 2013). Only Marketing strategy, network effects and strong research and development capabilities are the only types of competitive advantages enjoyed to some extent whereas monopoly and holding exclusive re-selling or distribution rights were not enjoyed at all. This represents the scenario in the local industries. Based on this ground, establishing the factors behind low competitive advantage in various sectors in Kenya is necessary.

Asava (2010) affirms that firm's competitive advantage is influenced by internal factors and external factors. He defined internal factors as financial ability, human resources, research collaborations, marketing, resource capability and cost. Asava (2010) further argues that external factors include political factor, economic, social, and technical and culture. He acknowledges other factors that influence competitive advantage as research and development, workforce characteristics, entrepreneurship and government involvement. However, Asava (2010) concludes that how these factors affect competitive advantage remains contradictory and theoretical and vary according to market setting.

Hashi and Stojcic (2013) argue that Research and Development (R&D) investment creates value for the firm because it provides competitive advantage through differentiation strategies that produces new and better products and services. This is supported by supported Hasan and Karaaslan (2014) who found out that a positive relationship exists between R&D intensity on and firm financial performance. This however, contradicts with Dirk (2002) who established that investment in intangible assets like R&D tend to be both more risky and harder to collaterize than investment in physical assets. The author notes that therefore, it is more likely that financial constraints for R&D occur. Dirk (2002) concludes by saying that research and development is not only expensive but also risky, for it is difficult to know beforehand what will work or what will sell.

Regarding supply chain, several studies demonstrate that managing supplier involvement in product development poses several challenges (Paton &McCalman, 2008). On the other hand, other scholars believe that the network and the relationships in themselves have an impact on firm's gains. Research by Taco, Cristina and Dirk (2006) on the relationship between supply chain integration and performance of Dutch and Spanish companies show that supply chain integration needs a more tailored approach in order to be successful.

Statement of the Problem

The current situation as revealed by African Seed Access Index show poor performance in the seed industry in Kenya, while Chepkwony (2012) pointed out that Kenya Seed Company has been facing stiff competition from other competitors. This is attributed to liberalization of the Seed industry in Kenya which was effected in 1990s, and since then there has been increasing and stiff competition among the players. The consequences of liberalization have led to continued entry of new seed players in the seed market, resulting in the over 129 seed companies officially registered. This has eventuated to increased competition within the sector. Adding to this competitions are over 12,000 agricultural input stockists who are operating without being licensed. Chepkwony (2012) pointed out that Kenya Seed Company has not been spared as it has been realizing poor performance. This poor performance has affected other sectors relying on it. For instance, according to the Kenya seed industry study (2013), growth in the agricultural sector decelerated in 2013 to 2.9 percent from a revised growth of 4.2 percent in 2012 partly due to the high frequency of machine breakdowns of the major processing plants and late delivery of seed to the farmers way past the planting season that as a result led to low yields.

Interestingly, though it is acknowledged that there is stiff competition in the industry, not study has focused on factors affecting firm's competitive advantage in the same industry. Moreso, from the farmer's perspective, Maina (2015) acknowledges that on average smallholder farmers in Kenya travel seven kilometers to the nearest source of fertilizer and hybrid seeds, a situation puts into question the commitment of Kenya seed companies to meeting customer needs.

Locally, a number of studies have been done on competitive advantage but in different context. Wambugu (2013) did a study on the factors influencing competitive advantage of firms in the micro finance industry in Kenya. The study found out that low cost provider, use of technology, support structures risk, service offered, quality, location, an embedded customer base and innovation have at least more than moderate influence in the competitive advantage. Karuoya (2014) investigated on factors influencing sustainable competitive advantage among cut flower companies. The study found out that infrastructure, location, human resource and horticulture clusters influences sustainable competitive advantage to a large extent. This study investigated the determinants of firm's competitive advantage using case of Kenya Seed Company.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the determinants of firms' competitive advantage among seed companies in Kenya: Case of Kenya Seed Company limited. The specific objectives were;

- To establish the effect of resource capability on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- To establish the effect of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- To establish the effect of research and development on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- To establish the effect of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses

- **H_{01}**: There is no significant influence of resource capability on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- **H_{02}**: There is no significant influence of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- **H_{03}**: There is no significant influence of research and development on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited
- **H_{04}**: There is no significant influence of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited

LITERATURE REVIEW

Porter's Five Forces Model

Michael Porter's Five Forces of Competitive position model provides a simple perspective for assessing and analyzing the competitive strength and position of a corporation or business organization. The model was developed in 1979 as a framework for assessing and evaluating the competitive strength and position of a business organization. The five forces that Porter suggests drive competition are existing competitive rivalry between suppliers, threat of new market entrants, bargaining power of buyers, power of suppliers and threat of substitute products.

Figure 1: Porter's Five Forces Model

This model was relevant to the current study as it acknowledges that the main driver of firms competitive advantage is the number and capability of competitors in the market. The model highlights importance of capabilities of an organization in promoting its competitiveness with key focus on marketing, warning that unless incumbents have strong and durable barriers to entry, then profitability will decline to a competitive rate. It's upon this basis that this model is adopted by the current study.

VRIO Framework

VRIO Framework analyses the firm's capabilities and internal resources so as to establish whether they can be a source of sustained competitive advantage. VRIO Framework was originally developed by Barney (1991) who pointed out that firm's resources must be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable so as to become source of source of sustained competitive advantage. A resource or capability that meets all four requirements can bring sustained competitive advantage for the company.

This framework was adopted by this study due to its relevance on subject under investigation. According to the frameworks, there is need to assess whether, resources, market capabilities, research and development activities and supply chain within Kenya Seed Company are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and non-substitutable. Hence it can be concluded whether they are source of sustained competitive advantage or not based on the findings.

Resource Advantage Theory

The resource-advantage theory covers various disciplines including management, marketing, economics and general activities of a business. According to this theory, resources within an organization facilitate the ability of the organization to produce efficiently as well as improving its market position. Firms in possession of competitive advantage can continue to do so by continuously investing in the processes that result the enhancement of their competitive advantage. According to Mills, Platts and Bourne (2003) crucial sources and determinant of firms' performance and competitiveness are highly linked with the resources and capabilities that a firm has.

Resource advantage theory had been adopted by this study because it supports the role of resource availability on competitive advantages. The relevance of resource advantage theory to the current study is that there is interrelation between organizations resources and competitive advantage. The theory suggests that, an institution with more resources than competitors and with efficient patterns of resource deployment can better their market positioning. Hunt and Morgan (2005) argue that a firm's rivals might fail or take longer period of time to succeed when resources of an already advantaged firm are protected by societal institutions or if advantage-producing resources are socially complex, causally ambiguous and tactical.

Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view theory (RVB) states that the primary drivers and sources to organizations' competitive advantage and better performance are largely related with the attributes of their capabilities and resources which are costly-to-copy and highly valuable (Mills, Platts & Bourne, 2003). In other words, the crucial sources and determinant of organizations' performance and competitiveness

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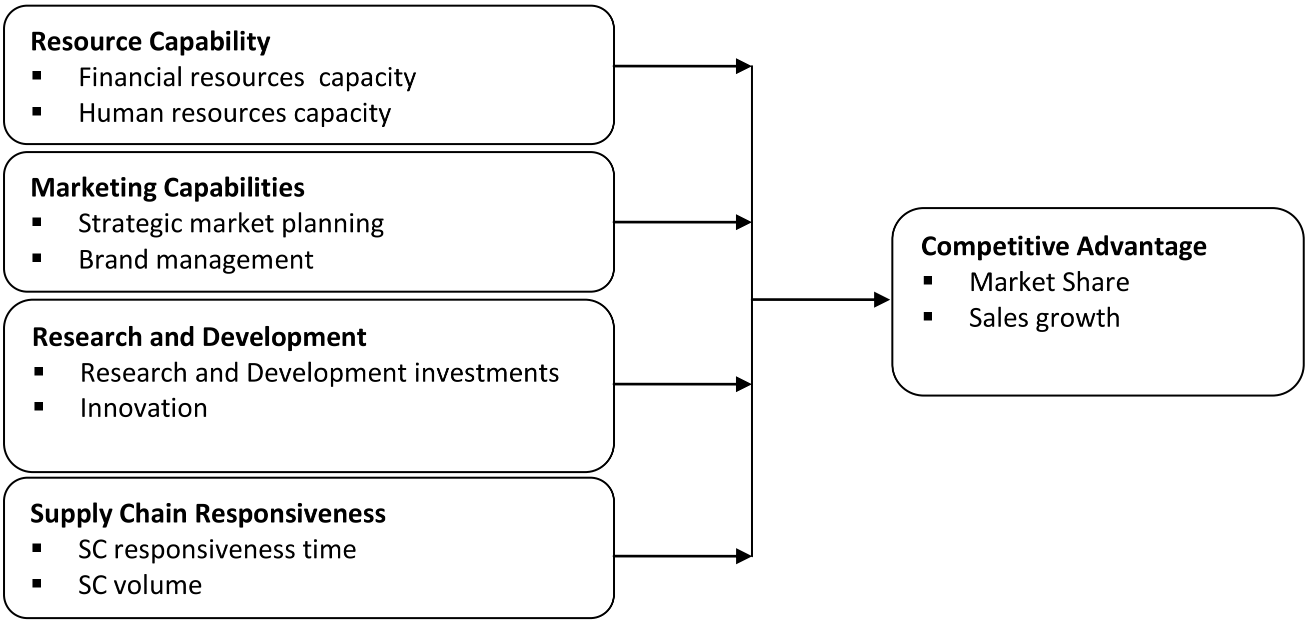
are highly linked with the resources and capabilities that a firm has.

Knowledge-Based View Theory

The KBV of the organisation is an extension of the RBV. The key principle approach is that an enterprise is an organization for generating and applying different types of knowledge (Grant, 2006). While incorporating some contents of the RBV, the KBV concentrates attention to the process or lane by which exact firm capabilities develop over time. This kind of progress of knowledge during learning might be seen as an important factor in achieving economical advantage and better performance (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002). Organisational growth cannot be sustainable in absence of dynamic re-development of knowledge-based resources and capabilities since a business enterprise is less capable of discovering potential opportunities.

This theory links research and development to achievement of competitive advantage. Research and development enhances knowledge within the company which can lead to uniqueness in company's innovation. Knowledge could be seen as a typical invention factor that has an enormous impact on productivity, innovation, and product development (Spender, 2006). It is also vital to make a note of that firm's capabilities such as advertising and technical capabilities are not the only things that matter, as frequently it is the nature of the knowledge that has result on the sustainability of the competitive advantage (Kogut & Zander, 2008).



Independent variables **Dependent variable**

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Empirical Review

The researcher reviewed a study by Santhapparaj et al. (2006) on the competitive factors of semiconductor manufacturers in Malaysia. In this particular study, data was gathered using questionnaire as research tool, administered to the respondents who were the 200 managers from 10 different companies operating within 2 Free Trade Zones located in UluKlang and Sungei. In this study, organisational resources were measured using human capital development and manufacturing flexibility while capabilities were measured using product quality improvement and technical skill development. The revelations of the study were that there is a significant relationship between organisational resources, capabilities, systems and competitive advantage.

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Tuan and Yoshi (2010) did a study on organisational capabilities, competitive advantage and performance in supporting industries in Vietnam. The target population was of 102 firms. Competitive advantage was measured using cost reduction capability, quality capability and innovation capability. A multivariate analysis of survey responses of 102 firms indicates that the organisational capabilities are related to the competitive advantage, that the competitive advantage is related to performance, and that the competitive advantage mediates the relationship between organizational capabilities and performance.

Yao and Hongxia (2016) did a study on the marketing capability and competitive advantage affect business performance focusing on 268 China's agribusinesses. Descriptive survey design was used to gather the data. The collected data are then subjected to the ordinary least squares and weighted least squares analysis. Results of the empirical evidence show a positive effect of the marketing capability on the business performance. Further analysis reveals that the competitive advantage completely mediates the relationship between marketing capability and business performance. The study findings failed to presents findings on the effect of marketing capability and competitive advantage. This study seeks to establish whether marketing capability affects competitive advantage.

Research by Leticia, María, Juan and Nuria (2012) marketing capabilities exert a significant and positive effect on clients' satisfaction and loyalty, which ultimately lead to better organizational performance in terms of sales, profit, and market share. This study was done in the context of SMEs hence given that the Seed Industry is a totally different industry, these study findings may not be generalized to the seed industry.

Hardeep (2013) explored the role of marketing capabilities in enhancing competitive advantage and business performance. This study was done outside the Kenyan context and given that different economies have different influences, this study cannot be generalized to the Kenyan context. Prithwiraj, Subramanian and Ramakrishnan (2010) investigated the impact of marketing capability, operations capability and diversification strategy on performance. The study failed to link marketing capabilities and competitive advantage.

Research by Day (2011) acknowledges the widening of the gap between the accelerating complexity of their markets and the limited ability of their organizations to respond demands new thinking about marketing capabilities. His work only gives suggestion to what can be done to remedy the situation other that showing the effect of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage.

Ejramia, Salehia and Ahmadiana (2016) did a study on the effect of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage and performance with moderating role of risk management in importation companies. The study used descriptive research design. The statistical population of this study includes 100 importer companies. Research questionnaire was distributed collected among 120 participants. Pearson's correlation test and linear regression were utilized in SPSS software for statistical data analysis. The results of study signify that the marketing potentials effect on competitive advantage of the importer company and at the same time marketing capability impacts on performance of Importation Company.

Sarwat (2009) did a study on marketing capability, strategy and business performance in emerging markets of Pakistan. Marketing capability was measured using market-research capability, pricing capabilities, product development capabilities, channel management capabilities, promotion management capabilities, marketing management capabilities, low-cost leadership, and differentiation strategy and product market scope. The results suggest that marketing capabilities and strategy frame exist in the business environment of Pakistan but there is a weak relationship with firm performance.

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Hashi and Stojcic (2013) suggest that research and development investment creates value for the firm because it provides competitive advantage through differentiation strategies that produces new and better products and services. The authors' suggestions are hypothetical as they are suggestion. A study by Hasan and Karaaslan (2014) confirms a positive effect of R&D intensity on the firm financial performance. Same findings are evidenced by Ehie and Olibe (2010) that after controlling for firm size, industry concentration and leverage, R&D investment positively affects firm performance. The studies however, do not show the relationship between R&D and competitive advantage.

Mohammad and Murad (2014) investigated 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 competitive advantage of companies. 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, high product innovation, 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.

Investigation on the factors that influence competitive advantage in East African Breweries by Mukonyo (2013) used a case study approach. The results showed that cost leadership, product and focus strategies influenced company achieving competitive advantage. The focus of the study was investigation contribution of portersgeneric strategies to competitive advantages. The current study investigates effect of resource availability, marketing capabilities, research and development and supply chain on competitive advantage.

Mumassabba, Muchibi, Mutua and Musiega (2015) researched on factors that influence competitive advantage among Kenyan supermarkets. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The findings revealed that product innovation, information technology, managerial capacity and relationships with suppliers have a direct positive influence on competitive advantage in supermarkets. The study did not shed light on influence of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage which the current study aims to investigate.

This study reviewed the work of Somuyiwa, Mcilt and Adebayo (2012) indicates that positive association existed between Supply Chain Responsiveness (SCR), SCM practices and competitive advantage. The study was however, done on the Nigerian context which is different from the Kenyan context. A review of the study by Wambugu (2013) on factors influencing competitive advantage of firms in the micro finance industry in Kenya revealed that low cost provider, use of technology, support structures Risk, and innovation have at least more than moderate influence in the competitive advantage. This study finding cannot be generalized to the seed industry given that the setting of the financial and seed industry are different. Marijan and Rozana (2010) in their argument, indicate that sufficient funds are necessary for establishment of support structures in any organization and for attainment of goals. The authors however, failed to show the clear link between availability of funds and financial performance of firms.

Alimin,Raduan, Haslinda and Jegak (2010) researched on the relationship between organizational competitive advantage and performance. A cross-sectional study was conducted. The findings revealed that the size of firms does not significantly moderate the relationship between competitive advantage and performance while age had significant effect. The study focused on how size and age of firms moderate the relationship between competitive advantage and performance. The current study however, focused on factors that affect competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive research design. The target population of the study comprised of employee of Kenya Seed Company in Nairobi headquarters. There were 121 employees across three levels of management which included top management, middle level management and low level management. The sample frame of the study was obtained from the human resource records. In order to come up with appropriate sample size, this study used the Yamane formula. The research instruments used by in this study were questionnaires. The study data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative data. The completed questionnaires were input into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 and quality checks done as part of data management process.

FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with each of the resource capability statements. The statements were anchored on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from 1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Somewhat disagree/Somewhat Agree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agrees and respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to the statements. Descriptive measures included percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation.

Resource Capability

The first objective was to establish the effect of resource capability on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. To measure Resource capability, a set of seven statements was formulated. The pertinent results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Resource capability

Resource capability	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SDV
The employees have Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) the company requires for production of quality and innovative products.	5 (6.5)	44 (57.1)	19 (24.7)	6 (7.8)	3 (3.9)	3.55	0.88
The company attracts employees with needed Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products.	12 (15.6)	33 (42.9)	24 (31.2)	7 (9.1)	1 (1.3)	3.62	0.90
The company trains it employees on emerging issues that affect its competitiveness in the industry.	8 (10.4)	41 (53.2)	15 (19.5)	11 (14.3)	2 (2.6)	3.55	0.95
The company retains employees with Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products.	19 (24.7)	23 (29.9)	16 (20.8)	14 (18.2)	5 (6.5)	3.48	1.23
The company has allocated adequate finances for enhancing activities that promote market share sales growth	5 (6.5)	32 (41.6)	24 (31.2)	12 (15.6)	4 (5.2)	3.29	0.98
Financial capability of the company enables it to produces products targeting different regions with varying weather setups.	9 (11.7)	46 (59.7)	11 (14.3)	6 (7.8)	5 (6.5)	3.62	1.01
Financial capability enables the company to integrate innovation in its production processes and sustain such innovations.	5 (6.5)	22 (28.6)	32 (41.6)	14 (18.2)	4 (5.2)	3.13	0.96

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From Table 1, the researcher noted that 57.1% and 6.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that employees had Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) the company required for production of quality and innovative products with a mean of 3.55 (agree). However, 24.7% of the respondents were not sure on the same. Further, 42.9% and 15.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the company attracted employees with needed Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products. Only, 1.3% of the respondent did not confirm that the company attracts employees with needed Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products.

On training, 53.2% and 10.4% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the company trains it employees on emerging issues that affect its competitiveness in the industry. However, 14.3% of the respondent did not confirm that the company trains it employees on emerging issues that affect its competitiveness in the industry. Moreover, 29.9% and 24.7% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the company retains employees with Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products. Only, 6.5% of the respondent strongly disagreed that the company retains employees with Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) to produce quality and innovative products.

In relation to the company had allocated adequate finances for enhancing activities that promote market share sales growth, 41.6% and 6.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively while 14.3% were undecided. Nevertheless, 59.7% of the respondents that financial capability of the company enables it to produce products targeting different regions with varying weather setups and further 11.7% agreed on the same with a mean of 3.62.

Lastly, 28.6% and 6.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that financial capability enables the company to integrate innovation in its production processes and sustain such innovations although majority of them were not sure as indicated by 41.6%. Same views are advanced by Chen and Cian (2010) who argue companies gain and sustain competitive advantage due to the ability to renew, integrate and expand their existing competences and continuously develop new capabilities. They add that organizations need to ensure that placement of people to their respective tasks is matched with their expertise and skills.

Marketing Capabilities Strategy

The second objective was to establish the effect of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. To measure marketing capabilities, a set of seven statements were formulated. The pertinent results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Marketing capabilities

Marketing capabilities	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
The company carries continuous rebranding and quality improvement of products offered to the products offered to the market	11 (14.3)	37 (48.1)	11 (14.3)	15 (19.5)	3 (3.9)	3.49	1.08
The company offer branded subsidized products targeting different geographical regions	13 (16.9)	32 (41.6)	15 (19.5)	12 (15.6)	5 (6.5)	3.47	1.14
The company's engagement in product promotion has enhanced brand visibility and products awareness in the market.	25 (32.5)	21 (27.3)	17 (22.1)	12 (15.6)	2 (2.6)	3.71	1.16
Through strategic marketing plan, KSC has segmented the market it serves allowing	20 (26)	30 (39)	22 (28.6)	5 (6.5)	(0)	3.84	0.89

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supply of products relative to each segments demands							
Through strategic marketing plan, the KSC has managed to identify customer market segments who are attracted to the company's products	8 (10.4)	36 (46.8)	19 (24.7)	13 (16.9)	1 (1.3)	3.48	0.94
The company's strategic marketing plan has resulted well-coordinated marketing activities, leading to better outcomes	31 (40.3)	25 (32.5)	12 (15.6)	8 (10.4)	1 (1.3)	4.00	1.05
The company's strategic marketing plan is revised occasionally	17 (22.1)	26 (33.8)	25 (32.5)	6 (7.8)	3 (3.9)	3.62	1.04

From Table 2, in relation to the company carries continuous rebranding and quality improvement of products offered to the products offered to the market, 48.1% and 14.3% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. The results further revealed that 19.5% of the respondents did not agree that the company carries continuous rebranding and quality improvement of products offered to the products offered to the market.

On the company offer branded subsidized products targeting different geographical regions, 41.6% and 16.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. Only 6.5% of the respondents did not strongly agree that company offers branded subsidized products targeting different geographical regions. Similarly, with a mean of 3.71 (agree), 27.3% and 32.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the company's engagement in product promotion has enhanced brand visibility and products awareness in the market while 22.1% were not sure.

Further, through strategic marketing plan, KSC has segmented the market it serves allowing supply of products relative to each segments demands as shown by 39.0% and 26.0% of the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed respectively. However, only none of the respondents strongly disagreed. The results also revealed that, 46.8% and 10.4% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that through strategic marketing plan, the KSC has managed to identify customer market segments who are attracted to the company's products. Furthermore, 24.7% were undecided with a mean of 3.48.

The company's strategic marketing plan has resulted well-coordinated marketing activities, leading to better outcomes as shown 40.3% of the respondent who agreed and additional 32.5% who agreed on the same with a mean of 4 (agree). Lastly, 33.8% and 22.1% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the company's strategic marketing plan is revised occasionally with a mean of 3.62 (agree). These findings are in agreement with Vorhies and Harker (2000) who remarked that an organisation with marketing capabilities is able to outperform its competitors in terms of profitability, growth, customer satisfaction, and adaptability because of robust market research, marketing management, and distribution capabilities.

Research and Development

The third objective was to establish the effect of research and development on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. To measure research and development, a set of seven statements were framed. The pertinent results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Research and Development

Research and Development	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
The company has invested highly on research and development of its products and services	23 (29.9)	24 (31.2)	12 (15.6)	8 (10.4)	10 (13)	3.55	1.36
The company has increased resources/investments dedicated to sustaining innovation exercises	8 (10.4)	38 (49.4)	23 (29.9)	7 (9.1)	1 (1.3)	3.58	0.85
The company has invested in training and development of the research and development personnel	9 (11.7)	35 (45.5)	22 (28.6)	7 (9.1)	4 (5.2)	3.49	1.00
The company has developed superior quality products as a result of undertaking research	5 (6.5)	43 (55.8)	21 (27.3)	7 (9.1)	1 (1.3)	3.57	0.80
The company has been altering products occasionally to meet client needs	16 (20.8)	23 (29.9)	25 (32.5)	11 (14.3)	2 (2.6)	3.52	1.06
Number of products the company has been releasing into the market have increased	24 (31.2)	24 (31.2)	16 (20.8)	10 (13)	3 (3.9)	3.73	1.15
The company has been providing customized products to the customers	9 (11.7)	40 (51.9)	18 (23.4)	6 (7.8)	4 (5.2)	3.57	0.98

From Table 3, 31.2% and 29.9% of the respondents agreed and strongly respectively that the company had invested highly on research and development of its products and services with a mean of 3.55. Further, 10.4% of the respondents strongly agreed while 49.4% agreed that the company has increased resources/investments dedicated to sustaining innovation exercises. However, 29.9% of the respondents were not sure on the same.

On the company investing in training and development of the research and development personnel, 11.7% and 45.5% of the respondents agreed and strongly agree respectively although 28.6% of the respondents were it sure. With a mean of 3.57, 55.8% of the respondents confirmed that the company has developed superior quality products as a result of undertaking research while 27.3% neither agree nor strongly agree.

On the company has been altering products occasionally to meet client needs, 32.5 of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.52. Further, 20.8% and 29.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and agree respectively that the company has been altering products occasionally to meet client needs.

Most of the respondents confirmed that the number of products the company has been releasing into the market have increased as shown by 31.2% and 31.2% who agreed and strongly agree with a mean of 3.73. However, 13.0% of the respondents did not confirm. Lastly, most of the respondent with a mean of 3.57 (agree) indicated that the company has been providing customized products to the customers as shown by 51.9% of the respondents. However, 23.4% of the respondents were not sure.

Supply Chain Responsiveness

The fourth objective was to establish the effect of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. To measure supply chain responsiveness, a set of seven statements were framed. The pertinent results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Supply chain responsiveness

Supply chain responsiveness	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	SDV
The company delivers products and services to customers without delays	22 (28.6)	31 (40.3)	13 (16.9)	8 (10.4)	3 (3.9)	3.79	1.09
Customer orders are delivered on timely basis without defects	21 (27.3)	36 (46.8)	10 (13)	7 (9.1)	3 (3.9)	3.84	1.05
Products are delivered to customers were other competitors have not yet ventured into.	16 (20.8)	33 (42.9)	16 (20.8)	10 (13)	2 (2.6)	3.66	1.03
The company alters product supply volume in a relatively short time to meet client needs	23 (29.9)	32 (41.6)	14 (18.2)	5 (6.5)	3 (3.9)	3.87	1.04
The company consistently supplies varying volumes of products, as requested by customers	14 (18.2)	26 (33.8)	28 (36.4)	6 (7.8)	3 (3.9)	3.55	1.01
In supplying of high volumes of products to the customers, the company ensures that cost is reduced.	20 (26)	32 (41.6)	20 (26)	4 (5.2)	1 (1.3)	3.86	0.91
The company forecasting of demanded volume of products is accurate	21 (27.3)	31 (40.3)	15 (19.5)	9 (11.7)	1 (1.3)	3.81	1.01

1-Strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agrees

From Table 4, 40.3% and 28.6% of the respondents agreed and strongly agree respectively that the company delivers products and services to customers without delays while 16.9% were undecided, 10.4% disagreeing, and a mean of 3.8 (agree). Further, with a mean of 3.84 (agree), majority of the respondents 46.8% agreed and 27.3% strongly agreed that the customer orders are delivered on timely basis without defects although the remaining 13% were undecided and 9.1% disagreed. In relation to products are delivered to customers where other competitors have not yet ventured into,42.9% agree and further 20.8% strongly agreed with a mean score of 3.66 (agree).

On company altering product supply volume in a relatively short time to meet client needs, 41.6% of the respondents agreed and 29.9% strongly agree with a mean score of 3.87 (agree). Nevertheless, 36.4% of the respondents were undecided whether the company consistently supplies varying volumes of products, as requested by customers while 33.8% agreed and 18.2% strongly agree.

The results also revealed that majority of the respondents confirmed that supplying of high volumes of products to the customers; the company ensures that cost is reduced as shown by 41.6% of the respondents who agreed and further 26.0% who strongly agreed on the same. Lastly, 27.3% and 40.3% strongly agreed and agreed that the company forecasting of demanded volume of products is accurate. This was also supported by a mean of 3.81.

Inferential Analyses

Pearson Correlation Results

The correlation coefficient (r) results were presented as shown in Table 5 using Pearson correlation analysis, which computes the direction (Positive/negative) and the strength (Ranges from -1 to +1) of the relationship between two continues or ratio/scale variables.

Table 5: Multiple Correlation Matrix

		Resource capability	Marketing capabilities	Research and development	Supply chain
Resource capability	Pearson Correlation	1	.306**	.177	.255*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007	.123	.025
	N	77	77	77	77
Marketing capabilities	Pearson Correlation	.306**	1	.214	.219
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007		.062	.055
	N	77	77	77	77
Research and development	Pearson Correlation	.177	.214	1	.286*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.123	.062		.012
	N	77	77	77	77
Supply chain responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.255*	.219	.286*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.055	.012	
	N	77	77	77	77
Competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.601**	.401**	.468**	.531**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	77	77	77	77

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation Table 5, resource capability is positively correlated to competitive advantage the coefficient is 0.601 (p value < 0.01) this is significant at 99% confidence level. Thus increase in resource capability would make competitive advantage to increase. Similarly, the correlation coefficient for marketing capabilities was 0.401, P=0.000, suggesting that there is significant positive relationship between marketing capabilities and competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Increase in marketing capabilities would results to increase in competitive advantage.

Similarly, a correlation coefficient of -0.468** implied that there is significant positive relationship between research and development and competitive advantage. Lastly, there is significant positive relationship between supply chain responsiveness and competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited as indicated by 0.531**, p=0.000. This implies that increase in supply chain responsiveness would results to increase in competitive advantage.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study sought to investigate the determinants of competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. This was achieved by carrying out standard multiple regression. The study was interested in knowing the effect of each of factors on competitive advantage when all these constructs were entered as a block on the model. The results of multiple linear regression analysis were presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adj R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Sq Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.780[a]	.608	.586	.24400	.608	27.941	4	72	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supply chain responsiveness, Resource capability, Marketing capabilities, Research and development

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	6.654	4	1.663	27.941	.000[b]
1	Residual	4.287	72	.060		
	Total	10.940	76			

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage

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b. Predictors: (Constant), Supply chain responsiveness, Resource capability, Marketing capabilities, Research and development

The results from the model summary in Table 6 gave us information on the overall summary of the model. The four determinants accounted for 60.8% significant variance in competitive advantage (R square =.608, P=0.000) implying that 39.2% of the variance in competitive advantage in competitive advantage is accounted for by other variables not captured in this model. From the findings, the F value was more than one, as indicated by a value of 27.941, which is larger than one. This implied that the final study model has significant improvement in it is predictability of competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited.

Table 7 showed unstandardized coefficients, standardized coefficients, t statistic and significant values.

Table 7: **Regression Coefficient**

Model		Coefficients[a] Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.075	.471		-2.285	.025
	Resource capability	.456	.084	.429	5.401	.000
	Marketing capabilities	.144	.079	.143	1.809	.005
	Research and development	.363	.104	.272	3.476	.001
	Supply chain responsiveness	.426	.108	.313	3.940	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage

A regression of the four predictor variables against competitive advantage established the multiple linear regression model as below:

Y=-1.075+ 0.456 X_1**+0.144** X_2**+0.363** X_3**+ 0.426** X_4

Where Y is the dependent variable (Competitive advantage),

X_1 is Resource capability
X_2 is marketing capabilities
X_3 is Research and development
X_4 is Supply chain responsiveness

From the findings, we looked at the model results and scan down through the unstandardized coefficients B column. All the determinants had significant positive effect on the competitive advantage. If the selected determinants are held at zero or it is absent, the competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited would be -1.075, p=0.025. The results revealed that resource capability had unique significant contribution to the model with B=0.456, p=.000 suggesting that controlling of other variables (Marketing capabilities, Research and development and Supply chain responsiveness) in the model, a unit increase in resource capability would result to significant increase in competitive advantage by 0.456 units.

The coefficient of marketing capabilities was 0.144, which was significant (p=.005). When the variance explained by all other variables (Resource capability, Research and development and Supply chain responsiveness) in the model is controlled, a unit increase in marketing capabilities would result to increase in competitive advantage by 0.144units in the same direction.

Another variable that also had a unique significant contribution to the model was the value for research and development (B=.363, p=.001). When other variables in the model are controlled (Marketing capabilities, Resource capability and Supply chain responsiveness), a unit change in research and development would result to significant change in competitive advantage by 0.363 in the same direction.

Lastly, Supply chain responsiveness had also unique significant contribution to the model with B=0.426, p=.000 implying that when other variables in the model are controlled (Marketing capabilities, Research and development and Resource capability), a unit change in Supply chain responsiveness would result to significant change in competitive advantage by 0.426 in the same direction.

Hypothesis testing

First, study hypothesis one (H_{01}) stated that there is no significant influence of resource capability on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Multiple regression results indicated that resource capability has significant influence on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited (β = 0.456 at $p<0.01$). Hypothesis one was therefore rejected. The results indicated that a single increase in resource capability will lead to 0.456 units increase in competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited.

Secondly, study hypothesis two (H_{02}) stated that there is no significant influence of marketing capabilities on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Multiple regression results indicated that marketing capabilities has significant influence on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited (β = 0.144 at $p<0.01$). Hypothesis two was therefore rejected. The results indicated that a single increase in Marketing capabilities will lead to 0.144 units increase in competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited.

Thirdly, study hypothesis three (H_{03}) stated there is no significant influence of research and development on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Multiple regression results indicated that research and development has significant influence on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited (β = 0.363 at $p<0.01$). Hypothesis three was therefore rejected. The results indicated that a single increase in research and development will lead to 0.363 units increase in competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited.

Fourthly, study hypothesis four (H_{04}) stated that there is no significant influence of supply chain responsiveness on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Multiple regression results indicated that supply chain responsiveness has significant influence on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited (β = 0.426 at $p<0.01$). Hypothesis four was therefore rejected. The results indicated that a single increase in supply chain responsiveness will lead to 0.426 units increase in competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that resource capability has significant effect on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. An increase in resource capability would results to significant increase in competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. The company attracted employees with needed knowledge, skills and abilities to produce quality and innovative products. Financial capability enabled Kenya Seed Company to produces products targeting different regions with varying weather setups. This improved the competitive advantage of the company.

The study concluded that marketing capabilities has significant effect on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Through strategic marketing plan, KSC has segmented the market it serves allowing supply of products relative to each segments demands. The study also established that the company's strategic marketing plan has resulted well-coordinated marketing activities, leading to better outcomes.

From the linear and multiple regression results, the study concluded that research and development has significant effect on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. An increase in research and development such as investment in products and service development, developing of superior quality products through research and increasing number of products in the market would results to improvement in competitive advantage.

The study concluded that supply chain responsiveness has significant effect on competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Hence, supply chain responsiveness is a significant predicator of competitive advantage of Kenya Seed Company limited. Customer orders were delivered on timely basis without defects. The company altered product supply volume in a relatively short time to meet client needs

The study recommended that management of Kenya Seed Company should strive to retain employees with knowledge, skills and abilities to produce quality and innovative products. This can be achieved by offering competitive financial and non-financial benefits to their employees.

The study recommended that Kenya Seed Company should ensure that the marketing personnel had the right marketing capabilities by bringing expert in the area to train them and also hold in-house trainings. Further, the study recommended that companies should have strategic marketing plan with well-coordinated marketing activities, which would results to better outcome.

The study recommended that management of Kenya Seed Company should increase in investment in research and development so as to come up with innovative products and services capable of competing competitively in the market.

Lastly, the study recommended that management of Kenya Seed Company should strive to deliver products and services to customers without delays. This can be achieved through both vertical and horizontal integration in the supply chain and therefore, improve competitiveness of Kenya Seed Company products and services.

Areas for Further Studies

The study focused on one case, Kenya Seed Company Limited; therefore, further studies should consider other seed companies in Kenya. The study focused on four factors affecting competitive advantage, the study recommended that further studies should consider factors that were not included such as technological capabilities, managerial capabilities and resource-exploiting capabilities.

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