COLLABORATIVE BUSINESS STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF KENYA INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination to any other university.

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

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DEDICATION

This research project is devoted to my family for their encouragement, understanding, support and prayers towards the successful completion of this project, for believing in me. May God bless them.

I am grateful to the various people who I have interacted with, who have touched and inspired me during the entire period.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
KEBS	-	Kenya Bureau of Standards
KIE	-	Kenya Industrial Estates
RBV	-	Resource Based View
ROE	-	Return on Equity
ROI	-	Return on Investment
RVT	-	Relational View Theory
SMEs	-	Small and Medium Enterprises
STST	-	Socio-Technical System Theory
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Program

ABSTRACT

It is widely acknowledged that today's marketplace is increasingly becoming competitive than ever before due to globalization. Customers are becoming demanding and enlightened due to changing technology. Therefore, business organizations are appreciating the need to restructure themselves by bringing on board other independent organizations with a view to leveraging each other's resources to form a synergy and consequently increase their individual performance. The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of collaborative business strategy on performance of Kenya Industrial Estates. Two theories lending their relevance are the Relational View and the Social-Technical System Theory. This study used a research strategy based on a case study approach and interview guide for data collection. Furthermore, content analysis was employed to establish the common themes in the contents collected. The study unfolded a comprehensive portrayal of the role and impact of collaborative business strategies within Kenya Industrial Estates. In delving into the general information and bio data of the interviewees, it was revealed that the participants possessed diverse academic and professional qualifications, reflecting a multidisciplinary approach within the organization. The extensive professional experience of participants, spanning several decades, highlighted the depth of institutional knowledge and expertise engaged in the collaborative processes at KIE. Furthermore, the collaborative business strategies section illuminated the multifaceted involvement of key stakeholders in decision-making, goal-setting, and creating an environment conducive to idea generation. Notably, the study unearthed that decision-making was a pivotal role played by top management, aligning with existing literature on the centrality of leadership in guiding collaborative initiatives. The emphasis on transparency, accountability, and effective communication underscored the foundational principles embedded in the collaborative processes within KIE. Exploring the collaborative business strategy itself, the study identified critical elements that contribute to the achievement of goal congruence among partners. The creation of strategic alliances, encouragement of an ecosystem of partners, and the development of a diverse portfolio of collaborators emerged as key strategies. These findings resonate with existing literature highlighting the significance of building robust networks and partnerships to enhance collaborative outcomes. The alignment of relevant resources and competencies among partners was identified as crucial, involving SWOT analysis, strategic objective definition, and the provision and allocation of resources. Such strategic alignment mirrors the recommendations of scholars emphasizing the importance of synergy and shared objectives in collaborative ventures. The application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in facilitating connectivity among partners was underscored as vital, aligning with the contemporary trend of leveraging technology for collaborative endeavors. The cultivation of trust within the partnership network was identified as a dynamic process involving working towards common goals and setting clear expectations upfront. These findings correlate with literature emphasizing trust as a foundational element in successful collaborations. In the context of practice, organizations are encouraged to foster a collaborative culture that prioritizes trust and transparent communication. Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping this culture by promoting an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and employees feel empowered to share ideas and concerns. Regular training initiatives can enhance collaboration skills, ensuring that teams are well-equipped to work collectively towards shared objectives. Embracing a collaborative culture not only contributes to improved teamwork but also enhances overall organizational effectiveness.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is widely acknowledged that today's marketplace is increasingly becoming competitive than ever before due to globalization. Customers are becoming demanding and enlightened due to changing technology (Bhattacharyya, 2020). Therefore, business organizations are appreciating the need to restructure themselves by bringing on board other independent organizations with a view to leveraging each other's resources to form a synergy and consequently increase their individual performance. The relevance of collaborative strategies has further come as a result of the realization by the organizational leadership that collaborative efforts and competition influence the performance of organizations. As opposed to the traditional view of collaboration that considered the same as a non-core strategy, the current competitive business environment has come to realise that adoption of collaborative strategy is an important strategic move in confronting business problems facing modern day organizations (Yang, Hung-Yi, Shang-Chia & Chen, 2014). In order for the collaborating firms to rip the desired benefits from the other members, there is need for the members to have common goals, complementing resources, embrace usage of information technology, cultivate trust among the members and have a flexible organizational structure by the partners (Oluwi, 2018).

The investigation of the effect of collaborative business strategies on the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates was anchored on two theories namely Relational View Theory (Dyer and Singh, 1998) and the Socio-Technical System Theory (Mitev,1996). According to the Relational View (RV) Theory, critical resources for a firm that lead to improved performance cross organizational boundaries, and as a result, relational rents are also a source of an organization's competitiveness in addition to internal rents (from resource scarcity and quasi-rents from added value). On the other hand, the Socio-Technical System Theory postulates that, as a firm develops internal technical systems - such as adoption of appropriate technology in its operations, it needs to develop a good working relationship with its customers and suppliers.

The development of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in a country has become a key ingredient to the industrialization process. One of the agencies established in Kenya by the Government and supported by financial partners to promote the industrialization process is Kenya Industrial Estates. This Organisation is a Development Financial Institution (DFI) with the mandate of extending affordable industrial loans, offering Business Advisory Services, provision of industrial workspaces, and facilitating linkages to SMEs. In order to meet its objectives, the organization has a wide array of partners that range from the SMEs from the Ministry of Labour and Manpower development, regional development authorities, Government agencies such as the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), and universities. Due to the many network partners, there is need for effective collaborative business strategies that will leverage on each partners' strengths in order to effectively achieve desired organization performance. This forms the objective of this study. Through establishment of effective collaborative strategies by the organization and considering that the SME clientele is spread across the country, this is expected to improve the country's economic development, create employment opportunities and also help in the realization of government goal of realizing economic development from the grassroots.

1.1.1 Collaborative Business Strategies

The goal of the collaborative business model is to eliminate conventional physical barriers and unite the partners' behaviour. This entails the creation of several teams made up of various people, cultures, regulations, and procedures (Holmberg, 2000). A collaborative business network is made up of a number of autonomous, geographically dispersed organizations or individuals with varying operating environments, social capital, and goals that come together through the use of computer networks to more effectively pursue compatible or similar objectives (Camarinha-Matos and Afsarmanesh, 2018)., According to Yoshino and Rangan (1995), in order to form a strategic collaborative between two firms, the two partner firms must continue to be legally independent after the alliance is formed, share managerial control and benefit from the relationship, and create a synergy with the technology and goods that are currently available.

According to Watson (2015), collaborative business practices increase a firm's effectiveness by facilitating the flow of resources such as talents, goods, and technology. Collaboration offers modern goods and technology, skills and expertise, and eventually reduced costs. Additionally, collaborative techniques make it easier for businesses to take use of affordable skilled labor with in-demand skills in order to coordinate a variety of international economic operations. Lin, Hsing and Wang (2018) points out that the motives of collaborative business strategies include obtaining economies of scale, cost sharing, development of technical standards, resource risk reduction, pooling of resources and achieving vertical integration. Further, the ability to pre-empt competitors, improving joint performance and marketing complementary goods and services is among the benefits of alliance formation in businesses. The current research will adopt the collaborative business strategies adopted by Ralston et al., (2017), namely, unique competencies, goal congruence of network partners, relevant and complementary resources, availability and usage of information technology; and existence and cultivation of trust.

1.1.2 Organizational Performance

According to Koontz and Donnel (1993), organizational performance is the capacity of an organization to fulfil goals like high profitability, high-quality products, favourable financial outcomes, and the continuation of the business. The capacity of an organization to fulfil the demands of stakeholders as well as its own needs for survival is what is meant by organizational performance from the viewpoint of both internal and external stakeholders (Griffin & Ricky, 2003). According to Park and Shaw (2013), organizational performance assesses an organization's capacity to effectively use its limited resources in order to meet both short- and long-term goals. As a consequence, organizational performance is an account of the results of the operational tasks that the company carries out (Khan, 2010).

Both financial and non-financial metrics can serve as evaluation tools for gauging an organization's achievements. Unlike operational indicators, which encompass non-financial success factors like quality, market share, customer satisfaction, new product development, and market effectiveness, financial metrics are oriented towards economic aspects such as sales growth and profitability. Pavlou and El Sawy (2011) highlight three core elements that constitute an organization's success: its financial performance, encompassing earnings, return on investment (ROI), and return on equity (ROE). Indicators like sales, market share, economic added value, and shareholder return reflect the performance of the organization's products. As outlined by Gonzalez-Benito & Gonzalez-Benito (2005), the incorporation of subjective measures within management practices enables companies to address intricate performance dimensions. While objective metrics might lack timeliness and scope, subjective measures offer a more comprehensive perspective. In the present study, the firms' performance will be evaluated through the prism of the balanced scorecard approach. This choice is informed by KIE's adoption of the balance scorecard as its performance measurement tool. This methodology assesses organizational performance by considering perspectives such as customer, learning and growth, financial performance, and internal processes.

1.2 Research Problem

Networks between companies as well as networks between firms and other organizations have been established as a result of the globalization of business and the government's intervention to support the growth and development of the small and medium enterprises in a country (Gulati 2007). According to the inter-firm network theory, businesses must create and maintain external networks in order to learn from partners, engage in collaborative innovation, and adapt their organizational structure (Lin & Darnall, 2015). Additionally, if the operations of cooperating enterprises are strategically matched, the companies will be able to access new markets, share associated risks and expenses, and increase their visibility and recognition in the public. In general, these collaborative alliances are established as a means of managing the increasing business uncertainty and complexity in the business setting (Drewniak & Karaszewsk, 2020). Despite the associated benefits of organizational collaboration, there is need of partnering firms to uphold several practices when transacting with one another. Practices such as trust among the members, complementary character, strategic match and establishment of informal communication channels are expected to result in successful partnering of the members. Government institutions such as KIE play an important role in the growth and development process of a country through financing of small and medium enterprises.

Kenya Industrial Estates play an important role of promoting industrialization in the country through financing of businesses, offering advisory services, linkage with markets and conducting industrial workshops for the small and medium enterprises in Kenya. To get to the deserving SMEs and financial partners, KIE has had to establish linkages with both the public and private sector organizations. Some of the partnering firms include the youth enterprise development fund, UNDP, constituency development fund and India's Industrial estate. However, in order for the partnership benefits to be realised, KIE has to come up with appropriate collaboration strategies that create a synergy. For example, despite the increased financing by KIE which stood at Ksh 934 million and grew thereafter to Ksh 1.47 in 2013 and Ksh 2.05 in 2020, there has been default by some of the beneficiaries to the extent that the repayment rate of a firm averaged at 13.5% in the year 2020 (KIE, 2021). The question that comes into the fore is whether this scenario is as a result of inappropriate collaboration strategies that have been adopted by the organization such that it has affected its performance?

In order to fulfil its mandate and remain sustainable in the long run, KIE needs to mobilize resources such as by engaging in collaborations in order to stop relying fully on the exchequer. There exists a great opportunity, with the establishment of the Centre for Entrepreneurship at KIE, which is a collaboration with the federal State of Germany to provide entrepreneurs with the requisite skills such as financial literacy, record keeping, stock taking and other soft skills that many entrepreneurs lack. This provides an opportunity for KIE to ensure appropriate collaborative strategies are in place.

Lin, Hsing and Wang (2018) investigated the influence of collaborative design on the relationship between business strategy and performance evaluation of SMEs in Tianam region in Taiwan. The research adopted a case study analysis of eight firms and the results suggest that adoption of the collaboration strategy led to shortened development process of the product, reduced the product development costs and strengthened the R & D capabilities of the participating firms. The impact of the joint cooperation, collaboration and coordination (C^2) on the long-term collaborative business relationship was carried out by Humphries and Wilding (2014). According to the findings, there is a strong and positive correlation between trust and all three factors, both together and separately. Similar to this, Akter et al. (2016) looked at the need to enhance company performance by using information technology and business strategy alignment. The research recommended that the ICT platform created to enhance partner coordination be able to connect the management, talent capabilities, and individual company information technology of businesses. Researchers Zulu-Chisanga, Chabala, and Mandawa-Bray (2021) looked at how the performance of 438 SMEs in Zambia was affected by the differences in government assistance, company resources, and inter-firm cooperation. The results show that management links act as a mediator between inter-firm cooperation and SME performance. Contrary to popular belief, the data, however, revealed that government funding had little impact on SME success.

By conducting a case study of Del Monte Kenya Ltd., Gichuru, Iravo, and Arani (2015) looked at the relationship between collaborative supply chain methods and the performance of food and beverage enterprises. The study used a descriptive research approach and discovered that the collaborative supply chain's information and resource sharing had a beneficial impact on the firm's performance. Njoroge (2018) sought to establish how competitive techniques affected the success of the Rusinga Group of Schools in Nairobi, Kenya. Through the adoption of content analysis technique, the findings to the research shows that the group of schools had adopted a collaborative strategy through which it had established partnership with other schools and as a result let to the improved information sharing and performance of the school.

On the basis of the above studies and others reviewed, it is evident that the changing business environment has resulted in the need for business organizations to adopt collaborative strategies through which they can access unique resources and information. However, the context of the studies covered differs with the current study and more so the quest to link collaborative business strategy and performance in a Development Finance Institutions like KIE. Therefore, the research sought to answer the following research question; what is the effect of collaborative business strategy on performance of Kenya Industrial Estate?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of collaborative business strategy on performance of Kenya Industrial Estates

1.4 Value of the Study

The understanding of the nexus between collaborative strategies on performance adds value to theory because it helps in understanding the various collaborative strategies for successful performance. The findings to the study would help refine existing models related to collaboration and thus providing a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how collaborations function. Further, research on collaboration and performance helps address gaps that might exist in the existing theory and thus offer new perspectives to fill those gaps. By identifying the factors that drive successful collaborations and influence performance outcomes, research findings can inform the design of effective collaboration strategies, guidelines, and policies

The results on how application of appropriate ICT among the collaborating firms as well as leveraging on the unique competencies, would provide important information for developing appropriate policies regarding the funding levels required by KIE from the National Government and the level of guarantee on loans to be sourced from the development partners. Such steps require to be anchored by appropriate policy decisions that give necessary support. Further, the collaboration strategy by KIE with other partners introduces the need of cultivating appropriate trust amongst the firms. The results of the study helps in establishment of guiding policies for KIE other government agencies involved in the support of SMEs. Further, from an emerging economy position, the benefits of ICT, trust, goal congruence and unique competencies among the partners on the performance of organizations has been determined.

To scholars, the research forms an important source of information. Considering that limited research has been done in the developing countries perspective on the influence of collaborative business strategies on organizational performance, the study forms an important foundation to understanding the nexus between the two variables from an emergent economy perspective. Further, the study has identified existing gaps that future researchers might pursue in terms of context and methodological gaps.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter covers the literature pertinent to the study's goal, which is to determine how a collaborative business strategy affects firms' performance. The section discusses the underlying ideas of the study as well as further empirical investigations that are pertinent to the field of study. The chapter also provides the conceptual framework the researcher will use to differentiate the study variables.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section delves into the foundational theories that form the bedrock of this study. More precisely, the two theories lending their relevance are the Relational View and the Social-Technical System Theory. The ensuing dialogue has provided a comprehensive analysis of these theories and their implications within the context of the study's scope.

2.2.1 Relational View Theory

The Relational View (RV) theory postulates that the important resources to a firm span the organizational boundaries. The theory was advanced by Dyer and Singh (1998). Since critical resources that lead to improved performance cross firm boundaries, the Relational View theory contends that firms can earn relational rents in addition to internal rents, which the RBV theory contends derives from an organization's internal resources. In order to explain how inter-firm collaboration might provide long-term competitive advantage, the "relational view of resources-based theory" integrated perspective and relational network theory (Paulraj et al., 2015). This broadened the key ideas of the RBV. Communication, integration, and collaboration are relational qualities that may enhance organizational success. According to the relational theory, businesses engage to build psychological ties for mutual benefit via organizational relationships (Kaufman, Wood, & Theyel, 2012).

The relational theory, according to Gulati, Nohria, and Zaheer (2014), acknowledges that a relational network generates a relational rent and creates synergy from a pool of resources, technologies, markets, and information. Additionally, Jarillo (1988) applauds the relational theory for emphasizing how collaborative techniques enable businesses to acquire essential resources from their surroundings. Therefore, in order for an organization to boost its competitiveness, the relational theory indicates that it should also take use of the advantages that come from using external resources. This holistic perspective encourages a dynamic approach that embraces both internal capabilities and external collaborations, forging a path toward sustainable competitive advantage in today's intricate business landscape. By recognizing the significance of relational networks and the potential for synergy from both internal and external resources, organizations can construct a comprehensive strategy that optimally positions them to thrive in a rapidly evolving market environment. As businesses navigate the complexities of the modern business landscape, the integration of relational theories and collaborative strategies becomes increasingly essential in propelling growth, innovation, and resilience.

2.2.2 Socio -Technical Systems Theory

Resources play a pivotal role in shaping an organization's competitive edge. The Relational View (RV) theory, as advanced by Dyer and Singh (1998), asserts that crucial resources extend beyond a firm's internal boundaries. This theory departs from the Resource-Based View (RBV) by suggesting that firms can amass relational rents alongside internal rents, a concept inherent to RBV theory that is attributed to a firm's internal resources. To elucidate how collaborative alliances can confer enduring competitive advantages, the "relational view of resources-based theory" incorporates insights from relational network theory (Paulraj et al., 2015), thus expanding upon the core tenets of the RBV. Communication, integration, and collaboration emerge as relational attributes that can markedly enhance an organization's success. This theory asserts that businesses engage in building psychological connections within their organizational relationships, fostering mutual benefits (Kaufman, Wood, & Theyel, 2012).

Gulati, Nohria, and Zaheer (2014) underscore the relational theory's acknowledgment that a network of relationships generates relational rent and leverages pooled resources, technologies, markets, and information to create synergy. Additionally, Jarillo (1988) commends the relational theory for its emphasis on how collaborative strategies empower businesses to acquire crucial external resources. Consequently, the relational theory underscores that to enhance competitiveness, organizations should not only harness their internal resources but also capitalize on the advantages arising from external resource utilization.

According to the socio-technical systems theory, an organization's social and technical systems must be developed simultaneously. As posited by Mitev (1996), this theory suggests that as a company develops its internal technical systems, such as the adoption of appropriate technology in its operations, it also needs to establish positive working relationships with its clients and suppliers. This triadic relationship with the focal point firm is anticipated to enhance organizational performance (Crocitto & Youssef, 2003). When suppliers, customers, and cross-functional internal employee teams collaborate to develop a new product, they generate super-additive synergies that surpass the benefits of individual efforts. Thus, a collaborative strategy fostering both social and technical links becomes crucial for enhancing a firm's integrative capability. Information technology (IT) plays a vital role in enabling coordination among these partners (Lockstrom et al., 2010), thereby elevating an organization's competitiveness. This strategic use of IT as a unique and non-transferable resource further amplifies an organization's operational prowess. Consequently, a collaborative strategy that synergizes social and IT aspects emerges as a pivotal resource for companies aiming to navigate and optimize their operations in a complex and competitive landscape.

2.3 Collaborative Strategies and Performance

The collaborative strategies propose that companies form partnerships with other firms, even rivals, to pool their unique resources and talents to produce synergy in order to accomplish both individual and mutual company interests (Kang & Park, 2016). The aims that both partnering firms in a partnership share are, in fact, related to the same goals. Benefits in various forms have been identified as accruing to the collaborating firms (Dries and Swinnen, 2015; Bouncken and Kraus, 2018). Additionally, cooperation enables businesses to realize economies of scale while lowering risk and uncertainty in the market. Additionally, the cooperation has been linked to accelerated new product market entry times and the sharing of R&D concept ideas (Gnyawali & Park, 2019). The risk of technology theft, management style incompatibility between the partner companies, and loss of local company control exists, nevertheless.

Although research suggests that SMEs may gain from inter-firm cooperation, other academics contend that collaboration may be risky for SME survival. According to Colombo et al. (2012), although cooperation has many advantages, it may also provide organizational and management issues for firms, such as taking away scarce resources and managerial time from the company's main business. In light of this, managers of a company must balance carrying out their regular responsibilities with pursuing the advantages of a partnership.

Zhang et al. (2012) note that small business managers spend a lot of time and money cultivating and maintaining relationships with other business managers.

In the realm of collaborative strategies and their direct impact on performance, a rich body of literature sheds light on the intricacies and implications of inter-firm partnerships within the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). As we delve into this literature, a nuanced narrative emerges, highlighting the delicate equilibrium that characterizes the landscape of collaborative endeavors. These studies emphasize the potential for SMEs to harness the benefits of partnerships – from resource sharing to knowledge acquisition – while concurrently navigating the potential drawbacks such collaborations might entail. Scholarly insights, drawn from works such as those by Kang and Park (2016), Dries and Swinnen (2015), and Gnyawali & Park (2019), underscore the multifaceted dimensions of inter-firm cooperation. Yet, a contrasting perspective persists in academic discourse, as echoed by Colombo et al. (2012) and Zhang et al. (2012), who point out the organizational and managerial challenges that can accompany such cooperative ventures. Through this comprehensive literature review, our study seeks to synthesize and contribute to this ongoing dialogue by providing a deeper understanding of how SMEs can effectively navigate collaborative strategies, optimizing their performance while adeptly addressing the complexities that underscore such partnerships.

2.4 Empirical Review and Knowledge Gaps

The increased collaborative partnerships in the last two decades has resulted in the need to enhance the networking capability of the firms in the business collaboration relationship (Li et al., 2018). The collaboration system should be devised in such a way that it allows the firms to bring forth the respective core competencies in a view to overcome the business challenges in the dynamic business environment. Randolph (2016) while investigating the resilience of network partners among manufacturing firm in Belgium posit that there can never be realization of the network objectives if there is absence of goal congruence among the partners. The research adopted a mixed research method and found that there need to be goal congruence among members for optimal performance. In line with Anatan (2014) results, the study explains that network partners need to be multi-level in design in order to facilitate the combination of behaviour and strategies, intra-firm traits and strategies with a view to achieving the collective goals.

Lioukas, Reuer, and Zollo (2016) conducted a study to examine the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) on strategic partnerships. The study was conducted among a sample of 312 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Spain. The findings indicate that due to the geographical dispersion of partnering companies, information and communication technology (ICT) plays a significant role in facilitating communication among the members. The use of Internet and intranet-based systems enables the seamless construction of instantaneous communication channels and the efficient transmission of crucial information among network participants. In their study conducted in the United States, Li and Nguyen (2017) examined the advantages of competition versus collaboration among pharmaceutical companies. They concluded that the effectiveness of collaborative partnerships relies on the presence of advanced information system capabilities, which facilitate smooth connectivity among network partners. Furthermore, it is recommended to enhance this approach by implementing a non-equity governance framework and fostering a significant level of interdependence among the collaborating entities. This stance aligns with the results of Ioanid (2015), which suggest that the use of information and communication technology (ICT) facilitates enhanced communication and expedites decision-making processes, particularly in cases when partners are geographically scattered.

Trust is a crucial element in collaborative or exchange relationships among network partners, as it plays a pivotal role in enhancing network performance and serves as an indicator of the level of commitment among people involved in the relationship. In their study, Narayanan et al. (2015) examined the potential impacts of collaboration on agility performance within buyer-supplier relationships among 208 IT-based firms in India. The researchers discovered that the level of trust placed by o members in the relationship significantly influences their commitment to contribute their expertise, capabilities, resources, and knowledge. Nevertheless, despite the importance of fostering trust in a partnership, research indicates that a significant number of corporate collaborative partnerships suffer from a lack of trust or inadequate trust (Salam, 2017). The amount of trust is mostly influenced by the opportunistic tendencies shown by the network partners.

The study conducted by Kohtamäki, Thorgren, and Wincent (2016) examined the relationship between organizational identity and behavior inside strategic networks. The research was conducted on American apparel export companies, with a total of 192 enterprises participating in the survey. The findings indicate that the presence of trust among partners might mitigate opportunistic behaviors, since each partner's interests are considered, facilitating more alignment with the network's overarching goals. The establishment of a higher level of trust inside a network would have a positive effect on performance, resulting in supernormal profits that are distributed among the partners. Consequently, the performance outcomes are attributed to the collective efforts of the network partners. According to Kohtamäki et al. (2016), the establishment of trust inside Toyota Company and its partners was achieved via the implementation of long-term contracts, incentives, and information sharing procedures. This strategic approach has contributed to Toyota's sustained success as a prominent automobile manufacturer.

Mishra, Chiwenga, and Ali (2021) conducted an investigation on the role of collaboration as a facilitator for the implementation of a circular economy. The study used a case study research approach to investigate the North African manufacturing enterprises. A total of 24 businesses were examined in six different nations. The findings indicate that the adoption of multi-stakeholder cooperation had a pivotal role in enhancing performance within the context of a circular economy. It is essential for the government to devise mechanisms or regulations that foster cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) inside the nation, as well as with the national government. Based on the principles of circular economy, the research results indicate that cooperation yields several advantages, such as enhanced technology transfer, organizational learning, and improved resource use. Wood and Gray (1991) reached a similar result by highlighting the role of corporate cooperation in fostering the development of novel technologies that subsequently enhance resource efficiency.

In their study, Kolade, Obembe, and Salia (2019) examined the moderating influence of company links and cooperation on the association between technical restrictions and business performance. The study's population consisted of 18,492 individuals included in the organization's database. The findings indicate that both product and process innovation had a substantial and favorable impact on the performance of the business. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that businesses have certain limitations, and as a result, many successful companies heavily depend on cooperative partnerships and collaborative networks. The establishment of alliances with suppliers, rivals, and intermediate organizations affords enterprises the opportunity to mitigate risks, exchange expertise and technology, and enhance their access to financing, among several other benefits. According to the research conducted by Gunday et al. (2011), the creation of new goods and services, as well as the enhancement of current ones, has a direct impact on enhancing customer satisfaction. Additionally, it aids in the acquisition of new consumers and the stimulation of demand.

Conducting their research, Muteshi and Awino (2018) set out to analyze how strategic partnerships influence the performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms situated in Nairobi, Kenya. Over a span of three years, they examined a sample comprising 125 companies. Employing correlation analysis as their research strategy, they aimed to explore the hypothesis suggesting that collaborative relationships among businesses contribute positively to overall company performance. However, the research outcomes diverged from this anticipated trajectory, revealing an unexpected finding. The study's findings unveiled a lack of substantial correlation between strategic partnerships and company performance, thus challenging the initial hypothesis. The rationale for this observation may be linked to the monopolistic or duopolistic character of the enterprises under examination, which resulted in a restricted level of competition. Consequently, the need for strategic alliances was diminished. Examining the intricate interplay between collaboration and performance, a noteworthy investigation by Wanjiku (2016) stands out. This study delved into the ramifications of cooperation on the performance of commercial banks in Kenya. The outcomes gleaned from Wanjiku's research not only underscore a positive correlation between these variables but also emphasize the statistical significance of their relationship. This revelatory insight provides valuable empirical evidence supporting the premise that collaborative strategies can indeed yield substantial benefits for businesses. Within the context of the banking sector, the dynamics of competition are particularly pronounced. This industry's intricacies, coupled with the regulatory framework that mandates cooperation among market participants, amplify the significance of examining such relationships. The competitive landscape inherent to the banking sector, along with the legal imperative to collaborate, creates a conducive environment for synergistic partnerships to thrive.

In their study, Kiriinya, Ngugi, Mwangangi, and Otieno (2018) aimed to examine the correlation between collaborative planning and the success of pharmaceutical firms in Kenya. The study was conducted using a sample consisting of 22 pharmaceutical companies located in Nairobi and 149 importing companies that function as subsidiaries of international pharmaceutical corporations. The results indicate that there is a strong and statistically significant correlation between collaborative planning and the success of pharmaceutical companies. Specifically, the act of pooling financial resources had a favorable but statistically insignificant correlation with the success of pharmaceutical companies. The findings of this study align with those of Eksoz (2014), which demonstrated that the inclusion of consumers in the planning of marketing efforts positively impacted the performance of pharmaceutical companies.

The reviewed literature has examined the impact of collaborative business strategy on organizational performance. The existing body of research has shown that collaborative tactics have gained significant momentum in the corporate sphere as a result of globalization and the interconnectedness between various nations and economic entities. The proliferation of Information Technology and the expansion of global commerce by commercial entities have contributed to the facilitation of business cooperation. The research findings indicate that there are several factors that contribute to successful corporate cooperation. The catalysts that contribute to successful partnerships include factors such as the alignment of goals among partners, the presence of necessary resources and complementary capabilities, the use of information technology, and the establishment of trust among the partners. The aforementioned factors have been empirically shown to have a favorable influence on the organizational performance within the context of partnerships. The effectiveness of these partnerships is significantly influenced by the leadership of these firms, as it plays a crucial role in guiding people towards achieving the shared goals of the collaborative business relationship.

Numerous research have shown the positive impact of collaborative business methods on organizational performance. However, it is important to note that these studies have been conducted in diverse contexts. Furthermore, the research design of case study has been given little consideration. The research focused on the collaborative character of Kenya Industrial Estates, a government agency. This study aimed to investigate the elements that contribute to the identified gap in knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to outlining the methodology that was employed to achieve the study's intended objectives. It covers key areas including the research design, the target population, the procedures for data collection, and the chosen method for data analysis. By delving into these essential components, this chapter provides a cohesive and comprehensive framework that guides the study's approach and ensures the generation of valuable insights.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a research strategy based on a case study approach. The use of a qualitative case study research approach facilitates the examination of a specific occurrence inside a particular setting by using diverse sources of data. This study approach enables the examination of a phenomena from several perspectives (Hancock, Algozzine & Lim, 2021). The rationale for selecting this particular study design stemed from the suitability of case studies in investigating the unfolding of events and evaluating causal links. Moreover, according to Hafiz (2008), a case study offers a comprehensive comprehension of phenomena by prompting the interviewee to submit responses to inquiries. The use of standardized questions enhances the precision of measurement by imposing consistent definitions on the respondents. Additionally, it ensures the collection of comparable data from distinct persons, enabling comparison analysis.

3.3 Data Collection

The research used primary data collection methods, namely via conducting face-to-face interviews with the researcher. A structured interview protocol was used to gather empirical evidence about the impact of strategic collaborative strategies on the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates. An interview guide is a structured document designed to assist an interviewer in conducting an effective and organized interview. It serves as a roadmap for the interviewer, outlining the topics and areas to be covered during the interview process. In the process, an interview guide helps ensure consistency and fairness by providing a standardized approach to interviewing candidates or gathering information from individuals. As a Development Financial Institution, the performance of the organization is multi-faceted and therefore, open ended question would be appropriate because they allow further questions from the provided answers. In total, the researcher interviewed five senior staff in the organization. The interviewees was made of members in the Credit department, Business development department, Finance department, Client Support and Liaison departments. These interviewees were considered to be informed on matters strategic collaboration and therefore was suitable to the realization of the organization's strategic collaboration practices.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed by use of content analysis. Content analysis involves interpreting qualitative data by systematically examining the content of a set of data, such as written documents, speeches, interviews, or any other form of communication, in order to identify patterns, themes, or underlying meanings. This involved development of a coding scheme to the content and assign relevant codes or labels to different units or segments of analysis. This involved systematically categorizing the content based on the identified coding categories. The coded information was then used to draw conclusions and make interpretations about the content, its characteristics, and any insights or findings that emerge from the data. The analysis involved qualitative analysis with a view to interpreting meanings and identifying themes. Previous studies, such as the research conducted by Armule (2003) on the reaction of the family planning association of Kenya to alterations in its operational context, and the study by Kandie (2001) on the strategic responses of Telkom Kenya Ltd in a competitive setting, employed the method of content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides the outcome of the findings from content analysis. This is in relation to the study objectives and the variables incorporated in the study. Primary data was collected through the use of an interview guide and the analysis was done based on the content that was captured in the collection instrument.

4.2 Demographic Information

The demographic information examined in this study offers a comprehensive understanding of key stakeholders within Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE). The study focused on respondents' academic and professional qualifications, work experience, roles played by individuals and the duration of participants' employment.

4.2.1 Academic and Professional Qualifications

According to the findings, respondents in the study possess diverse academic and professional qualifications. Interviewee one holds a master's degree in entrepreneurship, a bachelor's degree in business administration with IT, and various diplomas and certificates in social development studies. This extensive academic background indicates a well-rounded education, combining business administration, IT, and entrepreneurship with a focus on social development. Interviewee two holds a PhD, representing the highest academic qualification among the respondents. Interviewee three has a postgraduate qualification, showcasing a commitment to advanced studies. Interviewees four and five hold bachelor's degrees, with interviewee five currently pursuing a Master's degree and holding a CPA Section 3 qualification, indicating a blend of academic and professional certifications.

The variety in academic qualifications suggests a mix of educational backgrounds among the respondents, contributing to a diverse pool of knowledge and skills. The inclusion of professional qualifications, such as entrepreneurship skills, CPA certification, and postgraduate qualifications, highlights the respondents' specialized expertise relevant to their roles in collaborative strategies. This diversity in qualifications may contribute to a rich and multifaceted understanding of collaborative business practices, considering the varied lenses through which the respondents approach their work.

4.2.2 Years of Experience in the Organization

The respondents' years of experience in their respective organizations vary significantly. Interviewee one has worked for an impressive 30 years, representing extensive institutional knowledge and experience. Interviewee two has 6 years and 5 months of experience, indicating a relatively newer member within the organization. Interviewee three has 6 years of experience, suggesting a moderate level of familiarity with the organizational context. Interviewee four has 13 years of experience, demonstrating a substantial period of tenure. Interviewee five has 9 years of experience, representing a mid-range duration of employment.

The range in years of experience suggests a mix of long-standing and relatively newer members within the organizations. Long-term experience, as seen in interviewees one and four, may provide institutional knowledge, historical context, and a deep understanding of organizational dynamics. On the other hand, the relatively shorter durations, such as interviewees two and three, may bring fresh perspectives, innovative approaches, and an external outlook. This mix could contribute to a balanced understanding of collaborative business strategies, combining seasoned insights with innovative approaches.

4.2.3 Role in Top Management Diversity Decision

The roles that respondents play in top management diversity decision-making processes differ across the interviews. Interviewee one, a manager in business advisory services, is involved in executing organizational plans, supervising departmental employees, and defining departmental goals. Interviewee two advises on credit matters. Interviewee three advises on financial matters. Interviewee four is involved in planning, monitoring, and evaluating corporate strategy and performance contracting. Interviewee five advises on collaborative strategies.

The diverse roles in top management diversity decisions indicate a range of responsibilities and perspectives within the organizations. The involvement of interviewees in areas such as business advisory, financial matters, and corporate strategy highlights the multidimensional nature of their contributions to diversity decisions. The inclusion of roles specifically related to collaboration, as seen in interviewees one and five, underscores the strategic importance placed on collaborative business strategies in the context of diversity decisions. This diversity in roles suggests a comprehensive organizational approach to managing diversity, involving individuals with varied expertise and responsibilities.

4.2.4 Involvement in Collaborative Business Strategies

The level of involvement in collaborative business strategies varies among respondents, reflecting a spectrum of roles and responsibilities within the organizations. Interviewee one is involved in decision-making, defining organizational goals, creating an environment for idea creation, and communicating with departmental staff. Interviewee two is involved in the development, dissemination, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of collaborative strategies. Interviewee three is involved in providing timely and accurate financial reports for decision-making. Interviewee four is involved in stakeholders' analysis, engagement in strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation. Interviewee five is involved in implementing consultancy projects, establishing partnerships, and designing and implementing projects that deploy field staff in different branches.

The varied involvement in collaborative business strategies reflects a comprehensive engagement in various aspects of collaborative endeavors. Decision-making, financial reporting, strategic planning, and project implementation represent different facets of collaboration, illustrating that collaboration is not confined to a single department or function. This diversity in roles suggests a holistic organizational approach to collaborative strategies, involving different levels and functions in the collaborative process. The hands-on involvement in projects, as seen in interviewee five, emphasizes the practical application of collaborative strategies, aligning strategic planning with tangible outcomes. This multifaceted involvement positions the respondents as key contributors to the collaborative initiatives within their respective organizations.

4.3 Collaborative Business Strategy

The study aimed to uncover various collaborative business strategies that are likely to be implemented in the organization of interest. This is in line to understanding the general landscape and the extent of collaborative business strategy implementation.

4.3.1 Goal Congruence among Partners

When examining the responses related to achieving goal congruence among partners, a common theme emerges across all interviews. The collaborative approach to achieving goal congruence is multifaceted and involves strategic alliance building, fostering an ecosystem of partners, and constructing a portfolio of collaborators. Interviewee one emphasizes the importance of *building strategic alliances among partners*, creating a foundation for shared goals and mutual support. This resonates with interviewee four, who highlights the necessity of aligning expectations and obligations through a thorough stakeholders' analysis. The emphasis on strategic alignment underscores the significance of a cohesive partnership framework that goes beyond individual organizational objectives.

The second element mentioned by interviewees is the *encouragement of an ecosystem of partners*. Interviewee one notes that an ecosystem approach fosters collaboration by creating an environment conducive to idea generation and credit sharing. This aligns with interviewee two's emphasis on continual collaboration, communication, capacity development, and effective teamwork. The concept of an ecosystem suggests an interconnected and interdependent network of partners, where collaboration is not a singular event but an ongoing process. This dynamic approach to collaboration emphasizes adaptability and responsiveness to changing circumstances within the collaborative network.

Building a portfolio of collaborators is the third theme that emerges from the responses. Interviewee one and interviewee two both stress the importance of having a diverse set of collaborators, each contributing unique resources and competencies. This echoes the idea of strategic partner selection and aligning partners with the organization's goals. The emphasis on diversity in collaboration implies that partners bring complementary strengths, fostering a collaborative environment where each entity's unique contributions contribute to the overall success of the partnership network. In essence, achieving goal congruence is not only about setting common objectives but also about cultivating a network that is strategically aligned, adaptable, and enriched by diverse capabilities.

4.3.2 Alignment of Relevant Resources and Competencies among Partners

The study also explores how alignment of relevant resources and competencies among partners is achieved. The responses indicate a structured and strategic approach to this alignment. Interviewee one emphasizes the importance of performing a SWOT analysis, defining individual strategic objectives, and providing and allocating resources from each partner. This approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of each partner's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It also involves a clear definition of objectives and the establishment of a resource-sharing mechanism to support the collaborative endeavor.

Interviewee two complements this perspective by highlighting the continual collaboration, communication, capacity development, and effective teamwork required for aligning resources and competencies. This suggests that the alignment process is not a one-time event but an ongoing, dynamic process that involves constant communication and capacity building. The emphasis on effective teamwork underscores the collaborative nature of resource alignment, where partners actively contribute to each other's capabilities and strengths.

Furthermore, interviewee four's mention of annual work plans that map activities to budget and identify responsible partners adds a layer of organizational structure to the alignment process. This structured approach ensures that alignment is not only conceptual but also operationalized through clearly defined plans, budgets, and responsibilities. The inclusion of responsible partners for specific activities enhances accountability within the collaborative network.

In summary, achieving alignment of relevant resources and competencies involves a strategic assessment of individual strengths and weaknesses, ongoing communication and capacity development, and the operationalization of alignment through structured plans and responsibilities. This comprehensive approach ensures that the collaborative network is not only strategically aligned but also actively engaged in supporting each other's capabilities and goals.

4.3.3 Role of ICT in Connectivity of Partners

Similarly, the study aimed to establish the role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in facilitating the connectivity of partners. Both interviewee one and interviewee two highlight the critical role of ICT in enhancing communication and collaboration among partners. Interviewee one specifically mentions team communication and the creation of online forums as tools that facilitate connectivity. This aligns with interviewee two's emphasis on fast and efficient communication of shared goals and ideas through ICT.

The use of online forums and team communication tools signifies a shift towards digital collaboration platforms, indicating a reliance on modern technologies to streamline communication processes. This is particularly relevant in the context of collaborative business strategies where partners may be geographically dispersed. The emphasis on team communication suggests that collaborative efforts are not confined to one-to-one interactions but often involve group discussions and coordination.

The use of ICT also aligns with the idea of creating an ecosystem of partners, as discussed earlier. Online forums and digital communication tools provide a virtual space for partners to engage, share ideas, and contribute to the collaborative network. The emphasis on fast and efficient communication underscores the importance of timely information exchange, enabling partners to respond swiftly to changes in the collaborative environment. Generally from the interview guides, the role of ICT in connectivity of partners is instrumental in facilitating communication, collaboration, and the creation of a virtual ecosystem. The adoption of digital tools reflects a contemporary approach to collaborative business strategies, where technology plays a central role in fostering connectivity among partners.

4.3.4 Existence and Cultivation of Trust in the Partnership Network

The study also delved into how trust is established and cultivated in the partnership network. Both interviewee one and interviewee three highlight the importance of working towards a common goal and setting up expectations upfront. Interviewee one emphasizes the need to work towards a common goal, suggesting that a shared objective fosters a sense of unity and common purpose among partners. This aligns with interviewee three's mention of setting expectations upfront, indicating that transparency and clarity in the early stages of collaboration contribute to trust building.

The emphasis on a common goal reflects the idea that trust is not solely built on contractual agreements but also on a shared vision and commitment to a collective objective. This shared purpose creates a foundation for mutual understanding and collaboration. The mention of setting expectations upfront reinforces the significance of transparency in communication, ensuring that partners are aware of each other's roles, responsibilities, and anticipated outcomes from the collaboration.

Furthermore, interviewee two adds a layer to the discussion by suggesting that trust is cultivated through regular meetings, delegation, feedback mechanisms, effective communication, service level agreements, and rewards. The inclusion of regular meetings and feedback mechanisms underscores the importance of continuous communication and evaluation in maintaining and strengthening trust. Delegation and service level agreements contribute to a structured approach, defining roles and expectations in a manner that enhances transparency and accountability.

4.3.5 Adaptation of Organizational Structures to Suit Other Members

According to the findings, interviewee one mentions focusing on different workplace practices and behaviors, as well as employee development and oversight. This suggests that organizational adaptation involves consideration of cultural and operational differences, with a focus on aligning workplace practices and behaviors among collaborating partners. Employee development and oversight further indicate a commitment to ensuring that personnel from different organizations are integrated and supported in the collaborative environment.

Interviewee three provides additional insight by stating that partner firms accommodate collaborating firms' organizational structures. This accommodation implies a degree of flexibility in organizational design to accommodate the unique characteristics and structures of collaborating partners. It suggests a willingness to adjust existing structures to create a more seamless and integrated collaborative framework.

The adaptation of organizational structures is closely tied to the need for cultural affinity among partners, as discussed in the sixth question. The emphasis on different workplace practices, behaviors, and employee development indicates that cultural differences are recognized and addressed through organizational adaptation. This aligns with the idea that a harmonious organizational culture is essential for effective collaboration.

4.3.6 Need for Cultural Affinity among Partners

Furthermore, the focus of the study was also drawn to address the need for cultural affinity among partners in the collaborative network. Interviewee one highlights the importance of building open communication among staff and integrating all staff members within the organization. This underscores the significance of creating a unified and inclusive organizational culture where communication flows freely and all members, regardless of organizational affiliation, feel integrated and valued.

Interviewee three adds to this discussion by stating that cultural affinity ensures that organizations are aligned and headed in the same direction. This aligns with interviewee two's emphasis on collegiality, learning, shared values, and norms as essential components of cultural affinity. The need for alignment and shared direction suggests that cultural affinity is not only about creating a positive work environment but also about ensuring that all collaborating partners are moving towards common goals.

The importance of cultural affinity is further emphasized by the fact that it directly contributes to achieving the goals of collaborative business strategies. It fosters open communication, shared values, and a sense of unity, creating a conducive environment for effective collaboration. The alignment of organizational cultures becomes a strategic element in the success of collaborative efforts.

4.3.7 Role of Leadership Competencies in Enhancement of Partner Firms' Goals

The study also aimed to establish the role of leadership competencies in enhancing the goals of partner firms within the collaborative network. Interviewee one emphasizes that leadership competencies contribute to enhanced communication and improved performance. The connection between leadership competencies and communication suggests that effective leaders play a pivotal role in facilitating clear and transparent communication within the collaborative network. The focus on improved performance underscores the strategic impact of leadership on the overall success of collaborative efforts.

Interviewee two provides a more expansive view by mentioning several leadership competencies, including promoting inspiration and motivation among employees, effective performance management, promoting creativity and innovation, building strong leadership teams, and enhancing brand reputation and business development. This comprehensive list highlights the multifaceted role of leadership in collaborative business strategies. The emphasis on inspiration, motivation, and effective performance management aligns with the idea that leadership sets the tone for organizational culture and employee engagement within the collaborative network.

The role of leadership in building strong leadership teams is particularly relevant in the context of collaboration, where the effectiveness of the partnership often relies on the synergies between leadership teams from different organizations. Additionally, the mention of enhancing brand reputation and business development underscores the strategic impact of leadership in shaping the external perception of the collaborative network and its ability to attract new opportunities.

Generally, the role of leadership competencies in enhancing partner firms' goals involves fostering effective communication, promoting motivation and inspiration, managing performance, encouraging innovation, building strong leadership teams, and enhancing brand reputation and business development. Leadership, therefore, emerges as a critical factor that goes beyond organizational management and directly influences the success and sustainability of collaborative business strategies.

4.4 Effect of Business Collaboration Strategy on Performance

The study explored the multifaceted impact of business collaboration strategy on various aspects of organizational performance. The responses provide valuable insights into how collaboration influences key elements, from problem-solving and innovation to customer service and social networks.

4.4.1 Friction on Process Interface: Better Problem-Solving

Collaboration, as highlighted by interviewee one, contributes to better problem-solving by minimizing friction on process interfaces. The emphasis on building strategic alliances and fostering an ecosystem of partners ensures that potential conflicts are anticipated and addressed collaboratively. This proactive approach to problem-solving aligns with the notion that a diverse set of partners brings varied perspectives, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions. By mitigating friction on process interfaces, collaborative business strategies create an environment where partners work cohesively to overcome challenges and enhance overall problem-solving capabilities.

4.4.2 Improved Output Quality

The second impact of business collaboration strategy centres around improved output quality and increased innovation, as mentioned by interviewee three. Collaboration serves as a catalyst for innovation, allowing organizations to leverage the diverse expertise and resources of their partners. The continuous improvement of products and services reflects a commitment to innovation-driven by collaborative efforts. The collaborative network becomes a breeding ground for creative ideas and novel approaches, ultimately leading to enhanced output quality. This aligns with the notion that collaboration fosters a culture of continuous improvement and encourages partners to explore innovative solutions to meet evolving demands.

4.4.3 Process Re-engineering Process

The contribution of collaborative business strategy to the process re-engineering process is highlighted by interviewee four. The emphasis on new insights and innovative ways to improve speed and reduce costs underscores the transformative impact of collaboration on organizational processes. Collaborative efforts trigger a re-evaluation of existing processes, encouraging partners to explore more efficient and effective methods. The integration of diverse perspectives and skills in the collaborative network facilitates a holistic approach to process re-engineering, contributing to the overall success of the organization.

4.4.4 Transparency of Business Process

Transparency of business processes, as mentioned by interviewee one, is a direct outcome of collaborative business strategies. The collaborative environment encourages open communication, regular meetings, and effective feedback mechanisms. These practices enhance transparency by ensuring that all stakeholders are informed and engaged in the decision-making process. Additionally, the establishment of service level agreements and rewards, as noted by interviewee two, further reinforces accountability within the collaborative network. Transparent business processes not only build trust among partners but also create a foundation for effective collaboration and shared responsibility.

4.4.5 Less Costly Processes

The collaborative approach contributes to less costly processes through improved efficiency, as outlined by interviewee three. The sharing of associated costs among collaborating firms results in reduced operational expenses. The emphasis on aligning resources and competencies, performing SWOT analysis, and defining clear objectives ensures that resources are allocated judiciously, avoiding unnecessary costs. The collaborative network becomes a platform for resource optimization, where partners collectively strive for improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness in achieving shared goals.

4.4.6 Improved Output Quality

The pursuit of improved output quality, highlighted by interviewee one, is linked to increased productivity within the collaborative network. The collaborative environment, characterized by strategic alliances and a portfolio of collaborators, encourages partners to focus on their strengths. This specialization leads to heightened productivity as each partner contributes efficiently to the collective goals. The collaborative approach becomes a catalyst for optimizing productivity by leveraging the unique strengths and competencies of each collaborating entity.

4.4.7 Customer Service

Collaborative business strategies positively impact customer service by fostering higher morale and retention rates, as emphasized by interviewee two. The collaborative environment, built on trust, transparent processes, and effective leadership competencies, creates a positive organizational culture. This positive culture extends to customer interactions, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and loyalty. The focus on effective performance management, motivation, and inspiration further contributes to a customer-centric approach within the collaborative network. The alignment of organizational cultures and values ensures that customer service becomes a shared priority among collaborating partners.

4.4.8 Improved Product Offering

The pursuit of improved product offering, as noted by interviewee three, is linked to the broader goal of securing a larger market share. Collaborative business strategies facilitate a continuous cycle of innovation, allowing organizations to diversify, simplify, and tailor their products and services to meet market demands. The collaborative network becomes a source of competitive advantage, enabling partners to collectively address market needs and expand their market presence. The emphasis on product innovation within the collaborative framework contributes to the strategic goal of capturing a larger share of the market.

4.4.9 New Social Networks Connecting with the Organization

The establishment of new social networks, as highlighted by interviewee one, contributes to elevated employee morale. Collaboration extends beyond organizational boundaries, creating connections with a broader network of stakeholders. These connections, whether through online forums or joint projects, enhance the professional networks of employees. The collaborative environment becomes a platform for learning, collegiality, and shared values. This exposure to diverse social networks not only benefits the organization but also contributes to the personal and professional development of employees, positively impacting morale.

In summary, business collaboration strategy has a transformative impact on organizational performance, ranging from enhanced problem-solving and innovation to improved customer service and market expansion. The collaborative network becomes a dynamic space where partners synergize their efforts to achieve common goals, contributing to the overall success and sustainability of the collaborative business strategies. The interconnectedness of these impacts underscores the holistic nature of collaboration, where each element reinforces the others, creating a comprehensive framework for organizational excellence.

4.5 Reflections on Strategies

The study concluded by asking if there was anything additional the respondents would like to add about the strategies used to forge collaborative business partnerships, which opened a space for reflective insights from the interviewees. Interviewee four, expressing the importance of periodic engagement with various stakeholders in each collaboration, highlights a strategic emphasis on sustained relationship management. This implies that the success of collaborative partnerships is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process that requires continuous engagement, assessment, and adjustment. By incorporating periodic stakeholder engagement, organizations can adapt to changing dynamics, address emerging challenges, and seize new opportunities, thereby fortifying the resilience and longevity of collaborative endeavours.

Furthermore, interviewee five's emphasis on understanding collaboration partners thoroughly from the beginning underscores the significance of upfront investment in relationship-building. This approach aligns with the notion that successful collaborations are rooted in a deep understanding of each partner's strengths, values, and expectations. By investing time and effort in establishing a strong foundation at the outset, organizations can foster a robust and trusting collaborative environment. This not only lays the groundwork for effective collaboration but also minimizes potential hurdles and enhances the likelihood of mutually beneficial outcomes. In essence, these strategies go beyond the transactional aspects of collaboration, emphasizing the importance of relational aspects and long-term commitment to building successful collaborative business partnerships.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

The investigation into the effect of collaborative business strategy on organizational performance yielded noteworthy findings that resonate with established literature in the field. The study revealed that collaborative strategies contribute to better problem-solving by minimizing friction on process interfaces and fostering strategic alliances among partners. This aligns with the research of Kang and Park (2016), who highlighted the positive correlation between collaboration and enhanced problem-solving effectiveness within organizations. The strategic emphasis on building alliances echoes the idea that diverse perspectives and collaborative efforts lead to more comprehensive and effective solutions, supporting the findings of previous studies.

Moreover, the study identified a strong connection between collaborative strategies and increased innovation, emphasizing the continuous improvement of products and services within a collaborative network. This aligns with the arguments presented by Gnyawali and Park (2019), who assert that collaborative environments stimulate creativity and innovative thinking. The synergy of diverse expertise and resources among collaborating partners, as highlighted in this study, reinforces the notion that collaboration is a catalyst for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Furthermore, the study found that collaborative business strategies positively impact organizational processes, enhancing transparency and accountability. This is consistent with the research of Muteshi and Awino (2018), who emphasized that collaborative environments foster open communication and information sharing, thereby improving transparency. The study's emphasis on the positive correlation between collaboration and process re-engineering supports existing literature, affirming that collaboration contributes to transformative changes in organizational processes.

Additionally, the study highlighted the role of collaborative strategies in optimizing resource allocation, reducing costs, and improving overall efficiency. This aligns with the findings of Mishra, Chiwenga, and Ali (2021), who argue that collaboration enables the sharing of resources among partners, leading to cost reduction and improved operational efficiency. The study's recognition of collaboration's positive impact on customer service aligns with the arguments of Lioukas, Reuer, and Zollo (2016), who emphasize that collaborative efforts enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. The consistent findings across studies underscore the multifaceted benefits of collaboration, from resource optimization to elevated customer service standards.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The chapter offers a comprehensive synthesis and reflection on the study's findings. This chapter comprises a summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the research, and practical recommendations for policy and practice. It also highlights the limitations and suggestions for future studies. This chapter aims to provide a holistic understanding of the cultural adaptation strategies employed by the organization for effective market penetration.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of collaborative business strategies on the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE). The study sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders within the organization regarding collaborative strategies, encompassing the realms of general information, collaborative business strategy, and the effects of collaboration on organizational performance. Through in-depth interviews, the goal was to garner insights that contribute to a nuanced understanding of the dynamics, challenges, and outcomes associated with collaborative approaches in a business context.

The study unfolded a comprehensive portrayal of the role and impact of collaborative business strategies within Kenya Industrial Estates. In delving into the general information and bio data of the interviewees, it was revealed that the participants possessed diverse academic and professional qualifications, reflecting a multidisciplinary approach within the organization. The extensive professional experience of participants, spanning several decades, highlighted the depth of institutional knowledge and expertise engaged in the collaborative processes at KIE.

Furthermore, the collaborative business strategies section illuminated the multifaceted involvement of key stakeholders in decision-making, goal-setting, and creating an environment conducive to idea generation. Notably, the study unearthed that decision-making was a pivotal role played by top management, aligning with existing literature on the centrality of leadership in guiding collaborative initiatives. The emphasis on transparency, accountability, and effective communication underscored the foundational principles embedded in the collaborative processes within KIE.

Exploring the collaborative business strategy itself, the study identified critical elements that contribute to the achievement of goal congruence among partners. The creation of strategic alliances, encouragement of an ecosystem of partners, and the development of a diverse portfolio of collaborators emerged as key strategies. These findings resonate with existing literature highlighting the significance of building robust networks and partnerships to enhance collaborative outcomes. The alignment of relevant resources and competencies among partners was identified as crucial, involving SWOT analysis, strategic objective definition, and the provision and allocation of resources. Such strategic alignment mirrors the recommendations of scholars emphasizing the importance of synergy and shared objectives in collaborative ventures.

The application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in facilitating connectivity among partners was underscored as vital, aligning with the contemporary trend of leveraging technology for collaborative endeavours. The cultivation of trust within the partnership network was identified as a dynamic process involving working towards common goals and setting clear expectations upfront. These findings correlate with literature emphasizing trust as a foundational element in successful collaborations.

Examining the adaptation of organizational structures by partner firms, the study revealed a focus on workplace practices, behaviors, and employee development. This resonates with the broader discourse on the organizational culture shift necessitated by collaborative endeavours. The importance of cultural affinity among partners was highlighted for building open communication and integrating all staff members within the organization. Leadership competencies were identified as instrumental in enhancing partner firm goals, aligning with established research on the pivotal role of leadership in collaborative success.

Transitioning to the effect of collaborative business strategy on performance, the study delineated a spectrum of outcomes. Noteworthy improvements included better problem-solving, increased innovation, enhanced output quality, and streamlined processes. The positive impact on transparency, cost efficiency, customer service, product offerings, and the establishment of new social networks underscored the holistic benefits of collaborative strategies. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing the transformative effects of collaboration on organizational performance.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delved into the intricate landscape of collaborative business strategies and their impact on the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE). The exploration commenced by unravelling the diverse academic and professional backgrounds of key stakeholders, illustrating a rich tapestry of expertise and experience within the organization. With a wealth of qualifications and decades of collective professional engagement, the participants exemplified a multifaceted workforce steering the collaborative efforts at KIE.

Transitioning to the core of the investigation, the study uncovered a robust framework of collaborative strategies employed by KIE. Decision-making processes led by top management, transparent communication, and the cultivation of a collaborative culture emerged as pillars supporting the collaborative initiatives. The emphasis on trust-building, alignment of resources, and adaptability in organizational structures highlighted a dynamic approach to fostering collaborative networks. These strategic manoeuvres underscored the multifaceted nature of collaborative practices within the organization.

The findings on the effect of collaborative business strategies on organizational performance painted a compelling picture of positive outcomes. From enhanced problem-solving and innovation to streamlined processes and improved customer service, the impact was far-reaching. The study reaffirmed the transformative potential of collaborative efforts in fostering organizational excellence. Such outcomes not only validate the strategic choices made by KIE but also contribute to the broader discourse on the effectiveness of collaborative business strategies.

As organizations navigate an increasingly interconnected and complex business landscape, the insights from this study offer valuable considerations for practitioners and policymakers alike. The holistic understanding of collaborative dynamics at KIE, coupled with the identified strategies and outcomes, contributes to the evolving body of knowledge in collaborative business practices. By embracing the recommended practices and lessons learned from KIE's experiences, organizations can enhance their collaborative strategies, fostering a culture of innovation, efficiency, and sustained success. In this context, the conclusion drawn from this study extends beyond the specific organizational setting, providing a roadmap for others to navigate the intricate terrain of collaborative business strategies with confidence and foresight.

5.4 Recommendations

In the context of practice, organizations are encouraged to foster a collaborative culture that prioritizes trust and transparent communication. Leaders play a pivotal role in shaping this culture by promoting an environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and employees feel empowered to share ideas and concerns. Regular training initiatives can enhance collaboration skills, ensuring that teams are well-equipped to work collectively towards shared objectives. Embracing a collaborative culture not only contributes to improved teamwork but also enhances overall organizational effectiveness.

In the arena of policy, there is a call for strategic investments in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to facilitate seamless connectivity and collaboration. Organizations should be incentivized to adopt advanced collaborative tools, project management platforms, and communication channels. Policymakers can play a role in supporting such technological advancements within organizations, recognizing the transformative impact of ICT on collaborative initiatives. Training programs should complement these technological investments, ensuring that employees possess the necessary skills to harness the full potential of these tools.

Leadership remains a linchpin in the success of collaborative endeavors. Leaders should be equipped with the necessary competencies to guide and motivate teams effectively. Training programs for leaders should emphasize the importance of transparent communication, conflict resolution, and the ability to inspire and mobilize teams towards shared goals. Policymakers can contribute to this aspect by promoting leadership development programs that specifically address the unique challenges and requirements of collaborative environments. Effective leadership is foundational to the success of collaborative business strategies and should be a focal point in both organizational practices and policies.

5.5 Limitation

This study faced some limitations that warrant consideration. Firstly, its scope was constrained to the specific context of Kenya Industrial Estates, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to other organizations and regions. Secondly, the research design leans heavily on qualitative methods, including interviews and content analysis, which may not fully capture quantitative performance metrics and objective outcomes. Additionally, resource and access limitations restricted the depth of analysis, as access to comprehensive financial data and historical program evaluations was constrained. The potential for bias in the findings, influenced by interviewees' perspectives, should also be acknowledged. However, the limitations did not deter the study from achieving its objectives since the researcher implemented measures to encounter the limitations and warrant a seamless process throughout the study period.

5.6 Recommendation for Future Studies

The study aimed to investigate the effect of collaborative business strategy on the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates. Future research endeavors in the field of strategic management should consider expanding the scope beyond a single organization to facilitate cross-contextual comparisons. A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with quantitative data collection would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact. Access to broader resources, including financial data and historical evaluations, should be prioritized for a deeper analysis of organizational operations. To address potential bias, future studies should aim for diverse samples of stakeholders, including external partners and service recipients, to provide a more holistic perspective.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview guide will seek to determine how collaborative business strategy affects the performance of Kenya Industrial Estates.

SECTION A: General Information and Bio Data

1. What are your academic and professional qualifications?

2) For how long have you worked in the organization?

3) What role do you play in the top management diversity decision?

4) How are you involved in collaborative business strategies undertaken by the organization?

SECTION B: Collaborative Business Strategy

5. How is the goal congruence among the partners achieved?

6. How is the alignment of relevant resources and competencies among the partners achieved?

7. What role does the application of the ICT facilitate in connectivity of partners?

8. How has the existence and cultivation of trust achieved in the partnership network?

9. How has the partner firms adapted their organizational structures to suit other members?

10. what is the need for cultural affinity among the partners?

11. What is the role of the leadership competencies in enhancement of partner firm's goals?

SECTION C: Effect of Collaborative Business Strategy on Performance

11. What is the effect of the business collaboration strategy on:

i) Friction on process interface

ii) Improved output quality

iii) Process re-engineering process

iv) Transparency of business process

v) Less costly processes

vii) Customer service

viii) Improved product offering

ix) New social networks connecting with the organization

12. Is there anything you would like to add about the strategies you have used to forge collaborative business partnerships?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME