

**STRATEGIC AGILITY FOR POST COVID-19 RESILIENCE AT EAST
AFRICAN BREWERIES LIMITED**

BY


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DECLARATION

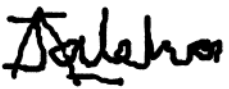
I hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for degree in any other University.

Signed  Date: 24th November 2023.

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This research has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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I dedicate this project to my family, colleagues, friends for their unwavering encouragement and support throughout my studies.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCM	Business Continuity Management
DCT	Dynamic Capabilities Theory
EABL	East Africa Breweries Limited
IT	Information Technology
PwC	Price Waterhouse Coopers
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UK	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

The determination of the strategic capabilities and agilities of a company as evidenced by its resilience to unexpected circumstance has been the subject of widespread debate and academic assessments. This research investigation thus sought to ascertain the strategic agility for post COVID-19 resilience at East African Breweries Limited. In order to determine the implications of strategic agility for post COVID-19 resilience at EABL, five (5) of the top level managers of the company were interviewed. The data collected was transcribed in the form of common themes and key findings determined. Consequently, the study findings revealed that technology innovation, collaboration as well as operational capabilities were the key agility strategies EABL adopted to sustain its business model in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings further revealed that technology and innovation was the most important strategic agility as it enabled new distribution channels to be opened up and enabled EABL to target more customers and instant feedback. Collaboration, and operational agilities were also significant in influencing post COVID – 19 resilience. The study thus concluded that the strategic agilities enabled East African Breweries Limited to be resilient in its operations in the face of the economic downturns that were caused by the COVID 19, underlined by its ability to bridge the gap between the company's products and the customer. This plus the implementation of off trade strategists and analysts to ensure that they are privy to the changes within the market also underscored the resilience after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability of EABL to also ensure that their workforce is motivated and healthy was also a marker of their resilience amid harsh economic times.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The prevailing dynamicity that has been the marker of today's unpredictable and diverse changes in the corporate environment, organizational resilience has become of utmost importance. Strategic agility has become recognized as a critical component that influences organizational resilience by allowing businesses to react rapidly and adaptably to shifting conditions. Companies with high levels of strategic agility are more likely to outperform their counterparts and recover from disasters according to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2021). Companies must invest in digital capabilities, create agile teams and processes, and promote a culture of continuous learning and innovation if they want to develop strategic agility. This calls for investing in digital tools like automation, cloud computing, and data analytics, encouraging staff members to develop new skills and try out novel ideas, setting up cross-functional teams that can work well together and communicate honestly. In order to quickly pivot and adapt to changing conditions, businesses must also design flexible and adaptable processes (Tarba et al., 2023). Strategic agility is therefore, an essential element of organizational resilience, and businesses that can cultivate it have a higher chance of success in the rapidly shifting business environment of today.

The completion of this research was underpinned by the postulations of two theories, Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) and the Contingency Theory. The Dynamic Capability Theory (Teece, Pisano and Shuen 1997) which suggests that organizations should incorporate, develop and recognise their competencies both internal and external to adeptly respond to the diversity that is seen within the business environment. DCT highlights the importance of being flexible through constant learning and innovation in order to achieve strategic agility and organizational resilience.

DCT will be complemented by the Contingency Theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967) which postulates that specific strategies for enhancing strategic agility and organizational resilience will vary depending on the unique circumstances and characteristics of the organization. The theory posits that strategic agility and organizational resilience are not universal concepts but rather depend on the unique characteristics and circumstances of an organization.

With a sizable presence in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, East African Breweries Ltd (EABL) is a top beverage manufacturer in East Africa. The company has been operating in the area for more than 90 years, giving it a wealth of experience and market understanding. The COVID-19 epidemic had a profound impact on many people's lives in 2020, causing uncertainty and instability. EABL responded quickly and successfully by donating a considerable sum of US\$ 5 million to boost trade and community projects throughout the region. The company provided financial assistance to its business partners, allowing for the distribution of hand sanitizers to vulnerable areas and the distribution of mattresses to frontline health workers (EABL Sustainability Report 2021). Despite the hurdles provided by the COVID-19 epidemic, EABL remained dedicated to addressing its customers' demands. To solve these issues, the company used the Business Model Canvas approach to develop agile strategies in key areas such as value proposition, IT infrastructure, customers, and resources. The business model has given EABL flexibility and resilience. The above context provides the motivation to study EABL's strategic agility for organizational resilience during the COVID-19 epidemic.

1.1.1 Strategic Agility

Strategic agility refers to an organization's capacity to rapidly and efficiently adapt its strategy, methods, and framework in order to effectively address unforeseen challenges and capitalize on sudden opportunities (McKinsey & Company 2021). Strategic agility is the capacity and ability of an enterprise to continually renew itself, employ flexibility without making compromises on efficiency of output (Clauss, Abebe, Tangpong & Hock, 2019). It is a systematic process of deploying dynamic capabilities to achieve continuous variations in the firms' process, service structure and products within the adjusted business model. Strategic agility is the ability to not just survive but thrive amid disruptions (Wade, Joshi & Teracino (2021). Arokodare and Falana (2021) defined strategic agility as proactively changing the organizational system to gain advantages through the employed strategy. Strategic agility is the ability to reactively exploit or take advantage of changing patterns through resource deployment in a fast and nimble way (Doz, 2020). This present study defines the agilities brought about by strategic planning as the pro-activeness of an organization to realign itself in the market place for sustained resilience without compromising on current customer offering.

Shams et al. (2021) define strategic agility as the capability of organizations to proactively counter unforeseen external changes through agility of production, supply chain and information technology, which maintain speed and flexibility in high levels. Hock et al. (2016) outlined strategic sensitivity, collective commitment, resource fluidity as the key agilities adopted by organizations to innovate their business model. Similarly, aligned with the perspectives of Doz and Kosonen (2010), the dimensions of strategic agility encompass entrepreneurial disposition, consolidation of leadership, and resource automation and dynamicity . Bassam (2019) affirms that

strategic agility is manifested through several criteria, including innovation, quality of service, delivery dependability, process flexibility, and cost leadership.

According to Govuzela and Mafini (2019) strategic agility includes the ability to use technology, collaborate on innovation, learn continuously and coordinate internally. Arbussa, Bikfalvi and Marques (2017) identified strategic unity, resource fluidity, strategic sensitivity and resourcefulness as vital components of strategic agility that assist small and medium enterprises in overcoming challenges related to their sizes. In addition, Padhy, Pati and Kumar (2020) emphasized that strategic agility indicators include customer responsiveness, adaptability and collaboration. Likewise, Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour (2021) highlighted the significance of agility indicators like innovation, knowledge management and risk management. In the present research, the facets as they relate to strategic agility were specified as strategic sensitivity, resource adaptability, entrepreneurial disposition and the consolidation of leadership positions to make them more cohesive.

1.1.2 Organizational Resilience.

The ability of as company to contemplate the possibility unforeseen interruptions and subsequently counter them as they occur, carry out its core responsibilities, and recover swiftly and efficiently is what defines organizational resilience (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010). The resilience of an organization is used to denote the capacity to foresee, prepare for and effectively handle both gradual shifts and sudden disruptions, enabling it to endure and thrive (Denyer, 2017). Additionally, it involves the organization's ability to swiftly respond, recuperate or innovate novel approaches to conduct business during challenging circumstances, surpassing the capabilities of other organizations (Kunz & Sonnenholzner, 2023) Moreover, organizational resilience

encompasses the capability to mitigate substantial business disruptions resulting from unforeseen and catastrophic events, surpassing the intended activities without incurring significant losses (He et al., 2023).

Kantur and İşeri-Say (2012) classified organizational resilience using the dimensions of conceptual integrity, strategic acting, perceptual stance and strategic capacity. Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007) identified that the organizational resilience constituted the affective, cognitive, relational and structural mechanisms. Tibayet al. (2018) conducted a study and concluded that effective leadership and management, a skilled and competent workforce, market responsiveness, situational awareness and a well-designed preparedness plan are key contributors to business resilience. Similarly, Rahi (2019) emphasized two crucial indicators of organizational resilience, namely adaptive capacity and awareness. The organization's awareness entailed evaluating its environment and interpreting present and future changes to proactively manage disruptions, while adaptive capacity involved transforming its structure and processes. Duchek (2020) suggested three successive resilience stages which constitutes organizational resilience which included anticipation, coping and adaptation.

To operationalize organizational resilience the study assessed the effectiveness of the business continuity plans, availability of a backup system, and the degree of preparedness for various scenarios and successful execution of recovery strategies (Bhamra, Dani & Burnard, 2011). The effectiveness and robustness of the organization's business continuity plans will be evaluated, including their completeness, timeliness, and alignment with probable interruptions. Having redundant systems, backup power sources, alternative communication lines and data backup, recovery processes all in place. The study assessed the organization's threat readiness, scenario planning, and risk assessment procedures. The study also evaluated how well the organization is

able to carry out its recovery strategy, taking into account things like response time and accuracy, team collaboration, communication efficiency, and resource use during the recovery phase.

1.1.3 East African Breweries Limited.

East African Breweries Limited (EABL) is a leading beverage manufacturing and marketing company in East Africa, with a history dating back to 1922 when it was founded in Kenya (East African Breweries Limited, 2020). The company is best known for its production of beer, spirits, and non-alcoholic beverages. EABL operates in five countries in the region, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and South Sudan, with a workforce of over 3,000 employees. EABL has a strong market position in the region, with a diverse portfolio of brands such as Tusker, Guinness, and Pilsner. According to the EABL annual report (2020), the company's performance has contributed significantly to the economic growth of the East African region. The company's operations generate employment opportunities, stimulate local economies through procurement of goods and services, and pay taxes, among others. EABL has continued to expand its operations in the region. In 2018, the company commissioned a new brewery in Kisumu, Kenya, to augment its capacity to produce thus meeting the demand for its products.

EABL has implemented a range of strategies to remain resilient in the face of various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic. East African Breweries Limited (2020) highlighted its efforts to optimize its operations, reduce costs, and maintain its market position. EABL also invested in digital platforms and e-commerce to enhance its distribution and sales channels. In terms of strategic agility, EABL in Kenya operates based on the Canvas Business Model, which informs its agility framework. The company's fundamental strategy centres around customizing its approach to the unique peculiarities of each country. The flexibility aids the organization in effectively

recognizing and shaping consumer trends while promptly reacting to evolving market conditions (EABL, 2021). EABL maintains a strong focus on the production of beer, spirits, and non-alcoholic beverages of reputable quality, while also devoting resources to responsible marketing, constant innovation, refining sales methods, and actively contributing to society's betterment (EABL, 2021).

In the post-COVID-19 era, both the agility and resilience of EABL were likely affected. The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the business environment, impacting consumer behaviour, supply chains, and overall market dynamics (EABL, 2021). EABL had to quickly adapt its strategies to meet the changing needs and preferences of consumers, ensure the availability and accessibility of its products, and address the evolving market conditions. The company's strategic agility framework, informed by the Canvas Business Model, likely played a crucial role in enabling EABL to pivot its operations, adjust its marketing strategies, and identifies new growth opportunities during this period (EABL, 2021).

1.2 Research Problem

Strategic agility strengthens an organization's capacity to foresee, react, recuperate from disruptive occurrences. It thus empower4s organizations to actively foresee potential risks and opportunities in the external landscape adapting their strategies and business models accordingly (Ebers, Yan & Weng, 2020). For instance, an exploratory study by Mangalaraj, Nerur, & Dwivedi (2023) discussed the influence of digital transformation on organizational agility and resilience, emphasizing how IT capabilities improve responsiveness and adaptation during disruptive periods. Similarly, Akpan, Johnny, and Sylv (2022) investigated the association between dynamic competences and organizational resilience among Nigerian manufacturing organizations, they

established that dynamic capabilities did amplify the resilience of the manufacturing firms. While the studies established the positive influence, they adopted IT as the only agile measure that influenced resilience, hence a corresponding area for further research emerges that this study aimed to address. A study by Ngeche & Kaluyu (2023) on the agilities as part of the organizational structure and sustainable competitive advantage in private multi-Practice hospitals in Kenya, established a positive and significant influence. However, the study outcome was on competitive advantage, while the present study focused on organizational resilience, hence a conceptual gap.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, EABL changed its operations through various strategic moves that enabled it to swiftly adapt to the emerging trends and market dynamics. The company's ability to sense the changing consumer behaviour and market demands allowed it to make timely strategic decisions and adjustments that ensured the continuity of its essential functions and minimized disruptions. EABL leveraged its flexibility by diversifying its product offerings and explored new business opportunities by expanding its presence in the digital space, investing in e-commerce platforms and delivery services to reach its consumers in a contactless and convenient manner (EABL, 2022). This strategic shift enabled EABL to maintain its market presence and continue serving consumers while adhering to the evolving health and safety regulations during the pandemic. The company implemented robust contingency plans, collaborated closely with suppliers and identified alternative sourcing options to ensure the availability of raw materials and minimize production disruptions (EABL, 2022). These novel supply chain practices helped EABL navigate the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, maintain its production capabilities and meet consumer demands. By leveraging its strategic agility, EABL demonstrated its resilience in the face of the post-pandemic challenges.

Research has indicated that the implementation of strategic agility empowers organizations to revamp their operations, fostering enhanced adaptability and robustness when dealing with unforeseen and unfamiliar challenges (Mangalaraj, Nerur, & Dwivedi 2023; Soto-Acosta 2020). Furthermore, in their investigation concerning manufacturing industries in Saudi Arabia in regard to resilience in logistic management and agility of the supply chain, Doghan and Sundram (2023) established operational efficiency and risk management positively influenced supply chain resilience. Lungu (2020) examined strategic agility and performance of information technology firms in Roman. The results indicated that transformation of IT firms in greater strategic agility. However, Bayo's (2021) study on strategic agility and sales growth of Alcohol Manufacturers quoted in Nigeria's Securities Exchange, firm size strongly moderated the relationship between sales growth and strategic agility. Onoshakpor, Etuknwa, and Karamalla-Gaiballa (2020) conducted a study to explore the impact of strategic flexibility on the organizational resilience of female entrepreneurs in Africa amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, revealing that enhancing networks, stakeholder relationships, and leveraging information technology empowered women entrepreneurs by expanding their options, accessing information, securing funding, and receiving social and financial support.

Wamalwa, & Ochola (2022) study on resilience among Kenyan manufacturing firms, demonstrated the positive influence of resource agility on organizational resilience. An empirical study by Ogema in 2017, the relationship between lean and agile procurement strategies and performance was investigated at East Africa Breweries Limited. The findings revealed a notable and favourable impact of waste management practices on overall performance. Maundu (2015) used the case of EABL to study the effect of strategic change management where it was established that leadership, stakeholder engagement together with organizational change affected

performance. Ng'ang'a (2018) did a study evaluating the association between strategic agility and competitiveness within the pharmaceutical industries operating in Kenya and established that policy alignment to enhancement of competitiveness improve firm performance. While the above cited studies have shown the positive influence of strategic ability, most adopted performance as the outcome measure, hence a conceptual gap. The studies were also done in different settings and since their findings cannot apply to this study, a contextual gap emerges that this study will seek to address. Therefore, this study addressed the research question on: What are the strategic agility capabilities adopted for organizational resilience at East Africa Breweries Limited?

1.3 Objective of the Study.

The objective of this study was to establish the strategic agility for post covid-19 resilience at East African Breweries Limited.

1.4 Value of the Study.

The study enriched theories in the field by providing empirical evidence and insights into the effectiveness of strategic agility in enhancing organizational resilience. By examining the specific strategies and practices implemented by EABL in the post-pandemic era, the study's findings contributed to the current knowledge base and provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between strategic agility and organizational resilience. These insights will not only expand theoretical frameworks but also help researchers identify important research gaps and areas for further investigation, ultimately advancing the understanding and application of strategic agility in the context of organizational resilience.

The study's findings had practical implications for the managers at East African Breweries Limited. The conclusions and recommendations derived from the study can be applied by

managers to develop and implement effective strategic agility measures that enabled the organization to adapt and thrive in the face of uncertainties and disruptions. They can apply the insights gained from the study to improve the organization's resilience by implementing agile practices and processes that enable quick adaptation to changing market conditions, customer needs and disruptions. By applying the study findings, managers can enhance the organization's ability to navigate uncertainties and recover swiftly from future disruptions.

The study's findings informed policy makers at East African Breweries Limited on the policy frameworks necessary to foster and support strategic agility for enhanced organizational resilience. It can guide policy makers in formulating strategies and policies that encourage a supportive organizational culture, promote investment in technological capabilities, and facilitate collaboration with external stakeholders. By implementing appropriate policy frameworks based on the study's findings, policy makers can create an environment conducive to the adoption of agile practices, enabling the organization to adapt and thrive in the face of future challenges and uncertainties.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delved into theories that anchored the study, and reviewed empirical studies on strategic agility and organizational resilience. This section also presented a summary of the empirical research gaps with the aim of addressing the research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation.

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece et al., 1997) was the main theoretical model and was complemented by the Contingency theory as the two influential frameworks that emerged in the field of strategic management to in understanding of how firms achieve resilience through strategic agilities. The DCT emphasizes the importance of a firm's ability to adapt and innovate in the face of external changes. Thus, a company's success is dependent not only on its existing resources and capabilities, but also on its ongoing attempts to evolve and rearrange these assets in response to changing market conditions (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Contingency theory, on the other hand, suggests that there is no universal best approach to managing a firm, and that the most effective management practices are contingent on the specific characteristics of the firm and its environment (Donaldson, 2001). This theory posits that firms must adopt different strategies and management practices depending on the context in which they operate. Despite their differences, there are several important connections between these two theories. For example, dynamic

capabilities theory emphasizes the importance of flexibility and adaptability, which are key components of contingency theory. Additionally, contingency theory recognizes that a firm's success is dependent on its ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions, which is a key tenet of dynamic capabilities theory. Researchers have also suggested that dynamic capabilities can be considered a type of contingency variable, as they are dependent on the specific context in which the firm operates (Zollo & Winter, 2002).

2.2.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT).

Teece, Shuen, and Pisano (1997) is built on the premise of exploitation of unique resource specific to a firm as a basis of aligning the firm operations in a dynamic environment. This theory acknowledges the existence of environment dynamism that makes it necessary to reconfigure and reinvent processes for competitive alignment (Wang, 2007). It assesses the capacity of an organization to assimilate develop, and realign both resources within and outside its control in responding challenges posted by evolving business environment. DCT posits that firms should constantly seek to align their operations to the changing environment through appropriate strategies like expansion, downsizing or maintaining existing capacity (Wheeler, 2002). It expands the need to digest environment changes to inform decisions related to development of new products and services to meet the changing tastes and preferences of customers (Shuen and Sieber, 2009).

This theory is significant in this study because it explains in detail how the reasons why firms need to monitor happenings in their environment and strategize on how to counter these changes to remain competitive. It explains how strategically agile firms can realign their processes, technology and other capabilities to match the changes occurring in their macro-environment

(Wang, 2007). Strategically agile firms have the capability to realign their daily operations to conform to changes in the environment by responding to opportunities and threats. It advocates for swift and prompt response to take advantage of opportunities and reduce the negative effects of threats for optimal firm performance. Dynamic capabilities theory (DCT) has also faced several criticisms. One of the main criticisms of DCT is that it lacks empirical evidence to support its claims. Some scholars argue that the concept of dynamic capabilities is too broad and abstract, making it difficult to measure and operationalize (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Additionally, DCT has been criticized for being too deterministic, implying that organizations have complete control over their capabilities and can easily adapt to changing environments. However, some scholars suggest that environmental factors and industry structure play a significant role in shaping a firm's capabilities (Teece, Shuen & Pisano, 1997).

2.2.2 Contingency Theory.

The Contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964) proposes that there is no one best way to develop strategic agilities for organizational resilience as such agilities depend on the specific situation and context. Instead, the most effective approach is contingent upon the specific environmental circumstances present at the time of decision-making (Weill and Olson, 1989). It acknowledges the role played by the dynamism in business environment in differentiating outcomes by the same agile strategies applied in different environments (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). The factors within and outside the control of an organization at the time of making a given decision influences the optimal strategy that would help attain set targets (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969). This theory advocates that firms operate in an open system where it manages the changes in the environment for its internal success (Fiedler, 1993). The theory is appropriate for this study as the relevant strategic agilities for resilience will depend on the existing environmental dynamics that is bound to abruptly change

and not easy to predict. Specifically, the Contingency theory is helps in understanding the relationship between strategic agility for post-COVID-19 resilience of East African Breweries Limited (EABL).

According to the Contingency theory, an organization's success in adapting to changing circumstances depends on its ability to match its strategies to the changing environment. EABL's ability to be agile in adapting its strategies to the post-COVID-19 environment will be critical to its long-term resilience. As noted by Abu Bakar et al. (2021), firms that adopt an agile approach to strategy development can enhance their adaptability and resilience to market turbulence. In addition, Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) have noted that firms that can align their strategies with the external environment can achieve superior performance outcomes. Therefore, EABL's ability to be agile in developing strategies that align with the post-COVID-19 environment will be critical to its long-term resilience.

However, the Contingency theory has received criticism owing to its opaqueness in identifying specific appropriate strategies that organizations can adopt in contingency scenarios to boost performance. It seems to advocate for adoption of any strategy provides one is able to give a justification of their choice. Contingency theory lacks a clear definition of what constitutes a contingency variable. Scholars argue that the theory has failed to provide clear guidelines on how to identify and measure contingency variables, which makes it difficult to test empirically (Donaldson, 2001). Additionally, contingency theory has been criticized for its lack of predictive power. Some scholars argue that the theory's focus on adapting to environmental factors makes it difficult to predict future outcomes and may result in a reactive approach to management (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967).

2.3 Strategic Agility and Organizational Resilience.

Vidmar, Rosiello, and Golra (2020) carried out an empirical enquiry focusing on the strategic agility and resilience of rapidly expanding SMEs in the UK. The research discovered that telecommunication infrastructure, restructuring, as well as new organizational culture yielded positive outcomes on both resilience and performance during the challenging period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The study however, was done on SMEs in the UK and the findings cannot be replicated in Kenya's manufacturing sector, hence a contextual gap. Hijjawi (2017), conducted a study by examining how strategic agility impacts the sustainability of a business model and its management within insurance organizations in Jordan. The study established that operational agility was key in sustaining business continuity management. The study however addressed the relationship between strategic agility and business continuity management and was as well done on insurance organization in Jordan hence depicting both conceptual and contextual gaps.

A study by Alhadid (2016) on organization agility on organization performance using data drawn from Jordan, it established a positive relationship between organizational success and agility inside the company. There is need for similar studies to be carried out on the context of other countries or regions. The study however was majorly centered on the correlation between organization agility and organization performance which is not the case for the current study hence a conceptual gap. The study was also done in Jordan depicting a contextual gap. Akhigbe and Onuoha (2019) conducted a study on the hospitality industry in Nigeria to examine the nexus between strategic agility and resilience. The study demonstrated a substantial connection between strategic agility using the dimensions of flexibility and accessibility and organization resilience in terms of adaptability and robustness. This study indicates a contextual gap since the study was taken in

Nigeria as well as conceptual gap where the study was taken in 2019 when COVID 19 disruption had not struck the country thus could not be included in the study.

Fakunmoju, Arokodare and Makinde (2020) carried out research to investigate the association between strategic agility and competitive advantage in oil and gas marketing firms in Lagos State, Nigeria. The completion of the research undertaking indicated a noteworthy influence on strategic agility on the competitive advantage of the examined firms. However the study exhibited a conceptual gap as it solely explored the association between strategic agility and competitive advantage without delving into broader contextual factors or even additional variables. Furthermore, the study's exclusive emphasis on oil and gas marketing companies in Lagos created a contextual gap. Arokodare and Asikhia (2020) conducted an empirical study to examine how strategic agility can help organizations achieve superior performance through strategic foresight. The study drew a conclusion from the review studies that the agilities accrued to strategic measures and strategic foresight had a significant relationship on firm performance. This study depicts a conceptual gap by focusing on strategic agility and firm performance.

Locally, the main objective of a study undertaken by Schmid, Raju, and Jensen (2021) was to investigate how business continuity could help to pandemic resilience in low- and middle-income countries. As a case study, the researchers chose COVID-19 in Kenya. According to their findings, using streamlined, flexible, and easily available business continuity methods could provide excellent opportunities for improving pandemic resilience and could be efficiently utilized during future disruptive occurrences. This study however focused on low and medium income countries revealing a contextual gap. Kagwanja et al. (2020) undertook a study to examine the shock, stress and everyday health system resilience taking a case of the Kenyan Coast. Health managers pointed a number of concerns within the health system and implemented absorptive, adaptive and

transformative solutions. These tactics had varying effects on system performance, but the resilience displayed in everyday scenarios appeared to result from managers' effective use of organizational capacities that suited the specific stressor and environment. The study however focused on shock, stress and resilience hence conceptual gap and also the study focused on Kenyan Cost revealing a contextual gap.

Ahmed, Kilika, and Gakenia (2021) conducted a study on SME Resilience to Covid-19, taking a case of Non-Essential Service Providers within Nairobi. The study emphasized that Kenyan SMEs can build resilience by implementing several key factors, such as business diversification, maintaining adequate financial resources, encouraging stakeholder collaboration, embracing self-reinvention, fostering a positive psychological outlook, leveraging technology, and effective cost management. However, the study concentrated on SME resilience and failed to explore the effect of strategic agility on organizational resilience, suggesting a conceptual gap. The study also revealed a contextual gap because it was conducted on Non-Essential Service Providers in Nairobi.

Muchoki (2022) conducted a study to determine how Nairobi's construction firms performed and how their strategic agility affected that performance. As per the results, it became evident that organizational capabilities as far as agilities were concerned, human adaptability, and technical flexibility each exerted a positive and substantial influence on performance. However, the examination primarily concentrated on the correlation between strategic agility and performance, leaving a noticeable gap in addressing the broader impacts of other agility dimensions on overall performance. It has also concentrated on construction companies in Nairobi, Kenya, indicating a contextual gap.

2.5 Summary of the Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gap.

The chapter looked in to the two theories underpinning the study to show the theoretical foundation of the study. The chapter discussed the dynamic capabilities theory which highlights the need for companies to poses the ability to adapt and remain innovative in order to respond to dynamic external business landscape. It highlights the importance of restructuring and innovating processes to maintain a competitive edge within a dynamic corporate environment. Contingency theory, nonetheless, postulates that there is no universally ideal strategy to managing a firm, and that the most effective management techniques are dependent on the individual qualities of the firm and its environment. Both theories emphasize the significance of changing conditions and aligning strategy with the external environment.

Strategic agility has been found in studies undertaken in a variety of nations, including the United Kingdom, Jordan, Nigeria, and Kenya, to have an important role in increasing resilience and performance amid disturbances such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Notably, organizational flexibility, adaptability, and accessibility were found as critical strategic agility factors that positively influenced resilience and competitive advantage. Most researches however, have concentrated on single components, such as the relationship between strategic agility and performance or resilience, leaving conceptual gaps in comprehending the entire relationships between these variables. Furthermore, the geographical scope of these researches, which range from specific regions within a country to low- and middle-income countries, suggests contextual gaps that restrict the generalizability of their findings. The current study sought to address these gaps by investigating on the effect of strategic agility for post covid-19 resilience at East African Breweries Limited.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology to be adopted by the research undertaking to for data collection and analysis was discussed in this chapter. The focus was on identifying an appropriate research design, defining the target population, selecting the data collection instrument, and outlining the data analysis plan. By employing these approaches, the study aimed to ensure a comprehensive and reliable methodology for conducting the research.

3.2 Research Design.

The term research design is used to denote a structured plan or framework of a study that outlines how the research question will be addressed. According to Creswell (2014), a research design involves making well-thought-out decisions that comprise the blue print thus involves outlining the methodologies and procedures to collect and analyse the required data according to the objective of the study. The research design involves multiple decisions including the chosen research methodology, methods for data collection, determination of sample size, sampling methodology, and procedures for data analysis.

The research used a case study design, which is appropriate for generating in-depth insights into the phenomenon under inquiry because of its focus on a particular company. This method allows

for the collection of extensive data that would be difficult to obtain in a cross-sectional investigation. By using a case study design, the researcher can delve into the complexities of the organization, allowing for a more in-depth grasp of the subject matter. This strategy ensures that the specific context and variables involved are thoroughly examined, resulting in a fuller and more nuanced investigation of the research issue.

3.3 Data Collection.

The study made use of first-hand qualitative primary data collected through an interview guide designed to capture common themes on strategic agility and organizational resilience that are compatible with the study's aims. The interview guide was an important part of this research because it sought for in depth responses from the interviewees. The researcher performed an in-depth analysis of the responses on strategic agility and organizational resilience to identify the key concepts, themes, and issues related to the topic, which was used to develop a set of initial questions for the guide.

The final interview guide contained a series of open-ended questions that were designed to elicit detailed responses from the interviewees. The questions were structured around the various elements of strategic agility and organizational resilience, such as the ability to adapt to changing circumstances, the development of flexible and adaptable processes, and the use of technology to enhance agility and resilience. The guide contained prompts to encourage the interviewees to provide detailed and specific examples of their experiences with agile strategies and organizational resilience in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Therefore, the interview guide proved to be a valuable tool for collecting rich and detailed data on the research topic, which was used to answer the study objectives.

3.4 Data Analysis.

Data analysis is a crucial stage in the research process, as it involves the synthesis of the data collected in order to make meaning and respond to the research objectives. For this particular study, most of the data to be collected was qualitative in nature, as the interviewees were provided descriptions of agile strategies employed and how they have contributed to organizational resilience in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. As such, the study made use of content analysis to make sense of the data collected. Content analysis has been found to be a suitable method for analysing open-ended questions, as it offers flexibility in analysis while at the same time allowing for objective and systematic description of content.

In conducting the content analysis, the data collected from the interviews was organized into identified thematic areas as per the study objectives. This process involved identifying patterns and themes that emerge from the data and grouping them together based on their similarities. Through this process, the researcher can identify recurring ideas, concepts, and perspectives that are related to the research objectives. These themes were then used to generate findings and draw conclusions that are grounded in the data. Overall, the use of content analysis as a method of data analysis in this study provided a systematic and rigorous approach to analysing the qualitative data collected from the interviews. It allowed for the identification of themes and patterns that emerge from the data, which in turn can be used to develop a rich and nuanced understanding of the agile strategies employed by organizations in response to the post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This part covered the analysis data, findings and discussion in order to assess the relationship between strategic agility for post Covid-19 resilience ay East African Breweries Limited through the use of interview guide. The aim of this chapter was to address the research question by analysing and discussing the study findings.

4.2 Strategic Agility for Organizational Resilience at EABL

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic hit businesses hard especially those that relied on open venues to sell their products. The interviewees stated that to overcome the consequences of the pandemic, EABL indulged in driving innovations, launching new products, and putting in place strategic pricing and effective cost management during times of economic uncertainty, as highlighted by the managing director and CEO;

“EABL has continued to remain resilient because of the high-performance culture we have created across the business, the rigorous execution of our strategy, the strength of our portfolio across categories, and our agility in responding to emerging trends and insights”.

Based on the statements from the interviewees, East Africa Breweries Limited (EABL), the largest beverages company in this area, experienced a substantial decrease in profits amid the pandemic, managing director of Kenya Breweries Limited (KBL), EABL’s subsidiary by Business Africa, June 21st 2021;

“When Covid-19 hit, with all the closures taking place, our business took a bit of shock,”

According to the interviewees, in tandem with changes in the venues for drinking alcoholic beverages during the Covid 19 pandemic and its attendant regulations, customer habits and preferences changed to cans from bottles as they preferred to buy alcoholic drinks in supermarkets and off licence shops. This forced EABL to reinforce its so called ‘off trade’ growth strategy, where attention switched to boosting sales in supermarkets, cash and carries and e-commerce as one interviewee stated;

“This tells you that the consumer is now more comfortable drinking in the confines of their homes, unlike in the past when they wanted to go out and spend,”.

In order to remain resilient during the Covid 19 pandemic, most interviewees agreed that EABL had to adopt various agile strategies through continuous adjustments in its core business as a result of the radical changing circumstances, not only by creating new products and services, but also changing its frameworks for conducting business and creative ways of accruing value to a firm. According to one interviewee;

“The uncertainty during the Covid 19 period, forced EABL to innovatively create new distribution channels and products to meet the changing consumption patterns of its customers through improved processes and reduction of its operating costs”.

Another interviewee stated;

“There was a big difference in how EABL was able to cope with the pandemic as we found a way to continue manufacturing, novel ways to work with additional distribution partners to make sure those products were available in the outlets for the limited times that they were available in line with the Covid 19 regulations”.

As pointed out by another interviewee;

“During the Covid 19 pandemic, our growth was driven by the business’ agility to respond to the changing consumer shifts and emerging channels’.

Most interviewees agreed that EABL had to quickly become agile by cutting costs in their approach to sustain its operations as a result of the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to one senior manager.

“Though the company looked to tighten its belt during the first wave of the pandemic by reducing capex investments and managing costs, EABL is now reinvesting in the business”.

Another interviewee commented;

“Our market teams re-organized their plans to help us emerge stronger from the crisis and continued to execute with discipline and invest prudently to ensure we are strongly positioned for a recovery in consumer demand,”

As per the interviewees’ observations, Kenya Breweries Limited (KBL), an EABL subsidiary, introduced an e-commerce platform named “Party Central” to bolster sales during the enforced lockdowns. KBL has continued to invest in such “omni channels” moving forward. Diageo UK, which has majority shares in EABL, intensified the use of E-commerce as a strategy means of leveraging global outreach and an online presence to ensure that products were available to the general population. The augmentation of the digital capabilities was thus an imperative with E-commerce being cited as the main form of strategic agilities that enabled the sustainability of EABL during the pandemic. As per the interviewees the challenges induced by the Covid-19 pandemic compelled KBL to broaden and modify its product offerings to align with the emerging channels and changing consumer trends while simultaneously investing proactively in their strategic brands , as stated by the EABL Group managing director and CEO;

“We responded to the new realities by continuing to invest behind the brands, expanding capacity and sustaining productivity initiatives to manage our cost base to ensure we emerge stronger”.

The managing director further stated;

“The business also invested in capacity expansion to support sales growth in line with EABL’s strategy”.

The adoption of dynamic channel movements to factor in the changing consumption patterns of the consumers was put to use since during hard economic times beer consumption experienced a downturn in terms of the quality and prices of the goods and services to match the prevailing economic times, downsizing spending to ensure a manageable level of disposable income. The interviewees stated that they remained optimistic about the changes in consumer spending habits as they concurred that the off-trade business strategy had grown exponentially as compared to the pre-Covid19 pandemic levels underlining the successful implementation of the strategic agility that enhanced EABL resilience.

In terms of collaborations and partnerships, EABL has over the years established collaborative partnership with different parties with shared common goals, as all parties mutually benefited from working together. However, during the Covid 19 pandemic, EABL entered into collaborative partnerships between those in different fields to supplement one another's expertise.

According to one of the senior managers;

“The key to our resilience post Covid has been partnerships, we are collaborating with a wide range of stakeholders – from state, to non-state actors – to promote cooperative problem solving and ensure longevity of our projects”.

The East Africa Breweries Limited increased its partnership with bars through a program worth Sh. 531 million designed to aid in the resurgence following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions termed “Raising the Bar”, this two-year initiative provided eligible business entities and outlets to digital training and support without charge. This effort significantly contributed to the swift

recuperation of the hospitality sector and facilitated our business in swiftly rebounding from the pandemic's effects.

“We want to support the long-term recovery of the hospitality sector as these businesses play an essential role in bringing people together to socialise and celebrate something that we have all missed so much during this terrible crisis,” said Andrew Cowan, former Group Managing Director and CEO in an interview conducted in July 2020

According to the interviewees, EABL had to engage in partnerships and collaborations that focused on specific areas regarding the pandemic, as one interviewee observed;

“Collaborations between AMREF, the Government and EABL ensured that there was provision of medical care, hand sanitizers and vaccination for the employees of EABL to ensure the continuity of operations.

The interviewer observed that during the pandemic, EABL developed strong, mutually beneficial partnerships, entered into collaborative arrangements to realise innovation, and engaged in fair contract and payment terms (EABL Integrated Report and Financial Statements, 2021).

“We now have our own e-commerce channel – partycentral.co.ke – and have developed partnerships with a set of established e-commerce platforms such as Jumia, Glovo, Turnup, and Oaks & Cock that deliver to our customers”. Commented one of the interviewees.

The responses from the interviewees were in tandem with EABL Integrated Report and Financial Statements (2021), which stated that as home consumption became more prominent during the pandemic, the organization partnered with boda boda riders and other regional online partners to deliver to consumers. Rebranding branding, EABL persistently enhance brand significance and maintained a strong presence with mainstream spirits among Kenyan millennial consumers, This was achieved by strategically partnering with well-known musicians and music groups such as Sauti Sol and Sol generation. The interviewees also highlighted the collaborations between Telco companies and EABL that were sustained even post pandemic as the scope of digital operations in

terms of distribution to the customers as well as for feedback purposes. The interviewees also highlighted the various partnerships EABL entered with other commercial partners to ensure that the effects of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown measures had a limited impact on the operations of EABL.

The ability of a company to anticipate and respond to unforeseen interruptions, carry out its core responsibilities, and recover swiftly and efficiently is what defines organizational resilience. The organizational resilience of a company or firm is especially noted when there are economic downturns as it is a marker of the capability of the firm to shoulder the effects of unexpected shocks. According to one of the interviewees, post Covid 10, the operating environment has continued to become unpredictable especially the macroeconomic fundamentals that have impacted our business. Another interviewee commented;

“As a company, we have particularly been severely impacted by inflation especially on the cost of our inputs. Consumers are also feeling the effects, with the consumers changing frequency of consumption, and/or downgrading in categories and price points”.

A senior manager highlighted that from 2021 onwards, EABL displayed impressive organizational resilience, resulting in a robust performance with a revenue surge range of +15% and a +2% profit growth. This success was credited to the unwavering determination and resilience of its workforce, complemented by a robust array of brands and effective market distribution network throughout the East African Region. A perspective supported by EABL’s Integrated Report and Financial Statements, (2022) averring that the groups brand’s, financial stability, and ability to withstand challenges were crucial elements that assisted us in manoeuvring through this phase, showcasing an improvement in performance.

“We responded with agility and remained focused on executing smartly, leveraging emerging opportunities with consumers and trade partners. Our actions amidst this pandemic delivered significant efficiencies” As quoted by the Group Chairman

The majority of those interviewed highlighted the significance of both management and employees in maintain agility and resilience during the COVID_19 pandemic. They stressed the commitment shown by both parties to the business, their adaptability during uncertainties, and their creative and innovative practices were imperative and facilitated their rapid adaptation and learning from experiences. As one interviewee remarked:

“The main operational aspects that were affected were the routes to the customer and the limited distribution of our products due to the lockdown measures. Further, the lockdown measures limited the customers’ ability purchase and consume our products due to the limited time and bar closures”.

The interviewees acknowledged that during the pandemic and post pandemic, reaching out to our consumers effectively and efficiently was and still is imperative, and EABL has continuously invested in time and resources to build a network of sustainable distributor partners to help the company win across traditional and emerging channel.

In terms of technological agility, EABL has continued to invest in digital capabilities that has enabled the business to build and enhance its data and business intelligence capabilities, leading to in depth understanding of retail insights for organizational resilience. According to Managing Director and CEO, as quoted in the EABL, Integrated Report & Financial Statements (2022);

“Our agile route to customer (RTC) model has been enabled through the leveraging of technology by investing in the Distributor Management System (DMS) across all distributor sites. DMS has been recognised as the best insight leading and route service optimisation solution. The other key merits of the DMS are optimised inventory management and real-time sales visibility at each retail outlet across the country, as well as unlocking opportunities for efficient distributor contact and coverage strategy that is anchored on addressing retail stockouts and increasing the numeric distribution of our portfolio of beer, spirits and innovation brands.

According to one of the senior managers who was interviewed, EABL has developed a versatile strategy, coupled a strong and fastest growing brand portfolios across the region. The company has invested in advertising and promotion (A&P) its strategic brands to build resilience in the long run. According to the senior manager;

“We are continuously adapting to the significant consumer, channel, and category shifts, where innovation has been key in driving growth across markets, categories, segments and the growing need for convenience, by addressing emerging consumption occasions with elevated brand experiences combined with aspirational and accessible innovations”.

The consensus among most of the interviewees was that the business landscape persists with substantial challenges. Nevertheless, EABL remains committed to its long-term strategy, relying on the resilience and determination of its management and staff. They play a pivotal role in guiding the company through these turbulent times, as mentioned by the Chief Group Financial Office in the EABL Integrated Report & Financial Statements (2023);

“We remain close to the changing consumer dynamics and continue to invest in our strong brands which are our source of competitive advantage. We will continue to embed efficiency in our operations and in our costs to protect the bottom line”.

Regarding leadership during the pandemic and its aftermath, most interviewees highlighted that EABL’s primary emphasis was on fostering business agility and resilience through ongoing learning at both leadership and functional levels. They emphasized the implementation of quarterly learning themes in alignment with the business priorities, the introduction of learning discussions during staff engagement sessions, and the use of functional learning to enhance employees’ skills while encouraging experimentation as strongly supported by one of the interviewees;

“E-commerce that enabled the introduction of Party Central, an online platform that promoted speed of execution, was all done while leveraging on Executives and Leaders at Teachers to drive continuous learning across EABL”.

Investments in digital channels strengthened the Direct-to-Consumer Model through the platform thebar.com (<https://ke.thebar.com>), previously known as the Party Central, and enhanced the retail self-service Business to Business (B2B) channel with Diageo One. The effective implementation of these digital platforms, adapted to evolving consumer behaviours, has and will continue to play a substantial role in bolstering EABL's business resilience in the forthcoming years.

On human resource agility, the interviewees stated that EABL continuously embeds a culture of discipline and efficiency whose outcome is significant operational savings are redirected into the most promising opportunities. These investments not only facilitate the expansion brand portfolio but also contribute to developing a more sophisticated capabilities through the integration of new technology and improved training programs. As highlighted by a senior manager, EABL has long been distinguished by its commitment to supporting its diverse workforce. A talent management framework has been established too ensure that recruitment of top talent, training and fostering an environment conducive to growth and success. According to the Group Chairman as quoted in the EABL Integrated Report & Financial Statements (2023);

“EABL is transforming into a more entrepreneurial and creative business. Our performance was delivered by our consumer-centricity, speed in execution and our people's agility to adapt to changing environment”.

The interviewer observed that EABL has continued to make deliberate efforts to boost its employee's skills and a firm commitment to help employees realise and reach their full potential. This has been done through various learning and development channels with strong mentorship provided by the management, which is key in creating the conditions for success.

4.5 Discussion

This part of the research goes about providing an analysis of the findings corresponding to the study's outlined objectives. The study's focal point was the assessment of the manner with which EABL embraced strategic agility in the face of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic so as to fortify organizational resilience. The study findings revealed that EABL adopted off trade growth strategy, innovative distribution channels due to changing consumer consumption patterns, reducing capital expenditure (Capex) and efficiently managing costs, invested in digital capabilities including e-commerce, entered in collaborative partnerships with diverse partners and invested in talent management to ensure an innovative and progressive work force. The study findings reflect the postulations of the Dynamic Capability theory as posited by Teece et al., (1997) which examines how strategic agility utilizes an organization's capabilities to enable it sense, seize, and reconfigure and remain flexible and implement effective strategies and operations. The study findings imply that EABL was able to integrate its strategic abilities that enabled it to quickly adapt and responded effectively to the Covid 19 disruptions by building the resilience needed to thrive in the turbulent business environment. The study findings also align with the postulations of the Contingency theory (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), which points out that organizations should adapt their strategies to fit the specific demands of their external environment. The implication to the study findings is that EABL embraced contingency thinking and developed strategies, that enabled it to adapt to the changing business conditions brought by the Covid 19 pandemic, making them better equipped to navigate the uncertainties through strategic agility for organizational resilience.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior studies on strategic agility for firm resilience (Vidmar, Rosiello, and Golra 2020; Ahmed, Kilika, and Gakenia 2021). In times of uncertainty, growth is an important dimension of resilience; organizations which adopt a growth mindset are better positioned to thrive under disruptions and other challenging situations. The adoption of growth strategies indicates that a firm's resilience hinges on its strategic agility and its specific growth strategy. Dahles & Susilowati (2015) pointed out the critical role of resilience as the organization's capacity to grow in the face of crisis. Purnomo et al. (2021) argued that organizations that exploit opportunities that emerge from a crisis is important for business growth. The study findings further indicate the significant path posed by channels innovation in relation to resilience, as it entails the willingness of the organization to innovatively create new distribution channels by reacting to disruptions quickly in a timely and agile manner. Organizations response to the Covid 19 crisis is that they searched for new suppliers, adopted e-commerce and changed their traditional roles in the distribution channel structure (Kumar & Malhotra, 2021). The study findings established that EABL undertook cost cutting measures by reducing capital expenditures (capex) and efficiently managing costs, The use of digital platforms underlined the flexibility of operations of EABL and thus expanded the scope of their resilience such that they are well prepared for changes consumer behaviours and purchasing patterns. Collaboration was also cited as an imperative for ensuring that the sustained operations of the EABL accrued profit amid disruptions to normal operations. Collaborations such as those on E-commerce platforms have persisted and have even expanded the scope of distribution for EABL as consumers become increasingly propended to online platforms as a means of acquiring beverages from EABL. The findings of this study reflected similar conclusions by various scholars (Schmid, Raju, & Jensen, 2021; Ahmed, Kilika, & Gakenia 2021).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section encompasses the primary discoveries, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the study's findings and objectives. It also emphasizes the limitations encountered and proposes directions for future research.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings

The completion of the study divulged key findings with regard to strategic agility adopted for resilience by EABL post COVID-19 pandemic. The key findings of the study established that EABL adopted growth strategy, innovations in channels management, cutting costs by reducing capex and managing costs efficiently, accelerated the digitization of their customers through the e-commerce platform and their internal operations. Other key findings included collaborations and partnerships with different strategic and diverse partners, embedding a culture of discipline and efficiency.

The study findings have shown that EABL's focus post Covid 19 has been to continue protecting their staff, engage in agile strategies that will make EABL double down on its expansion efforts as well as bolster current operations. The findings show that EABL has continued to rebuild its trade capabilities, increased its off - trade growth strategy, grown alternative channels such as e-commerce as well as taking advantage of investments in capacity expansion. Consequently, the study highlighted EABL's adoption of agility strategies for resilience by entering into

collaborative arrangements with strategic partners, embedding a culture of efficiency and management of its talent so as to be at the vanguard of innovation and improvement of its operational processes in the years to come.

5.3 Conclusions

EABL's use of trade off growth strategy, innovations in channels management, partnerships and digital platforms to enhance the agility and flexibility of its operations while also maintaining their levels of efficiency and output were found to be the agility strategies that ensured that East African Breweries Limited was afforded sustained resilience. The changes in consumer behaviour that came with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic made it such that new avenues for distribution and supply while also reducing costs. Diageo an E-commerce platform thus found utility post pandemic as EABL sought to maximize on the changes in consumer behaviour to ensure that they were better prepared for unexpected circumstances that affected their continued operations. The use of E-commerce platforms also underlined the importance of technology and innovation in ensuring flexibility and sustained operations despite disruptions.

The use of E-commerce platforms was also a marker for the strategic abilities as afforded from collaborative efforts and the operational resilience that came about as a result. Collaborative efforts were also cited by the respondents as presenting commercial resilience merits to shoulder the effects of the economic downturns caused by the pandemic. EABL also made sure that their workforce was well maintained during the pandemic in preparation for once the lockdown measures were lifted which included full salaries and no retrenchment despite not being in session with most of the employees doing work from home. This made it so that once the curfew measures were eased EABL had a healthy and well-motivated workforce that established a prerogative for

continued profits and resilience upon resuming normal operations. Conclusively, strategic agilities have enabled East African Breweries Limited to be resilient in the face of the economic downturns that were caused by the pandemic is its dynamic nature of operations underlined by its ability to bridge the gap between the source and the customer. This plus the implementation of off trade strategists and analysts to ensure that they are privy to the changes within the market also underscored the resilience after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability of EABL to also ensure that their workforce is motivated and healthy was also a marker of their resilience amid harsh economic times.

5.4 Policy Implications and Recommendations

The in-depth overview of the factors as they pertain to the strategic agility and resilience of East African Breweries Limited were divulged by the findings of the current study. As such, policy makers attached to EABL should take the time to review these factors as they affect resilience and how to expand the scope of implementation as well as the expected effects of various strategic agilities.

The findings of the study also underscore the need for EABL to continuously invest in new technologies and innovations to EABL remains resilient through the use of E-commerce platforms. The study thus recommends that EABL strengthens and expands their digital capabilities to facilitate online sales and digital marketing strategies that proved successful post pandemic. The use of technology to anticipate market shifts is also an avenue that EABL could undertake to increase their operational efficiency. Expanding the scope of their data analytics could also prove useful in ensuring sustained resilience. In terms of collaboration policies, it could also be pertinent for EABL to engage government bodies and regulatory authorities to ensure that the laws and

regulations are supportive of business continuity and trade facilitation during economic crises. The policies for collaboration could also implement to afford a new market to EABL thus ensuring mutual benefits.

Lastly, the study recommended that EABL should formulate policies on implementation of strategic agility policies to assess market trends, consumer behaviours and global developments so as to aptly adapt to them as they happen. The rapid adjustments to operations and distribution practices as well as marketing strategies can enhance EABL's response to unforeseen circumstances.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study concentrated solely on analysing the interaction between strategic agility and the resilience of EABL, making it a case study limited to one company. This narrowed the scope of the study's outcomes. Additionally, the policies concerning strategic agility and resilience could differ across various organizations, which was a limiting factor given the specific context of this research.

Furthermore, the study primarily focused on the top management's perspective, assuming their familiarity with the company's strategy and structure. However, achieving sustained resilience requires the involvement and awareness of the employees regarding the company's direction and necessary actions during unforeseen circumstances thus limiting the depth of the findings.

Finally, the study relied on primary data collection method involving interview with top managers. The accuracy and completeness of the responses relied on the interviewees' understanding of the

concepts and questions as well as their willingness to provide a truthful and unbiased answers. This aspect posed limitations in obtaining comprehensive insights for the study.

5.6 Areas of further Study

Since EABL is the main alcoholic beverage distributor in Kenya a study assessing strategic agility and resilience of a similar company could provide a comparison between the two findings thus providing a comprehensive overview of the alcoholic beverage distribution in Kenya. A study encompassing various firms from within the same industry could provide fresh insights into the interaction between strategic agility and resilience.

A potential complementary study that employs a different methodology by gathering data from both senior management and the employees within the company could be conducted as an area for further research. This approach thus aims to assess the effectiveness of communication regarding the strategic agilities and the resilience of the company among all employees. This could also provide an overview of the extent of involvement of employees in the policies and implementation of strategic agility actions. The findings of the current study would be compared from that study to provide further analysis and insights.

A comparable study utilizing both primary and secondary data collection methods aims to mitigate the limitations un each technique. By employing both approaches, the study seeks to compensate for the constraints posed by solely relying on either form of data by relying on both. The data collection method could also employ the use of questionnaires that are easy to understand to ensure that he answers to the question are from an informed perspective rather than one that is unsure of the questions and the answers to them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

1. What were the immediate strategic agilities to the COVID-19 pandemic that were adopted by East African Breweries Limited? How were they unique from the rest of the strategies?
2. In order of importance, which of the agile strategies were most crucial that enabled East African Breweries Limited to achieve resilience?
3. Are the agility strategies for resilience adopted during the Covid 19 pandemic still relevant in today's business environment? Kindly elaborate for each relevant agile strategy mentioned
4. What operational aspects of the company were greatly affected by the Covid 19 pandemic?
5. What measures were put in place to ensure the operations continued as planned?
6. Explain the roles employees played in the formulation and implementation of the strategic agilities for resilience at East African Breweries Limited during the pandemic?
7. What measures did the company put in place that enabled it to quickly reconfigure its business model? Kindly elaborate.
8. How did the organization use automation and technology to its advantage during the start of the Covid 19 pandemic to achieve resilience?
9. What specific human resource initiatives did East African Breweries Limited undertake to support its employees during the pandemic?
10. What innovations or new products did East African Breweries Limited develop and deploy in response to the Covid 19 pandemic?
11. What specific strategic initiatives for resilience did the top leadership of East African Breweries Limited undertake during the Covid 19 pandemic
12. What type of strategic partnerships and collaborations did East African Breweries Limited leverage with to enhance its strategic agility and resilience? Kindly explain
13. What strategies have East African Breweries Limited put in place to navigate the regulatory landscape and government policies in the post COVID-19 era to optimize growth and operations?

