

**THE INFLUENCE OF COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES ON
PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN MAVOKO DISTRICT
OF MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family members for the prayers and encouragement.

May the Lord, God, The Almighty bless them abundantly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God, The Almighty, for giving me the means, courage, strength and perseverance to complete the project. My greater appreciation goes to my wife Salome Kanini Mulungye and my children Kevin Mualuko Wambua, Kathleen Mueni Wambua, Kacey Mumbua Wambua and Kylie Mwende Wambua for the encouragement and prayers. Finally to my supervisor Dr. Munyoki for his time and dedication to ensure that I completed the project in time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 Concept of Competitive Strategies	2
1.1.2 Performance of private schools.....	3
1.1.3 Private Schools in Mavoko District	4
1.2 Research Problem.....	5
1.3 Objective of the Study.....	6
1.4 Value of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Theoretical Foundation	8
2.3 Competitive Strategies	10
2.3.1 Cost leadership Strategy	10

2.3.2 Differentiation Strategy	11
2.3.3 Focus Strategy.....	12
2.4 Conceptual Framework	13
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Research Design.....	15
3.3 Population of the Study.....	16
3.4 Data Collection.....	17
3.5 Data Analysis	17
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION	19
4.1 Introduction	19
4.2 Response Rate	19
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.....	19
4.4 Competitive strategies implemented by the schools	23
4.5 Influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools.....	24
4.6 Competitive Strategies	25
4.6.1 Cost leadership strategy	26
4.6.2 Differentiation strategy	28
4.6.3 Focus strategy	31

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 36

5.1 Introduction 36

5.2 Summary 36

5.3 Conclusions 38

5.4 Recommendations 39

 5.4.1 Recommendations with Policy Implications..... 39

 5.4.2 Suggestions for Further Studies 40

REFERENCES..... 41

Appendix i: Letter of introduction **i**

Appendix ii: Questionnaire to Respondents **ii**

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Population of the study.....	16
Table 4.1 Age Distribution.....	20
Table 4.2 Influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools.....	25
Table 4.3 Cost Leadership Strategy on Performance of Private Schools.....	26
Table 4.4 Extent to which cost leadership strategy affects performance	27
Table 4.5 Extend to Which Differentiation Strategy Influences Performance	28
Table 4.6 How differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools	29
Table 4.7 How differentiation strategy affects performance.....	30
Table 4.8 Model Summary and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)	33
Table 4.9 Coefficient of determination	34

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Number of years working in private schools in Mavoko District	21
Figure 4.2 Highest Level of education	22
Figure 4.3 Numbers of Teachers	23
Figure 4.4 Competitive strategies implemented by the schools.....	24
Figure 4.5 Focus Strategies as Competitive Strategic Plan Review	32

ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County, Kenya. These were necessitated by the desire to establish whether schools are applying competitive strategies in their efforts to improve their overall performance. Further, we sought to draw a correlation between good performance and adoption of competitive strategies among private schools in the District. Thus the study sought to determine the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County, Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive survey design. This was suitable in this study as it helped the researcher establish the existing conditions at the private schools. It further allowed identification of the various competitive strategies the schools were applying in their efforts to improve performance. The population of the study was the 8 boarding schools, 15 day schools and 11 mixed day and boarding schools within the study area. The study took a census of the whole population. A pilot study was carried out on a different set of respondents to better plan for the research. The test-retest procedure was used for testing reliability and it yielded favorable results to warrant reliance on the data collected and its findings. Qualitative and quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires. This was further analyzed and presented through narratives, tables and graphs. The study revealed that the schools adopted cost leadership strategy and this affects their performance. The researcher was of the opinion that cost leadership leads to increased productivity, innovative ability and it aids in enhancement of service quality. The study also discovered some element of differentiation and focus strategies which also affect performance.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

According to Graeme, (2008) Schools are complex in nature. Their operation and strategic focus could be enhanced by well-focused application of curriculum to support student's improvements and productivity in school and out of school (Graeme, 2008). The education system in Kenya has been subjected to rapid changes most often driven by globalization, the marketing of education services, information technology (IT) development, competitions and the most recent the 2010 constitution.

School performance is defined in terms of resource consumption per student using a model that relates the use of resources to the number of students enrolled (Norton et al, 2000). School Performance is also defined in terms of the conversion of resources into educational outcomes using a model that relates the use of resources per student to arrange of measures of the quality of education provided (Cohen et al., 2009). The increasing rate of expansion of education in Kenya has been accelerated by demand for education. The Kenyan government has given education a lot of prominence as evident in the 2012/2013 financial year budget in which education was allocated around 2.9 billion US dollars which was second to infrastructure which got 3.35 billion US dollars.

In Kenya, the means to judge academic achievement is through examinations. Kyalo and Kuthuka (1992) argue that a certificate must not only certify that a candidate has fulfilled the set requirements but also has attained results that compare favorably with similar cohorts elsewhere. While some schools consistently perform well in KCSE, others seem to perform poorly year in year out. Even among schools that perform poorly, some record

improved performance from one year to another, while others record decline in performance. Yet all schools set their academic goals aimed at improving academic performance.

1.1.1 Concept of Competitive Strategies

Porter (1996) defines competitive strategy as deliberately choosing different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value. These activities form the basis of competitive advantage. Strategy in itself can be defined as a game plan management has for positioning the company in its chosen market arena, competing successfully, pleasing customers and achieving good business performance (Thompson & Strickland, 2002). Strategy is also the commercial logic of a business that defines why a firm can have a competitive advantage.

Competitive strategy consists of all those moves and approaches that a firm has and is taking to attract buyers, withstand competitive pressure and improve its market position (Thompson & Strickland, 2002). It concerns what a firm is doing in order to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Porter (1980) outlined the three approaches to competitive strategy these being striving to be the overall low cost producer, i.e. low cost leadership strategy, secondly seeking to differentiate one's product offering from that of its rivals, i.e. differentiation strategy and lastly focus on a narrow portion of the market, i.e. focus or niche strategy.

Porter (1998) described competitive strategy as the search for a favorable competitive position in an industry, the fundamental arena in which competition occurs and further explains that competitive strategy aims to establish a profitable and sustainable position

against the forces that determine industry competition. This involves identifying sources of competition in the ever changing environment then developing strategies that match organizational capabilities to the changes in the environment. According to Porter (1998), competitive strategy is about being different. This means deliberately performing activities differently and in better ways than competitors.

1.1.2 Performance of private schools

A positive competitive strategy is correlated with better academic performance. It promotes co-operative learning, group cohesion and mutual respect. These aspects directly improve the learning environment (Gaith, 2003). Private schools perceived as being positive, safe and with nurturing environment that focus on learners' learning perform better in examinations regardless of available technology or teacher training. This means that the learning environment, culture and climate created by the school may foster or hinder learning (Farrant 1980). Learners from private primary schools in Kenya have always performed well at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education compared to most public primary schools. Perhaps, it is because the private schools have adequate infrastructure, adequate teaching/learning materials, good interpersonal relationships, and proper safety precautions put in place.

According to the rankings of private schools in the country that were released on 14th of September 2009 by the Ministry of Education, there are just eight schools that were given four star statuses. This survey showed a fair picture of the performance of private secondary schools. No school got the five-star mark most falling below two stars and most schools did not show a desire to improve even after their weaknesses were pointed

out. Among the measurement tools, commitment to continuous improvement, was the worst performed. The report from afro-educare observes. These schools either do not budget or do not document expenditures or have no bank account. The schools mainly scored low on financial sustainability, most failing to demonstrate proper financial management and accountability (Wanambwa and Ssekamate, 2009).

1.1.3 Private Schools in Mavoko District

Due to the importance of Education in the Socio-Economic development of an individual, great efforts are always made to ensure that an individual goes through the Education cycle successfully by achieving high academic results (Chance, 1981). In Mavoko District, the need for good results puts every stake-holder in the Education Sector on alert. Many mechanisms are put in place to ensure high performance and good results. Such mechanisms includes; introducing performance contracts by the government, Subsidizing Secondary Education (SSE), increasing in contact hours between the teacher and learner, remedial teaching during weekends, intensive testing policies etc (Kamau, 2003).

Private secondary schools in Mavoko District in their struggle to remain at the top in performance invest huge amounts of financial resources as competitive strategic plans to achieve competitive edge in the academic field. Despite these, some private schools continue to register poor performance for the last five years in the County. Besides, two private schools were closed indefinitely in 2009 and 2010 as a result of scoring less than 2.0 as their overall mean score (Machakos county KCSE results, 2008-2013). Could these performance issues have to do with competitive strategies in the private secondary

schools in the county? Rotich (2009), found a positive correlation between competitive strategies and performance of secondary schools. If they stem from issues to do with competitive strategic plans, then what is the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools?

1.2 Research Problem

The demands and needs of the education are constantly evolving. In order for a school to outperform the competition, management needs to adjust and align the school according to the needs and demands of the environment. One of the environmental influences to a school arises from competition following increased globalization and internationalization of schools. Increased competition threatens the attractiveness of an industry thereby reducing the profitability. It exerts pressure on firms to be proactive and to formulate successful strategies that facilitate proactive response to anticipated and actual changes in the competitive environment (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

Several scholars and researchers have reviewed performance improvement strategies employed by different organizations. Obiero (2010) explored the effect of administrative strategies on KCPE performance in Maseno Division in Kisumu. The study revealed that curriculum implementation and assessment, teacher professionalism and work related behavior and management practices have a bearing on KCPE performance. However materials and equipment as well as school environment and facilities have no significant influence on performance. Itunga (2011) examined the effects of principals' leadership styles on students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Meru central

district, Kenya. The study concluded that a significant relationship existed between principals leadership style and students performance.

Okello (2012) examined the influence of head teacher leadership strategies on academic performance in public schools in Starehe district, Nairobi, Kenya. Major findings of the study revealed that a good learning environment, shared vision, involvement of external partners and training of teachers contributed to academic improvement in Starehe District. Kamoche (2013) studied the influence of principals' administrative strategies on Students' Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in Mathioya Sub County, Kenya. Principals indicated that textbooks and playground in their schools were not adequate. It was also revealed that principals' strategy on facilitation of teachers' development influenced students' performance in KCSE. The study findings also revealed that principals' strategy on creation of enabling environment influenced students' performance in KCSE. The researcher has not come across a study that relates competitive strategies to performance in Mavoko district. Thus the aim of this study was therefore to provide an answer to the question; what is the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County, Kenya?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of competitive strategies on the performance of private schools in Mavoko District Machakos County, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The results of this study would be valuable to different stakeholders. For example, future researchers and scholars may use the results of the study as a source of reference materials besides suggesting areas for further research that they can further knowledge in the area of competitive strategic management.

Managers in the private schools sector may also use the findings act as a guiding framework for their future strategies in their effort to outperform the competition.

Policy makers in the area of private schools can also use the findings of this study to identify challenges and opportunities in the education sector.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the related literature on the subject under study presented by various researchers and authors. It reviews literature with respect to the research objective of the study that is to determine the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Various theories have being developed with regard to competitive strategies on performance. This study will look at 2 theories i.e. Resource-Based Theory on Competitive Strategy and the Organizational Development Theory.

There is evidence that profitability differs much more between businesses than between industries (Rumelt, 1991). The beginnings of the theory of gaining a competitive advantage through internal factors can be attributed to Barney (1991). The resource-based view of the firm has gone through a considerable amount of modifications and variations during the past three decades by a great number of scholars using terms such as resources, capabilities, assets and or core competences to describe intrinsic factors that lead to a competitive advantage for a firm. Although scholars use a variety of terms, this thesis will only use the term 'resources' to describe tangible assets, intangible assets, activities, capabilities and competences alike. A company's resources can be categorized into physical capital resources, human capital resources and organizational capital resources.

In a rapidly changing environment, a fifth characteristic durability which defines how easy a company's resource is outdated, has proven to be important as well (Grant, 2010). Amit and Schoemaker (1993) argued that a company needs strategic assets, a combination of resources and capabilities that respond to industry factors to gain competitive advantage. However, when competitors learn to duplicate those assets, they will turn into entry assets and their possession can then only lead to competitive parity. Hence, a company that wants to be successful in the long-term continuously needs to be able to develop strategic assets.

According to Organizational Development Theory, development is a necessary process that all organizations must undergo. There are many factors that make organizational development important for organizations to thrive and be successful. Organizational development is a complex process that is described as a "set of behavioral science-based theories, values, strategies, and technologies aimed at planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance, through the alteration of organizational members' on-the-job behaviors" (Britt and Jex, 2008:15). The process of organizational development cause changes in the daily workplace routine and these changes causes success and productivity in the workplace. Organizational developments help an organization to improve and evolve into a more successful organization. Organizational development is necessary for any organization to survive and be successful. Many theories have helped organizations to understand and implement organizational developments. It is important that conditions be correct in an organization if changes are expected to be successful.

2.3 Competitive Strategies

When a firm sustains profits that exceed the average for its industry, the firm is said to possess a Competitive Strategies over its rivals (Porter, 1985). The goal of much of business strategy is to achieve a sustainable Competitive Strategies. An organization will gain competitive advantage over its competitors from an understanding of both markets and customers, and special competences that it possesses (Porter, 1985). A Competitive Strategy exists when the firm is able to deliver the same benefits as competitors but at a lower cost (cost advantage), or deliver benefits that exceed those of competing products (differentiation advantage). Thus a Competitive Strategies enables a firm to create superior value for its customers and superior profits for itself.

Cost and differentiation Strategies are known as positional advantages since they describe the firm's position in the industry as a leader in either cost or differentiation (Porter, 1985). A firm utilizes its resources and capabilities to create a Competitive Strategy that ultimately results in superior value creation. Mc Lauren (2004) argues that resources are the sources of a firm's capabilities, while capabilities are the source of a firm's competitive advantage. Safford (2005) holds that a winning competitive strategy is always founded on consistently understanding and predicting changing market conditions and customer needs.

2.3.1 Cost leadership Strategy

A cost leadership strategy is one in which a firm strives to have the lowest costs in the industry and offer its products or services in a broad market at the lowest prices. Characteristics of cost leadership include low level differentiation, aim for average

customer, use of knowledge gained from past production to lower production costs, and the addition of new product features only after the market demands them. Cost leadership has advantages. The strategy protects the organization from new entrants. This is because a price reduction can be used to protect from new entrants. However, the risk of cost leadership is that competitors may leap from the technology, nullifying the firms accumulated cost reductions. Other competitors may imitate the technology leading to firm's loss of its competitiveness.

Hambrick (1983) argues that the main dimension of the cost leadership strategy is efficiency, the degree to which inputs per unit of output are low. Efficiency can be subdivided into two categories; cost efficiency which measures the degree to which costs per unit of output are low, and asset parsimony which measures the degree to which assets per unit of output are low. Together, cost efficiency and asset parsimony, capture a firm's cost leadership orientation. Firms following an efficiency strategy succeed in deploying the minimum amount of operating costs and assets needed to achieve the desired sales. This enables them to improve their financial performance (Hambrick, 1983; Porter, 1980).

2.3.2 Differentiation Strategy

Differentiation strategy is one in which a firm offers products or services with unique features that customers value. Successful differentiation is based on a study of buyers' needs and behaviour in order to learn what they consider important and valuable. The desired features are then incorporated into the product to encourage buyer preference for the product. The basis for competitive advantage is a product whose attributes differ

significantly from rivals' products. The value added by the uniqueness lets the firm command a premium price. The key characteristic of differentiation strategy is perceived quality (whether real or not). This may be through superior product design, technology, customer service, dealer network or other dimensions. The advantage of differentiation is that perceived quality and brand loyalty insulates company from threats from any of the five forces that determine the state of competition in an industry.

Through differentiation a customer is given reason to choose the brand and not any other service or product. Although all products or services can be differentiated not all brand differences are worthwhile or meaningful to the customers Kotler (2000), Porter (1980) and Aaker (1984). The challenge is to establish a difference that is relevant to customers. An organization is also faced with a challenge of how many differences to promote Aaker (1984). This will help an organization to avoid the risks of over-positioning, under-positioning, confused positioning and doubtful positioning.

2.3.3 Focus Strategy

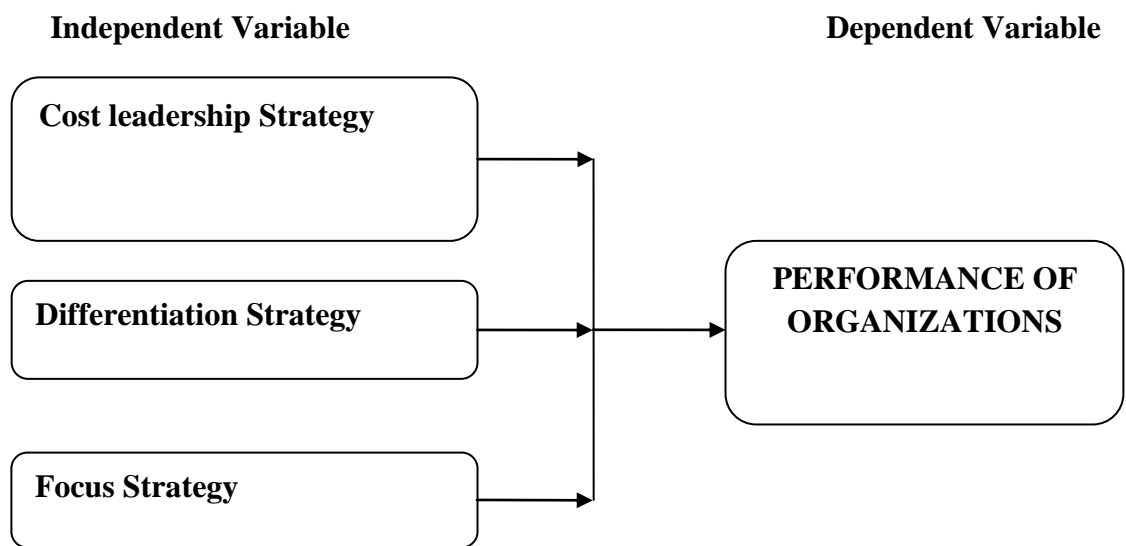
Focus strategy involves targeting a particular market segment. This means serving the segment more efficiently and effectively than the competitors. Focus strategy can be either a cost leadership or differentiation strategy aimed towards a narrow, focused market. Advantages of focus strategy include having power over buyers since the firm may be the only source of supply. Customer loyalty also protects the company from new entrants and substitute products. The firm adopting focus strategy can easily stay close to customers and monitor their needs.

Kombo (1997), in a study on the motor industry notes that firms had to make substantial adjustments in their strategic variables in order to survive in the competitive environment. The firms introduced new techniques in product development, differentiated their products, segmented and targeted their customers more and improved customer service. Karanja (2002) observes in a study of real estate firms in Kenya; that increase in the number of players has led to increased competition. The most popular type of competitive strategy was on the basis of focused differentiation. Firms tended to target certain levels of clients; especially the middle and upper class who resided in certain targeted estates.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

According to Young (2009), conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. In the study, the conceptual framework looked at the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County. The study was guided by the following independent variables; Cost leadership Strategy, Differentiation Strategy and Focus Strategy as illustrated in Figure 2.1

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework



Source, Author (2014)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the methodology that was adopted by the researcher in order to execute the study and realize its objectives. It includes research design, population, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This study was descriptive cross sectional survey. This design focused at a subset of the population at a particular point in time. Cross-sectional research takes a representative sample of its target group and bases its overall findings on the views of those targeted; assuming them to be typical representative of the whole group therefore allowing for generalizations. The method was useful in identifying practices in private schools. Omondi (2006) in a similar study of competitive strategies for the motor industry successfully used this design.

Descriptive research design is concerned with finding out about how, who, when and where of a phenomenon so as to build a profile (mugenda and mugenda, 2003). The research design was preferred because it has the ability to build a profile. Mugenda and mugenda (2003) further describes descriptive research design as a systematic, empirical inquiring into which the researcher does not have a direct control of independent variable as their manifestation has already occurred or because the inherently cannot be manipulated.

3.3 Population of the Study

Population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic. In other words, it is the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The population for this study included all the 34 private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County. The schools studied were categorized as 15 day schools, 8 boarding schools and 11 mixed day /boarding schools. The respondents were the school's Head teachers as shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Population

Schools	Population
Boarding schools	8
Day schools	15
Mixed day and boarding	11
Total	34

Source: District Education Officer Records (Mavoko District).

The study carried out a census since the target population was not large. The population of this study was the 34 private schools principals/head teachers and the study employed the census inquiry where the researcher administered questionnaires to all the 34 private schools thus making it easy for the researcher to access the respondents. The respondents were the school's principals.

3.4 Data Collection

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by the help of a questionnaire with both open-ended and close-ended questions. The closed-ended questions provided more structured responses to facilitate tangible recommendations. The open-ended questions provided additional information to the one that was captured in the close-ended questions.

Data collection procedure specifies the details of the task. It emphasizes the data obtained and its sources. To obtain data from respondents, questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the assistance from the research assistant. To avoid misrepresentation and to minimize errors, the researcher ran a pre-test of the questionnaires before the actual data collection. The questionnaire was carefully designed and pre-tested with a few members of the population and the supervisor for further improvements. This was done in order to enhance its validity and accuracy of data to be collected for the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

After data collection, a thorough check was done to the questionnaires before coding and entering the data in software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics i.e. Percentages, means, standard deviations and frequencies. The information was presented using frequency tables and in prose-form.

In addition, the researcher conducted a regression analysis in order to establish the relationship between competitive strategies and performance of private schools.

Regression analysis was used to predict the value of the dependent variable on the basis of the independent variable. Regression analysis was concerned with the study of the dependence of the dependent variable (performance of private schools), on three independent variables (Cost leadership strategy, Differentiation strategy & Focus strategy). The regression equation was;

$$(Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon)$$

Where;

Y= the dependent variable (performance of private schools)

B_0 = Constant

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Coefficients of determination

X_1 = Cost leadership strategy

X_2 = Differentiation strategy

X_3 = Focus strategy

ε – (Extraneous) Error term

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from the field, its analysis, and finally the interpretation of the findings on the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District, Machakos County. The data is presented in form of tables, charts and graphs.

4.2 Response Rate

The research targeted the 34 private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County. Of the 34 schools, 28 filled in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 82%. This response rates was excellent and representative and conformed to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The research sought to find out the gender distribution of the respondents.

From the finding, 22% of the respondents covered in this study were found to be female while male respondents made up 78% of the respondents. Thus the majority of the respondents were male. The research also sought to find out the age distribution of the respondents as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Age Distribution

Age Group (years)	Frequency
Below 25	4%
26-30yrs	4%
31-35yrs	17%
36-40yrs	21%
41-40yrs	29%
Above 45 yrs	25%

Table 4.1 presents findings on distribution of respondents by age group. From the findings, 4% of the respondents were of age group of below 25 years as was those of age group 26 –30 years, 17% were of age group 31-35yrs, 36-40 years was represented by 21% while the age group 41-45 years constituted the majority (29%). The respondents above 45 years were 25%.

The study further sought to establish the number of years that the respondents had been working in private schools in Mavoko District as shown in figure 4.1

Figure 4.1 Number of years working in private schools in Mavoko

District

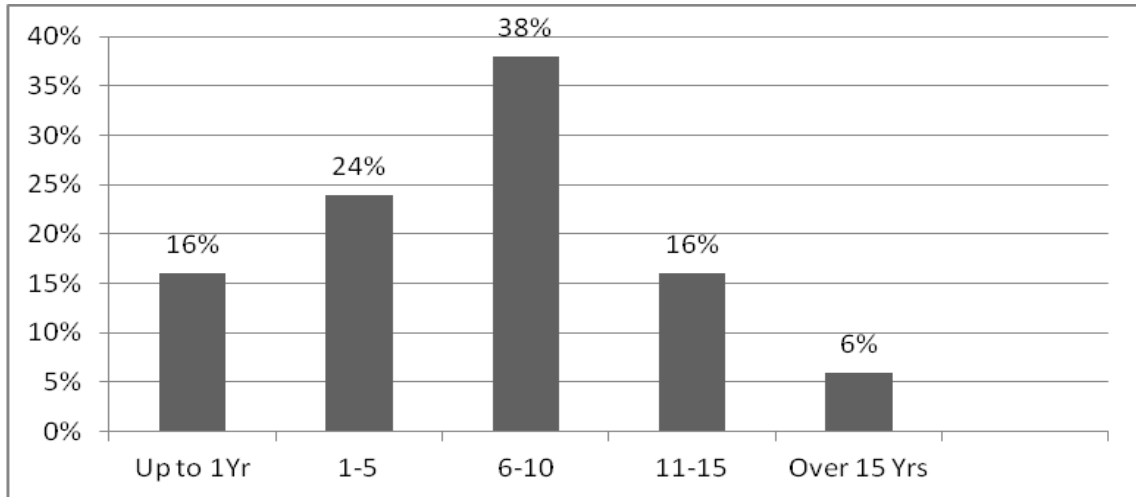


Figure 4.1 presents findings on the number of years that the respondents had been working in private schools in Mavoko District. From the findings, 16% of the respondents had been in private schools in Mavoko District for up to 1 year, 24% had been working in private schools in Mavoko District for between 1-5 years, 38% had been working in private schools in Mavoko District for between 6-10 years, 16% had been working in private schools in Mavoko District for between 11-15 years while only 6% had been working in private schools in Mavoko District for over 15 years,

The study further sought to establish the highest level of education attained by the respondents as shown in Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 Highest Education Level

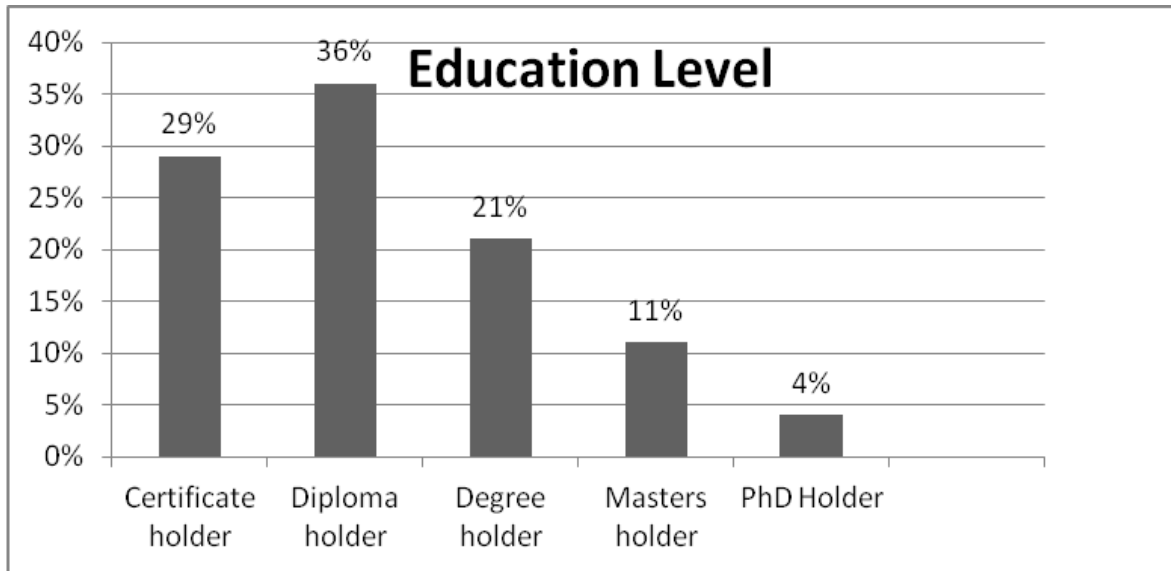
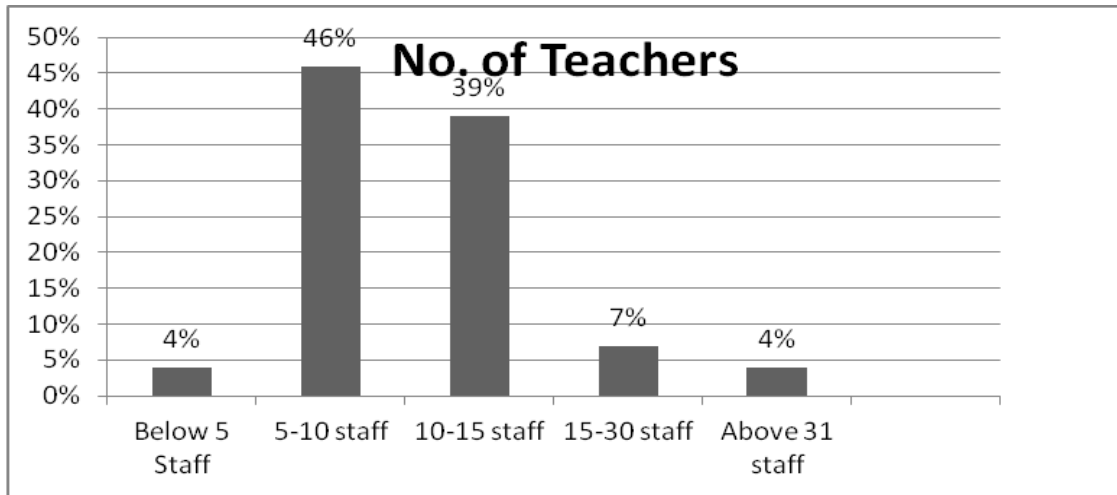


Figure 4.2 presents findings on distribution of respondents by the highest level of education attained. From the findings, majority (36%) of the respondents had diploma followed by 29% who were certificate holders. 21% of the respondents were Degree holders Level of Education, 11% of the respondents had masters while 4% of the respondents had PhD Holders.

The study further sought to establish the number of teachers there were in various schools as shown in Figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 Numbers of Teachers

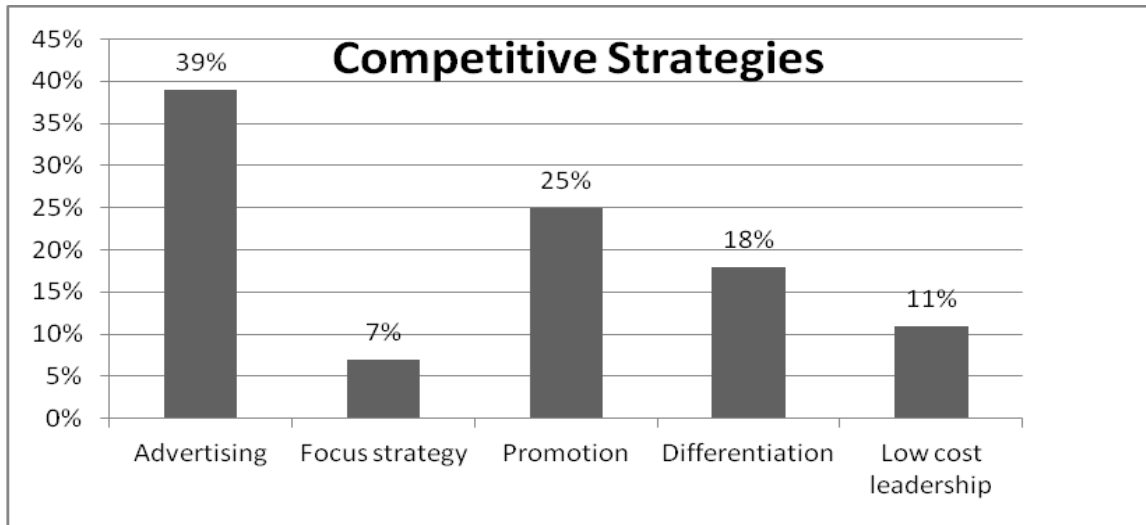


From the findings, majority (46%) of the schools had between 5-10 staff, 39% of the schools had between 10-15 staff, 7% of the schools had between 15-30 staff, 4% of the schools had below 5 staff while another 4% of the schools had below 5 staff while another 4% of the schools had above 31 staff.

4.4 Competitive strategies implemented by the schools

The study further sought to establish the competitive strategies that the schools implement in order to improve the performance as shown in Figure 4.4

Figure 4.4 Competitive strategies implemented by the schools



The findings on figure 4.6 shows that majority (39%) of the schools used advertising as a competitive strategy order to improve the performance, 25% of the schools used promotion as a competitive strategy, 18% of the schools used differentiation as a competitive strategy, 11% of the schools used low cost leadership as a competitive strategy while 7% of the schools used Focus Strategy as a competitive strategy order to improve the performance.

4.5 Influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools

The study further sought to establish the extent to which competitive strategies influenced performance of private schools in Mavoko District. The results are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools

	Frequency	Percent
To a very great extent	9	32%
To a great extent	12	43%
To a moderate extent	4	14%
To a little extent	2	7%
To no extent	1	4%
Total	28	100%

From the findings, majority (43%) of the respondents indicated that competitive strategies influence performance of private schools to a great extent, 32% of the respondents indicated that competitive strategies influence performance of private schools to a very great extent, 14% of the respondents indicated that competitive strategies influence performance of private schools to a moderate extent, 7% of the respondents indicated that competitive strategies influence performance of private schools to a little extent while 4% of the respondents indicated that competitive strategies influence performance of private school to no extent.

4.6 Competitive Strategies

According to Porter (1985), Competitive Strategies refers to a situation where a firm is able to sustain its profits over its rivals and exceeds the average for its industry. Achieving a sustainable business strategy is the goal of any business. By understanding

both the markets and customers, a business entity gains competitive advantage over its competitors. A well-executed competitive strategy will enable a firm to add value for its customers and record superior profits for its shareholders.

4.6.1 Cost leadership strategy

The study sought to find out whether cost leadership strategy affected performance of private schools in Mavoko District. The findings are illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Cost Leadership Strategy on Performance of Private School

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	17	61%
No	11	39%
Total	28	100%

The findings show that 61% of the respondents agreed that cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools while 39% did not agree that cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools.

The study further sought to establish the extent to which cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District as shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.4 Extent to which cost leadership strategy affects performance

Statements	Mean	Std. dev.
cost leadership aid in enhancement of service quality	3.254	1.0541
cost leadership leads increased productivity, innovative ability and activity	4.846	1.0948
cost leadership is important in building competitive capacity and position in the market	2.509	0.856
cost leadership enhances communication and knowledge sharing	3.658	1.0072
cost leadership leads to improved transparency and retention of staff	4.861	0.9081

From the data findings, the respondents agreed to moderate extent that cost leadership aid in enhancement of service quality as shown by mean of 3.254. On whether cost leadership leads increased productivity, innovative ability and activity the respondents agreed to very great extent as shown by mean of 4.846. The respondents agreed to a little extent that cost leadership is important in building competitive capacity and position in the market as shown by mean of 2.509. Asked whether cost leadership enhances communication and knowledge sharing; the respondents agreed to a great extent as shown by mean of 3.658 and finally the respondents disagreed to a very great extent that cost leadership leads to improved transparency and retention of staff as shown by a mean of 4.861

4.6.2 Differentiation strategy

The study sought to find out whether differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District. From the data findings majority (68%) of the respondents agreed that differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools while 32% of the respondents disagreed.

The study further sought to establish the extent to which differentiation strategy influence performance of private schools in Mavoko District. The results are as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Extend to Which Differentiation Strategy Influences Performance

Rating	Frequency
To a very great extend	16%
To a great extend	46%
To a moderate extend	28%
To a little extend	5%
To no extend	5%

From the findings, majority (43%) of the respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private schools to a great extent, 25% of the respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private schools to a moderate extent, 14%) of the respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private school to a very great extent, 43%) of the

respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private school to a great extent, 4% of the respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private schools to a little extent as well as to no extent.

The study sought to establish the respondents rating on various statements on how differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District. The findings were presented in the Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 How differentiation strategy affects performance

Statements	Mean	Std. dev.
Providing teachers and students with the information they need on time	3.961	1.051
Open and flexible learning environment that promote schools performance.	3.246	0.637
More interaction between teachers and students promotes schools performance.	4.113	0.983
Provision of superior education service	3.621	1.007
Offering additional subjects not offered by competitors	3.238	1.043
Use of latest technology in the library	2.439	1.374
Regular surveys of student needs	4.513	1.109

From the data findings, the respondents strongly agreed on the statement that providing teachers and students with the information they need on time as shown by mean of 3.934. On whether open and flexible learning environment promotes schools performance; the respondents agreed as shown by mean of 3.246. On whether more interaction between teachers and students promotes school performance; the respondents strongly agreed as shown by mean of 4.113. The respondents strongly agreed that Provision of superior education service promotes school performance as shown by mean of 3.621. From the data findings, the respondents agreed on the statement that offering additional subjects not offered by competitors promotes school performance as shown by mean of 3.238. The respondents were neutral on the statement that; use of latest technology in the library promotes school performance as shown by mean of 2.439. Finally on whether regular surveys of student needs promote school performance; the respondents strongly agreed as shown by mean of 4.513.

The study also sought to establish how differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District as shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 How differentiation strategy affects performance

	Frequency	Percent
Reduced customer complains	25	89%
Improved service delivery	28	100%
Reduced student absenteeism	22	79%

From the findings 89% of the respondents indicated that there was reduced customer complains, all (100%) the respondents indicated that there was improved service

delivery, 79% of the respondents indicated that there was reduced student absenteeism all as a result of differentiation strategy.

4.6.3 Focus strategy

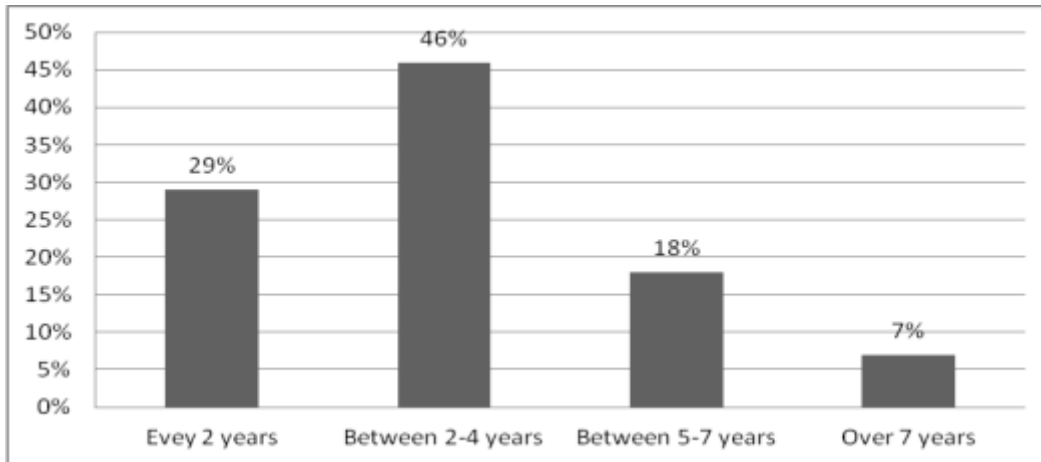
The study sought to find out whether focus strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District.

From the data findings; majority (75%) of the respondents agreed that focus strategy affects performance of private schools while 25% of the respondents disagreed that focus strategy affects performance of private schools

The study also sought to find out whether the schools practiced focus strategy as a competitive strategic plan. From the data findings; majority (82%) of the respondents indicated that their schools practiced focus strategy as competitive strategic plan while 18% of the respondents indicated that their schools did not practiced focus strategy as a competitive strategic plan.

The study also sought to find out how often the focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done as shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Focus Strategies as Competitive Strategic Plan Review



From the data findings 29% of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done after every 2 years, 46% of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done between 2-4 years, 18% of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done between 5-7 years while as 7% of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done after over 7 years.

4.7 Regression Analysis

The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis so as to determine the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District of Machakos County. The researcher applied the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study as shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Model Summary and ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.897	0.806	0.233	0.2764

Model		Sum of Squares	of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.342	5	.254	53.1233	.0000
	Residual	99.970	29	1.244		
	Total	109.685	34			

The regression analysis model shows the relationship between the dependent variable which is performance of private schools and independent variables which are cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy. The coefficient of determination (R^2) and correlation coefficient (R) shows the degree of association between dependent variable which is performance of private schools and the independent variables. The results of the regression indicate that $R^2=.806$ and $R= .897$ which is an indication that there is a strong linear relationship between independent variables (cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy) and the dependent variable (competitive strategies on performance of private schools)

a. Predictors: cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy

b. performance of private schools

The significance value is .0000 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significant in predicting cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 7.9. Since F calculated is greater than the F critical (value = 53.1233), the overall model was statistically significant.

Coefficient of determination

The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the relationship between Y and the three variables. The results were as shown in Table 4.9

Table 4.9 Coefficient of determination

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.976	1.384		0.978	0.003
Product development strategy	0.877	0.159	0.897	0.997	0.000
Pricing strategy	0.588	0.085	0.455	0.707	0.005
Promotional strategy	0.705	0.145	0.326	0.769	0.002

As per the SPSS generated in table 4.9, the equation ($Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$) becomes:

$$Y = 2.976 + 0.897X_1 + 0.455X_2 + 0.326X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (performance of private schools), X_1 is the cost leadership strategy, X_2 is differentiation strategy variable and X_3 is focus strategy variable.

According to the regression equation established, taking all factors into account (cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy) and the constant to be zero, performance of private schools will be 2.976. The data findings analyzed also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in cost leadership strategy influences will lead to a 87.7% increase in performance of private schools; a unit increase in differentiation strategy variable will lead to a 58.8% increase in performance of private schools, and a unit increase in focus strategy variable will lead to a 0.705 increase in performance of private schools. This concludes that cost leadership strategy contributes more to the performance of private schools followed by Promotional strategy and finally focuses strategy. At 5% level of significance and 95% level of confidence, cost leadership strategy had a 0.000 level of significance; differentiation strategy influences showed a 0.005 level of significant and focus strategy showed a 0.002 level of significant; hence the most significant factor is cost leadership strategy.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings from the study, gives conclusion and recommendation of the study with reference to the topic of the study that was to find out the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private school in Mavoko District of Machakos County.

5.2 Summary

The study shows that 61% of the respondents agreed that cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools while 39% did not agree that cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools. From the data findings, the respondents agree to moderate extent that cost leadership aid in enhancement of service quality as shown by a higher mean score on the likert scale. On whether cost leadership leads increased productivity, innovative ability and activity the respondents agree to a very great extent as shown by a higher mean on the likert scale applied in the study. The respondents agreed to a little extent that cost leadership is important in building competitive capacity and position in the market as shown by mean of 2.509. Asked whether cost leadership enhances communication and knowledge sharing; the respondents agree to a great extent as shown by mean of 3.658 and finally the respondents disagree to a very great extent that cost leadership leads to improved transparency and retention of staff shown by mean of 4.861

From the data findings, majority of the respondents agreed that differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools and forty three percent of the respondents indicated that differentiation strategy influence performance of private schools to a great extent. From the data findings, the respondents strongly agreed on the statement that providing teachers and students with the information they needed on time as shown by a high mean on the likert scale. On if Open and flexible learning environment promotes school performance, the respondents agreed as shown by a higher mean on the likert scale. On whether more interaction between teachers and students promotes school performance; the respondents strongly agreed as shown by a higher mean on the likert scale. The respondents strongly agreed that Provision of superior education service promotes school performance as shown by mean of 3.621. From the data findings, the respondents agreed on the statement that; offering additional subjects not offered by competitors promotes school performance as shown by a high mean on the likert scale.

The respondents were neutral on the statement that use of latest technology in the library promotes school performance as shown by mean of 2.439. Finally on whether regular surveys of student needs promote school performance; the respondents strongly agreed as shown by mean of 4.513. From the findings, 89% of the respondents indicated that there was reduced customer complains, all (100%) the respondents indicated that there was improved service delivery, 79% of the respondents indicated that there was Reduced student absenteeism; all as a result of differentiation strategy.

From the data findings majority of the respondents agreed that focus strategy affects performance of private schools while twenty five percent of the respondents disagreed that focus strategy affects performance of private schools. Majority of the respondents

indicated that their schools practiced focus strategy as competitive strategic plan while eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that their schools did not practiced focus strategy as competitive strategic plan. Twenty nine percent of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done after every two years, forty six percent of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done between two to four years , eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done between five to seven years while as twenty nine percent of the respondents indicated that focus strategy as competitive strategic plan review is done after over seven years.

According to the regression equation established, taking all factors into account (cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy and focus strategy) constant at zero, performance of private schools will be 2.976 times better .The data findings analyzed also show that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in cost leadership strategy influences will lead to over eighty seven percent increase in performance of private schools; a unit increase in differentiation strategy variable will lead to a fifty eight percent increase in performance of private schools, and a unit increase in focus strategy variable will lead to a 0.705 increase in performance of private schools. This concludes that cost leadership strategy contributes more to the performance of private schools followed by Promotional strategy and finally focuses strategy.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes cost leadership strategy if adopted in schools affects their performance. The study also concludes that the cost leadership strategy leads to increased productivity, innovative ability and activity since it aids in enhancement of service

quality. Finally on cost leadership the study concludes that cost leadership leads to improved transparency and retention of staff to very great extent.

The study concluded that the differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools. The study also concludes that interaction between teachers and students as well as open and flexible learning environment and provision of superior education service promotes school performance. The study further concludes that there was improved service delivery, reduced customer complains and that there was reduced student absenteeism all as a result of differentiation strategy.

The study concludes that the focus strategy affects performance of private schools and that most schools practiced focus strategy as competitive strategic plan.

5.4 Recommendations

The study on the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District Machakos County has brought out the dynamics of competition in the education sector. The researcher makes the following recommendations.

5.4.1 Recommendations with Policy Implications

Foremost, the study shows that private schools appreciate and apply competitive strategies in their operations. The recommendations arising out of this study include examining the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools not only in Mavoko district, Machakos County, but the whole country. The value all the education stakeholders can bring into the performance of private as well as public schools by adopting competitive strategies cannot be underestimated. The benefits of application of competitive strategies by all stakeholders in Mavoko District, Machakos County

should be felt beyond the county. More research should go into finding ways and means of incorporating competitive strategies in education policy formulation within the county and the whole country at large. The study demonstrates how competitive strategies influence performance thus calling for collaboration among government and non-state actors involved in education curriculum development and management. The study recommends that the private schools should adopt competitive strategies in order to enhance performance. This study also recommends that the policy makers should as well enact policies and that regulate and enhance performance of private schools in Kenya.

5.4.2 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study focused on investigating the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District Machakos County. This study therefore recommends that more research needs to be done on the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in the whole country.

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Appendix i: Letter of introduction

Dear Respondent

Ref: Request for Research Data:

I am a student at University of Nairobi carrying out a research study on the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District Machakos County.

Kindly, complete and return the duly completed questionnaire to the Researcher. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated. The information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you in advance

.....

(Researcher)

Appendix ii: Questionnaire to Respondents

The main objective of this study is to determine the influence of competitive strategies on performance of private schools in Mavoko District, Machakos County.

Section A: Demographic Information

You are requested to fill out your personal information in the spaces below. Please tick only one response.

1. Name of the school.....

2. Indicate your gender

Male []

Female []

3. What is your age?

Below 25 yrs []

25- 30 yrs []

31-35 yrs []

36- 40 yrs []

41-45 yrs []

Above 45 yrs []

4. Number of years working in private schools in Mavoko District

Up to 1 year []

1-5 years []

6-10 years []

11-15 years []

Over 15 years []

5. Level of Education

Certificate holder []

Diploma holder []

Degree holder []

Masters holder []

PhD Holder []

6. How many teachers are there in your school?

Below 5 staff [] 5-10 staff []

10-15 staff [] 15-30 staff []

Above 31 staff []

6. What competitive strategies does the school implement in order to improve the performance?

Promotion [] Advertising []

Low cost leadership [] Differentiation []

Focus Strategy [] any other, please specify_____

7. To what extent do competitive strategies influence performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

To a very great extent []

To a great extent []

To a moderate extent []

To a little extent []

To no extent []

Section B: Competitive Strategies

Cost leadership strategy

8. Does cost leadership strategy affect performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

Yes [] No []

9. If yes, please indicate how cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on how cost leadership strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1=no extent, 2= little extent, 3=moderate extent, 4=great extent and 5=very great extent.

	1	2	3	4	5
cost leadership aid in enhancement of service quality					
cost leadership leads increased productivity, innovative ability and activity					
cost leadership is important in building competitive capacity					

and position in the market					
cost leadership enhances communication and knowledge sharing					
cost leadership leads to improved transparency and retention of staff					

Differentiation strategy

11. Does differentiation strategy affect performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

Yes [] No []

12. If yes in (12) above indicate the extent to which differentiation strategy affect performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

Very great extent []

Great extent []

Moderate extent []

Low extent []

Not at all []

13. Below are various statements on how differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District? On a scale of 1-5 where 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree and 5= strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	1	2	3	4	5
Providing teachers and students with the information they need on time					
Open and flexible learning environment that promote school performance.					
More interaction between teachers and students promotes school performance.					
Provision of superior education service					
Offering additional subjects not offered by competitors					
Use of latest technology in the library					
Regular surveys of student needs					

14. In what ways does differentiation strategy affects performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

Reduced customer complains []

Improved service delivery []

Reduced student absenteeism []

Other..... []

Focus strategy

15. Does focus strategy affect performance of private schools in Mavoko District?

Yes [] No []

16. Does the school practice focus strategy as competitive strategic plan?

Yes [] No []

17. If yes, please indicate the period of the current focus strategy as competitive strategic plan?

18. How often is the focus strategy as competitive strategic plan Review done?

Every 2 years [] between 2-4 years []

Between 5-7 years [] over 7 years []

19. Who formulates the school's focus strategy as competitive strategic

plan? _____