COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES USED BY STANDARD GROUP LTD TO SUSTAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE MEDIA INDUSTRY

BY

CHARLES BARSOREI CHERONO

A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

NOVEMBER, 2014

DECLARATION

I Charles Barsorei Cherono, hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, university, or institution of learning or research, for any academic award.

Signature…………………………….. Date……………………

CHARLES BARSOREI CHERONO

Reg. No. D61/P/7339/2005

SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

Signature……………………………… Date………………………

Dr. JAMES GATHUNGU

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I wish to first and foremost thank my Almighty God for giving me the strength to go through this program. Undertaking the program as a working student and a parent has been a challenge which without His assistance and guidance, would have been difficult to overcome. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Dr. James Gathungu who tirelessly devoted a lot of his time to supervise the writing of this project. Through his expert guidance, encouragement and constructive critisms, I was able to complete this project.

My gratitude also goes to the University of Nairobi administration and staff for their support. I wish to sincerely thank the management of Standard Group ltd for allowing me to interview the senior management team and collect data for my study. Lastly, I thank my family, friends, lecturers and work colleagues especially Mr Peter Gichuhi and James Muiruri who gave me the moral support and information that made this research project a success.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my parents and my lower primary teacher Mrs. Chemobo for the effort they put to lay a firm foundation of my education and teaching me to be resilient in life hence to achieve my endeavors.

I also dedicate this project to my wife Jane, daughter Keziah Jemutai and son Ryan Bii for their moral support and encouragement. God gave you the patience during my study for enduring my absence as I was always busy.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the competitive strategies that Standard Group ltd has used to sustain its competitive advantage in the media industry in Kenya. Strategy is a set of decision making rules for guidance of organizational behaviour. A company is said to have a competitive advantage whenever it has an edge over rivals in attracting customers and defending against competitive forces. A sustainable competitive advantage is the persistence an organization applies despite efforts by competitors to copy or overtake it. The aim of every organization in the market is to outsmart its competitors. The objective of the study was to establish the competitive strategies used by Standard Group ltd to sustain its competitive advantage in the media industry in Kenya. Standard Group ltd has been in operation since 1902 and it remains one of the leading media houses in Kenya. It has built a strong brand name and continues to be a leading and dominant media house in Kenya. It was therefore of interest to study and find out the strategies it uses to remain a top media house throughout the years. This would therefore be useful to scholars and policy makers. The study was conducted using a case study design to gain in-depth knowledge. Primary data was collected using semi-structured interview guide administered through one to one interview. Secondary data was used to enrich understanding of the sustainable competitive strategies. Data collected was then analyzed using conceptual content analysis as presented through tables and figures. The respondents were senior management staff of Standard Group ltd. The research findings reveal that Standard Group has a clear drive for competitive strategies hence to achieve a competitive advantage in the market. To achieve the goal of competitive advantage, Standard Group has reconfigured its value chain by having advanced technology in its production processes and a good distribution network. In conclusion, with the dynamic business environment; organizations should undertake to align their strategies to the ever changing demands of the external environment. All managerial tasks such as resource allocation and organizational design should be directed at building the firm's market position. Most of the recommendations included in this report are not specifically external prescriptive as some were proposed by the respondents in the course of the interview. The company needs to address its inefficiencies and focus on product developments to suit customer needs and wants. The greatest challenge by Standard Group is the increased competition within the Industry and the cost of newsprint which is imported and affected by the currency exchange rates.

Key words: Strategy, Competitive strategies, Competitive advantage and Value chain.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Competition in the market place has increased with companies devising new and improved competitive strategies so as to protect their challenged market. The need for firms to remain competitive and successful in the long term has created the concept of competitive strategies for use by firms. These firms adopt and maintain a particular set of strategies and pursue these strategies so as to create a sustainable competitive advantage in their day to day operations. Thompson and Strickland (1998), observed that competition in the market place is like war where one sustains injuries and casualties, but the best strategy helps one to win the war. All firms operate within an environment and the environmental factors influence a firm's choice of direction and action and ultimately its organizational structure and internal processes. Environment is always dynamic and it continuously presents opportunities and threats to the organization. The environment of an organization is all those conditions and forces that affect its strategic options and determines its competitive situation (Porter, 1985.)

Environmental changes such as increased innovations, competition, globalization, regulations and de-regulations and consumer behaviour have affected many organizations in that, organizations have been forced to enhance their business processes in order to survive in an environment which has become increasingly competitive (Ansoff, 1987). Business environment in today's world is very turbulent. In order to grow and remain competitive in the challenging markets, organizations have come up with ways of surviving by continuous innovations (Pearce & Robinson, 2002). Standard Group limited operates in a very competitive environment and in order to have an edge over its competitors; it has to come up with appropriate strategies that will enable it have a sustainable competitive advantage. This paper analyses competitive advantages for Standard Group ltd and how it achieves its sustainability. A systematic way of examining all the activities a firm performs and how they interact is necessary for analyzing the sources of competitive advantage. The basic tool for doing this is the value chain.

1.1.1 Concept of Strategy

The concept of strategy is believed to have originated from the ancient Greeks. The word strategy comes from the Greek word ‘strategos’ meaning to plan the destruction of ones enemies through the effective use of resources (Burnes, 1999). Chandler (1962), views the emergence of strategy in civilian organization life to have resulted from awareness of opportunities and needs created by changing population, income and technology to employ existing or expanding resources more profitably. Ansoff and McDonnel (1990) defined strategy as, a set of decision-making rules for guidance of organizational behavior. The implication of this view is that an organization is supposed to interact with the environment according to some predetermined pattern.

According to Pearson and Robinson (1997), strategy is defined as large scale future oriented plans for interacting with competitive environment to achieve company objectives. It is the company’s “game plan”. A strategy reflects company’s awareness of why, where and how it should compete and for what purpose. Thompson and Strickland (1998), defined strategy as a pattern of organizational moves and managerial approaches used to achieve organizational objectives and pursue organizational mission.

Mintzberg (1987), gives perhaps the most inclusive view. He argued that we could not afford to rely on a single definition of strategy. He proposed five definitions of strategy. To him, strategy can be seen as a plan, a ploy, a pattern, a position and a perspective. As a plan, strategy specifies a consciously intended course of action of an organization. Here, strategy is designed well in advance of action and it is developed purposefully. As a ploy, strategy is seen as a maneuver intended to outwit a competitor. As a pattern, strategy is seen as emerging in a stream of actions. Here, strategy is seen as a consistency in behavior. As a position, strategy is a means of locating the organization in its environment. Lastly, as a perspective, strategy consists of a position and an ingrained way of perceiving the world. It gives a company an identity or personality.

According to Johnson and Scholes (1999), the concept of strategy is a commercial logic of a business that defines why a firm can have a competitive advantage. The crafting of a strategy represents a managerial commitment to pursue a particular set of actions in growing the business, attracting and pleasing customers, competing successfully, conducting operations, and improving the company's financial and market performance. What makes a competitive advantage sustainable as opposed to temporary are actions and elements in the strategy that cause an attractive number of buyers to have a lasting preference for a company's products or services as compared to the offerings of competitors (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2007).

1.1.2 Sustainable Competitive Advantage

According to Thompson and Strickland (1998), a company has a competitive advantage whenever it has an edge over rivals in attracting customers and defending against competitive forces. According to Barney and Hesterly (2008), a firm has a competitive advantage when it creates more economic value than its rivals. A firm is said to have a competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential player (Barney, 1991). To gain competitive advantage, a business strategy of a firm manipulates the various resources over which it has direct control and these resources have the ability to generate competitive advantage (Pearce & Robinson, 1997). According to Thompson and Strickland (1998), the routes to competitive advantage include; developing a product that becomes the industry standard, manufacturing the best made product on the market, developing superior customer service, achieving lower costs than rivals, having a more convenient geographic location, developing proprietary technology, incorporating features and styling with more buyer appeal, having the capability to bring new products to market faster than rivals, having greater technological expertise than rivals, developing unique competencies in customized mass production techniques, doing a better job of supply chain management than rivals, building a better known brand name and reputation and providing buyers more value for the money (a combination of good quality, good service and acceptable price).

A sustainable competitive advantage is the persistence the firm applies despite efforts by competitors or potential entrants to copy or overtake it. According to Barney (1991), a firm is said to have a sustainable competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy. Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) is what allows a business or corporation to maintain and improve its competitive position in a market against competitors in the long term (Clegg, Carter, Kornberger & Swheitzer, 2011). Thompson and Strickland (1998) noted that for any business strategy to be capable of sustained success, it must be grounded in competitive advantage. The bigger and more sustainable the competitive advantage, the better the company's prospects for winning in the market place and earning superior long- term profits relative to its rivals.(Thompson, et al., 2007).

Competitive strategies are said to be the heart of corporate success through which a firm attains sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Porter (1980), observed that the essence of formulating competitive strategy is to relate on organization to its environment. Since organizations are said to be environment dependent, they must scan the environment in order to spot trends and conditions that could affect the industry and adapt to them. Aosa, E. (1992), observed that the actions of competitors have a direct influence on a firm's strategy. He further states that strategy will only make sense if the market to which it relates is known. According to Newman, Logan and Hegarty (1989), strategy reflects the choice of key services that the organization will perform and the primary basis for distinctiveness in creating and developing such services. This leads to creation of sustainable competitive advantage by a firm in its area of business.

1.1.3 Media Industry in Kenya

An industry is a category of business. In the case of the media industry, the term refers to the collection of businesses that allows information to be shared. This includes operations such as radio broadcasts, websites, and newspapers. Businesses within the media industry can often be sub-categorized by their mediums. There are newspapers, magazines, and television stations. There are also radio stations, website, and podcasts. Each of these is a unique form of media, although they may all be used to share the same type of information.

Media in Kenya includes more than 90 FM stations, more than 15 TV stations, and an unconfirmed number of print newspapers and magazines. Publications mainly use English as their primary language of communication, with some media houses employing Swahili. Vernacular or community-based languages are commonly used in broadcast media; mostly radio. The media in Kenya is regulated by a statutory body called the Media Council of Kenya. The Media Council of Kenya is an independent national institution established by the Media Act, 2007 as the leading institution in the regulation of media and in the conduct and discipline of journalists.

1.1.4 Standard Group Limited in Kenya

The Standard Group is a classic example of a media house that has lived its dream. Its pioneer product, The Standard, is the oldest newspaper in East Africa and has unrivalled history dating back to the Pre- Independence era. The newspaper's epic journey started in Mombasa in 1902 when an ambitious Indian contractor working on the Kenya – Uganda Railway line, Alibhai Mulla Jevanjee, took a bold step to fill the information void in East and Central Africa. He installed a rudimentary printing press and engaged a British journalist-W.H. Tiller- to help start what was to be the first newspaper in the region. On November15, 1902, the first copy of the African Standard, a single sheet printed on black and white, rolled off the press. It has sustained a bold and focused journey over the decades with a crisp coverage of every historical moment in Kenya and the region.

The paper made its first milestone when the publishers charted a train to relocate the printing press to Nairobi as political and economic interests shifted from Mombasa to Kenya's current capital city some 500 kilometers north. It is the Standard that has provided the most complete record of Kenya's history from the first and second world wars that planted the seed for the fight for freedom, to the Mau Mau days and the push for self-governance to independence, the nascent post –independence days through the regimes of presidents Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel arap Moi and Mwai Kibaki. The Standard covered Kenya's first major international guest in 1905 when Queen Victoria's son – the Duke of Connaught came visiting. The Standard Group comprises, The Standard Newspapers, Game yetu, Nairobian, Radio Maisha, PDS, Standard Digital and the Think Outdoor Services.

1.2 Research Problem

Companies pursue competitive strategies to gain competitive advantage that allows them to outperform their rivals and achieve increased profitability. Competitive strategy if well developed and implemented, leads to sustainable competitive advantage which is considered the heart of corporate success. Developing a competitive strategy is essentially developing a broad formula of how the business is going to compete. Competitive strategy grows out of an understanding of the rules that guide competition. A firm can be said to have a sustainable competitive advantage when its competitive strategies are unique, offer long term benefits, other firms within the industry cannot duplicate(at least in short term) and the identified strategies are continually improved to keep the firm ahead of its competitors (Wernerfelt, 1984). Firms continuously interact with the environment in which they operate. This poses a challenge in trying to keep up with the environment which is highly dynamic, chaotic and turbulent. Organizations that remain successful are those that develop strategies of attaining a competitive advantage over its competitors in the same industry and this competitive advantage attained remains sustainable in the long run. They develop strategies that match their activities to the environment and put into consideration the concept of environmental dependence. The concept of sustainable competitive advantage therefore is what puts organizations ahead in their industries.

Standard Group ltd is one of the leading Media houses in Kenya, a company that has grown from a small outfit in the 1900s to a large company in the recent past. It has over the years invested heavily in production and conveying of news to the public. They have spent valuable time and money to come up with differentiated products and services but continue to experience numerous challenges in trying to recoup their investments by remaining profitable in the market. Globalization, technological advancement and more enlightened customers greatly impact the Media industry. Despite all these challenges, Standard Group limited has managed to withstand test of times and is still profitably in Kenya.

There exists literature on previous researches on strategies employed in attaining sustainable competitive advantage in other industries and sectors in Kenya but not within the Media industry. Omwansa(2012), focused on strategies applied by Multinational Pharmaceutical Corporations in Kenya to attain sustainable competitive advantage while Musyoka(2011), focused on Strategies adopted by Kenol Kobil ltd in developing sustainable competitive advantage. Ali(2012), looked at developing sustainable competitive advantage by Barclays Bank of Kenya ltd. Nzioka(2012), looked at Strategies used by Standard Chartered Bank in building a sustainable competitive advantage in international markets. Other researchers include Mungai(2012), who looked at Strategies adopted by the University of Nairobi to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and Nduta(2012), looked at Strategies for developing sustainable competitive advantage at Siginon Freight ltd, Kenya.

Although all the studies pointed out those local firms apply competitive strategies in developing sustainable competitive advantage in their environments coupled with challenges which are unique and sector specific, the same cannot be generalized to represent other firms that have not been studied. The uniqueness of specific firms may necessitate a separate study. Various studies have been done to determine the competitive strategies and challenges facing Kenyan firms but these have not been conclusive enough to warrant generalization (Ngotha, 2008).None of the past research has been able to address the competitive strategies used by Standard Group ltd to sustain its competitive advantage. The researcher seeks to understand how Standard Group ltd has distinguished itself to remain reputable and successful ahead of its competitors since its inception in 1902. What competitive strategies does Standard Group ltd use to sustain its competitive advantage in the Kenyan Media industry?

1.3 Research Objectives

The research objective is to determine the competitive strategies used by Standard Group Ltd to sustain its competitive advantage in the media industry.

1.4 Value of the Study

The Study will contribute knowledge to existing literature, which will be a useful reference point to Scholars, Academicians and Researchers. It will also help identify areas for future research study. The study will bridge the research gap that existed and avail secondary data for future primary research.

Managers of Standard Group ltd will be able to view the organization's Sustainable Competitive Advantages in a broad perspective. This will help them to learn and assess their strategies and look for more opportunities to improve their competitive advantage. It will help them to apply new strategies in order to build a sustainable competitive advantage. Customers will also benefit from high quality of products and services. The study will also be of importance to investors, collaborating agencies and the public in general in better understanding the various means used by Standard Group ltd to remain competitive.

Investors and other collaborating agencies will be able to make informed decisions on whether to partner with or invest in the company to ensure a sustained relationship and value for their money. The results may also be useful to policy makers in the media industry as they can be used to understand the dynamics in the media industry and come up with measures of improving the sector for competitiveness. The practitioners already in the industry may use the results to enhance their companies' activities in the provision of goods and services to customers.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature review from previous studies that have been carried out on sustaining competitive advantage. It reviews existing literature in relation to the competitive strategies and sustainable competitive advantage of firms operating in their surrounding environment with a view of building a body of knowledge relevant to this research work. It analyzes various views raised by different authors in relation to the objective of the study.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

A theory can be defined as a set of interrelated concepts which structure a systematic view of phenomena for the purpose of explaining or predicting that phenomena. It is like a blueprint and a guide for modeling a structure. A blueprint depicts the elements of a structure and the relation of each element to the other just as the theory depicts the concepts which compose it and the relation of concepts with each other.

China and Kramer (1999), define a theory as an expression of knowledge, a creative and rigorous structuring of ideas that project a tentative, purposeful and systematic view of phenomena. A theoretical framework provides a particular perspective or lens through which to examine a topic. It supports the proposed study by presenting known relationships among variables and setting limits or boundaries for the study. This study was informed by Resource Based view Theory.

2.2.1 Resource Based Theory

The Resource Based view is a management tool used to assess the available amount of business strategic assets. It is based on the idea that the effective and efficient application of all useful resources that the company can master determine its competitive advantage (Powell, 2001).The Resource Based theory views the firm as a bundle of resources which can be utilized to achieve a position of advantage over other competing firms in the industry. It is these resources and the way that they are combined, which make firms different from one another. A firm's resources includes all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information and knowledge controlled by the firm that enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Draft, 1983).

It is important for a firm to know the relevant resources that improve its efficiency and effectiveness (Powell, 2001). This view is considered as taking an inside-out approach while analyzing the firm and means that the starting point of the analysis is the internal environment of the organization. According to Barney (2001), the theory sees the firm as a collection of assets, or capabilities which are intangible. The success of corporations is based on their capabilities that are distinctive. It recognizes that companies with distinctive capabilities have attributes which others cannot replicate even after realizing the benefits they offered to the company which originally possessed them. Business strategy involves identifying a firm's capabilities, putting together a collection of complimentary assets and capabilities and maximizing and defending the economic rents which result.

Wernefelt (1984) argued that highly efficient resources form a resource position barrier that is effective because of the lower expected returns on the same type of resources if acquired by a competitor. Barney (2001) noted that the resource based view of the firm explains its ability to deliver sustainable competitive advantage when resources are managed such that their outcomes cannot be imitated by competitors, which ultimately creates a competitive barrier. A firm's sustainable competitive advantage can therefore be reached by virtue of unique resources being rare, valuable, inimitable, non-tradable and non-substitutable. The resource-based view stipulates that in strategic management, the fundamental sources and drivers to firms' competitive advantage and superior performance are mainly associated with the attributes of their resources and capabilities which are valuable and costly to copy. Barney (1991), examines the link between firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. Four empirical indicators of the potential of firm resources to generate sustained competitive advantage can be value, rareness, inimitability and non-substitutability.

The Resource Based View theory operates on two assumptions. First, resources are assumed to be heterogeneously distributed among firms. This allows the existence of differences in the form of resource endowments. Second, resources are assumed to be imperfectly mobile. This condition allows these differences to persist over time. Resources which are simultaneously valuable and rare can generate competitive advantage (Powell, 2001). For resources to qualify as a basis for an effective strategy, Thompson et al (2007) observed that, it must pass a number of external market tests of its value: inimitability, durability, sustainability and superiority. If a resource is inimitable, then any profit stream it generates is more likely to be sustainable. The longer lasting a resource is, the more reliable it will be as a sustainable competitive advantage.

2.3 Value chain

Value chain is the many discrete activities a firm performs in designing, producing, marketing, delivering and supporting its products. All the various activities that a company performs internally combine to form value chain- so called because the underlying intent of a company's activities is to do things that ultimately create value for the buyers (Thompson et al, 2007). A firm's value chain is embedded in a larger stream of activities (value system) that create and deliver the purchased inputs used in a firm's chain. Gaining and sustaining competitive advantage depends on understanding not only a firm's value chain but also how the firm fits in the overall system. Differences among competitor value chains are a key source of competitive advantage (Porter, 1985).

Every firm's value chain is composed of nine generic categories of activities which are linked together in characteristic ways. These activities are: firm's infrastructure, human resources management, technology development, procurement, inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales and service (Porter, 1985). The value chains of firms in an industry differ; reflecting their histories, strategies and success at implementation. Value chain displays total value and consists of value activities and margin. Margin is the difference between total value and the collective cost of performing the value activities. An analysis of the value chain rather than value added is the appropriate way to examine competitive advantage. The firm's value chain is divided into either primary or support activities (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2007).

Thompson et al. (2007) defined primary activities as those activities involved in the physical creation of the product and its sale and transfer to the buyer as well as after sales assistance. According to Porter (1985), there are five generic categories of primary activities involved in competing in any industry. Inbound logistics: Activities associated with receiving, storing and disseminating inputs to the product such as material handling, warehousing, inventory control, vehicle scheduling and returns to suppliers. Operations: Activities associated with transforming inputs into the final product form such as machining, packaging, assembly, equipment maintenance, testing, printing and facility operations. Outbound logistics: Activities associated with collecting, storing and physically distributing the product to buyers such as finished goods warehousing, material handling, delivery vehicle operation, order processing and scheduling. Marketing and sales: Activities associated with providing a means by which buyers can purchase the product and inducing them to do so such as advertising, promotion, sale force, quoting, channel selection, channel relations and pricing. Service: Activities associated with providing service to enhance or maintain the value of the product such as installation, repair, training, parts supply and product adjustments.

According to Porter (1985), support activities involved in competing in any industry can be divided into four generic categories. Procurement: Refers to the function of purchasing inputs used in the firm's value chain. Technology development: Every value activity embodies technology be it knowhow, procedures or technologies embodied in process equipment. Human resource management: It consists of activities involved in recruiting, training, development and compensation of all types of personnel. It supports both individual primary and support activities and entire value chain. Firm infrastructure:

consists of a number of activities including general management, planning, finance, accounting, legal, government affairs and quality management.

2.4 Cost advantage

A firm has a cost advantage if its accumulative cost of performing all value activities is lower than competitors' (Porter, 1985). According to Barney and Hesterly (2008), a firm that chooses a cost leadership business strategy focuses on gaining advantage by reducing its costs to below those of all its competitors. According to Thompson and Strickland (1998), cost leadership strategy aims at giving customers more value for the money. It combines a strategic emphasis on low cost with a strategic emphasis on more than minimally acceptable quality, service, features and performance.

Cost advantage leads to superior performance if the firm provides an acceptable level of value to the buyer so that its cost advantage is not nullified by the need to charge a lower price than competitors (Porter, 1985). Striving to be the industry's overall low cost provider is a powerful competitive approach in markets where many buyers are price sensitive. The aim is to operate the business in a highly cost effective manner and open up a sustainable cost advantage over rivals. To achieve a cost advantage, a firm's cumulative costs across its value chain must be lower than competitors' cumulative costs (Thompson & Strickland, 1998).

2.4.1 Value chain and cost analysis

The behaviour of a firm's costs and its relative cost position stem from the value chain activities the firm performs in competing in an industry. Thompson et al, pointed out that a company's primary and support activities identify the major components of the cost structure. Each value activity has its own cost structure and the behaviour of it may be affected by linkages and interrelationships with other activities both within and outside the firm. Cost advantage results if the firm achieves a lower cumulative cost of performing value activities than its competitors.

A firm's cost position results from the cost behaviour of its value activities. Several cost drivers can combine to determine the cost of a given activity. Cost drivers are the structural causes of the cost of an activity and can be more or less under a firm's control. Ten major cost drivers determine the cost behaviour of value activities. These drivers are; economies of scale, learning, pattern of capacity utilization, linkages, interrelationships, integration, timing, discretionary policies, location and institutional factors (Porter, 1985). Value chain analysis and benchmarking can reveal about a firm's cost competitiveness. Examining the costs of a company's own value chain activities and comparing them to rival's indicates who has much of a cost advantage or disadvantage and which cost components are responsible. Such information is vital in strategic actions to eliminate a cost disadvantage or create a cost advantage (Thompson et al., 2007).

2.4.2 Gaining cost advantage

There are two major ways that a firm can gain a cost advantage; control cost drivers and reconfiguring the value chain. Successful cost leaders usually derive their cost advantage from multiple sources within the value chain. Cost leadership requires an examination of every activity in a firm for opportunities to reduce cost and the consistent pursuit of all of them. Cost reduction may or may not erode differentiation and every firm should aggressively pursue cost reduction in activities that do not influence differentiation. Once a firm has identified its value chain and diagnosed the cost drivers of significant value activities, cost advantage grows out of controlling those drivers better than competitors (Porter, 1985). According to Thompson and Strickland (1998), the competitive advantage of a best cost provider comes from matching close rivals on quality-service- features performance and beating them on cost.

According to Porter (1985), reconfigured value chains stems from: a different production process, differences in automation, direct sales instead of indirect sales, a new distribution channel, a new raw material, major differences in forward or backward integration, shifting the location of facilities relative to suppliers and customers, and new advertising media. Reconfiguring the value chain can lead to cost advantage for two reasons; presents the opportunity to fundamentally restructure a firm's cost compared to setting for incremental improvements and by altering the basis of competition in a way that favours a firm's strengths.

2.4.3 Implementation and sustaining cost advantage

The success of cost leadership hinges on a firm's skills in actually implementing it on a day to day basis. A number of factors, including the training and motivation of employees, the firm's culture, the adoption of formal cost reduction programs, a constant pursuit of automation and a strong belief in the learning curve contribute to a firm's ability to achieve cost leadership. Cost advantage will result in above average performance only if the firm can sustain it (Porter, 1985).

Sustainability of cost advantage will be present if the sources of a firm's cost advantage are difficult for competitors to replicate or imitate. Cost advantage is sustainable if there are entry or mobility barriers that prevent competitors from imitating its sources. Sustainability varies for different cost drivers and from one industry to another. Sustainability stems not only from the sources of the cost advantage but also from their number. If cost leadership strategies can be implemented by numerous firms in an industry, or if no firms face a cost disadvantage in imitating a cost leadership strategy, then being a cost leader will not generate a sustained competitive advantage for a firm (Barney & Hesterly, 2008).

2.5 Differentiation strategy

Barney and Hesterly (2008), defined product differentiation as a business strategy whereby firms attempt to gain a competitive advantage by increasing the perceived value of their products or services relative to the perceived value of other firms' products or services. A firm differentiates itself from its competitors if it can be unique at something that is valuable to buyers. To be successful with a differentiation strategy, a company has to study buyers' needs and behavior carefully to learn what they consider important, what they think has value and what they are willing to pay for (Thompson et al., 2007). Differentiation must add value for the customer and thus the strategy should be designed from the customer's perspective rather than the firm's perspective. The added value must be communicated to the customers and they should effectively perceive it; done by creating brand value (Porter, 1985).

Differentiation strategies are an attractive competitive approach when buyer preferences are too diverse to be fully satisfied by a standardized product or when buyer requirements are too diverse to be fully satisfied by sellers with identical capabilities. The essence of a differentiation strategy is to be unique in ways that are valuable to customers and that can be sustained (Thompson & Strickland, 1998).Differentiation strategy is implemented over the product, services, personnel and image.

2.5.1 Differentiation strategy and the value chain

Differentiation leads to superior performance if the price premium achieved exceeds any added costs of being unique. Differentiation grows out of the firm's value chain. Virtually any activity is a potential source of uniqueness. The procurement of raw materials and other inputs can affect the performance of the end product hence differentiation. Other successful differentiators create uniqueness through other primary and support activities (Porter, 1985).

Porter (1985), points out that a firm's uniqueness in a value activity is determined by a series of basic drivers. Uniqueness' drivers are the underlying reasons why an activity is unique and without identifying them, a firm cannot develop means of creating new forms of differentiation. A firm cannot also diagnose how sustainable its existing differentiation is. The drivers of uniqueness are: policy choices, linkages, timing, location, interrelationships, learning and spillages, integration, scale and institutional factors. Thompson and Strickland (1998), pointed out that differentiation is about understanding what the customer values, about where along the value chain to create differentiating attributes and about what resources and capabilities are needed to produce brand uniqueness.

2.5.2 Sustainability of differentiation strategy

Approaches to developing sustainable differentiation strategy include: Quality option approach and building strong brand approach. Quality option approach focuses on developing a reputation for good quality and promise to deliver quality superior products or services to customers. Building strong brand approach to sustainable differentiation focuses on building brand equity. Brand equity generates value to customers and provides the firm a space to adopt premium pricing and develop enhanced brand loyalty (Porter, 1985). As a rule, differentiation yields a longer lasting and more profitable competitive edge when it is based on new product innovation, technical superiority, product quality and reliability, and comprehensive customer service (Thompson et al., 2007).

The sustainability of differentiation depends on its continued perceived value to buyers and the lack of imitation by competitors. To be sustainable, differentiation must be based on sources where there are mobility barriers to competitors replicating them. Product differentiation strategies add value by enabling firms to charge prices for their products or services that are greater than their average total cost. The ability of a strategy to add value must be linked with rare and costly to imitate organizational strengths in order to generate a sustained competitive advantage (Barney & Hesterly, 2008).

2.6 Technology and Competitive Advantage

A firm that can discover a better technology for performing an activity than its competitors gains competitive advantage. Technological change is one of the principal drivers of competition. It plays a major role in industry structural change as well as in creating new industries. It is also an equalizer, eroding the competitive advantage of even well entrenched firms and propelling others to the forefront. Technological change is important if it affects competitive advantage and industry structure (Porter, 1985).The basic tool for understanding the role of technology in competitive advantage is the value chain. Technology is embodied in every value activity in a firm and technological change can affect competition through its impact on virtually any activity.

Technology affects competitive advantage if it has a significant role in determining relative cost position or differentiation. Technology will affect cost or differentiation if it influences the cost drivers of uniqueness of value activities (Porter, 1985). According to Porter (1985), Technological change by a firm will lead to sustainable competitive advantage under the following circumstances: The technological change itself lowers or enhances differentiation and the firm’s technological lead is sustainable, the change shifts cost or uniqueness drivers in favour of a firm, pioneering the change translates into first mover advantages besides those inherent in the technology itself and the technological change improves overall industry structure.

2.7 Focus strategy

This is where a firm concentrates on one part of the market or product line. It is implemented by: focusing on the product line, targeting a segment and geographical area.

Focusing on a product line can help develop the firm in a technical expertise and achieve superiority over its competitors. A focuser's basis for competitive advantage is either lower costs than competitors in the serving market niche or an ability to offer niche members something they perceive is better (Thompson & Strickland, 1998). Campbell (2002) stated that, focus strategy aims at a segment of the market. A particular group of consumers is identified on the basis of age, income, lifestyle, geographical location or a combination.

What sets focused strategies apart from low cost or a differentiation strategy is concentrated attention on a narrow piece of total market. The target segment or niche can be defined by geographic uniqueness, by specialized requirements in using the product, or by special product attributes that appeal only to niche members. Targeting a segment can help the firm to design appropriate marketing strategy perfectly tailored to the target market segment. Geographical area is whereby a firm limits the operation to a geographical area and developing local brands. This can develop effective sustainable competitive advantage to the firm in terms of cost effectiveness. However, this approach may be risky when a superior national brand is introduced to the target geographical area (Thompson & Strickland, 1998).

2.8 Co- operative Strategies and Competitive Advantage

Strategic alliances exist whenever two or more independent organizations cooperate in development, manufacture or sale of products or services (Barney & Hesterly, 2008). While a few companies can pursue their strategies alone, it is becoming increasingly common for companies to pursue their strategies in collaboration with suppliers, distributors, makers of complementary products and sometimes even select competitors. Many companies have begun forming strategic alliances and cooperative relationships with other companies to complement their own strategic initiatives and strengthen their competitiveness in domestic and international markets (Thompson & Strickland, 1998

Alliances or cooperative agreements can involve joint research efforts, technology sharing and joint use of production facilities, marketing one another's products or joining forces to manufacture components or assemble finished products. The benefits of cooperation are; to collaborate on technology or development of promising new products, to improve supply chain efficiency, to gain economies of scale in production and or marketing, to fill gaps in their technical and manufacturing expertise and to acquire or improve market access.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the various steps that will facilitate the execution of the study to satisfy the study objectives. These steps include: Research design, Data collection instruments and procedures and Data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

This is the framework or plan of study used as a guide in collecting and analyzing data. It is the blue print in completing a research (Creswell, 2009). The research is to be conducted as a case study. A case study is a detailed investigation of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units (Kothari, 2004). This research design is appropriate because it involves an in-depth understanding of the issues under review that is competitive strategies used by Standard Group Ltd to sustain its competitive advantage in the media industry. Case study provides valuable insight for problem solving evaluation and strategy (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

Yin (1984), looked at the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real- life context. This boundary between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used. Case studies are the preferred strategy when both open and closed ended questions are to be asked in an interview where the researcher has little control over events and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context. The research will be descriptive in nature and will provide an ample opportunity for a detailed examination of the issues pertinent to the study.

3.3 Data Collection

The data collection methods to be used will ensure integrity. Primary data and Secondary data will be collected. A primary source is a direct description of any occurrence by an individual who actually observed or witnessed the occurrence. Primary data will be verified to ensure completeness, reliability and consistency of responses. Secondary sources include any publication written by an author who was not a direct observer or participant in the events described (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Respondents will be the managers of Standard Group Ltd. These are the management who are vested with the responsibility of enforcing managerial policies along with setting strategies for the company.

Face to face interview will be done with the executive directors, heads of departments and some managers. Structured or closed-ended questions will be used to obtain background information concerning the population of study and responses on pre-determined options. Unstructured or open-ended questions will be used to obtain information on the opinions, attitudes and perceptions of the target population. Structured or closed ended questions refer to questions which are accompanied by a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the answer that best describes the situation. Unstructured or open ended questions refer to the questions which give the respondents complete freedom of response (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis entails organizing the collected information with a view of getting answers as to the research question. Kothari (2004), points out that data analysis involves processing of collected data in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), defined data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. The data collected will be qualitative in nature and thus the analysis technique will be content analysis. Before any analysis, the data will be checked for completeness and consistency.

The qualitative data collected will be analyzed using conceptual content analysis. This is a technique for making references by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of message and using the same approach to relate trends. Content analysis, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) as well as Dawson (2009), is any technique that allows for making of inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of messages. Tabulated data, bar charts analysis of figures and pie charts will be incorporated for descriptive statistical analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the research findings. Content analysis technique was used to decipher meaning from the data and presented in the form of narratives, tables and graphs for better understanding. Primary data was collected from Standard Group ltd's managers. The researcher used semi structured interview guide to conduct face to face interviews with the managers who are charged with responsibility of enforcing managerial policies along with setting strategies for Standard Group ltd.

4.2 Demographic information

From the study, it was observed that all the respondents work in Nairobi which is the headquarters of the company. The study revealed that all managers are based within the offices where their sub-ordinates work. The senior directors are based in one floor and share one secretary so as to reduce time and cost when having meetings.

Table 4.1 Case summary of the respondents Bio data

Business section	**Job designation**	**Gender**	**Age Bracket**	**Work experience**	**Education level**
Human Resources	H/R manager	F	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate
ICT	Head of ICT	M	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate
PDS	PDS Manager	M	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate
Production	Manager	M	40-50	5-10	Undergraduate
Sales	Head of Sales	M	40-50	1-5	Postgraduate

Transport	Transport Officer	M	30-40	1-5	Postgraduate
Editorial	Manager-Editorial	M	40-50	More than 10	Undergraduate
Security	Head of security	M	40-50	Less than 1 year	Postgraduate
Marketing	Manager	F	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate
Commercial	Manager	F	40-50	More than 10	Undergraduate
Finance	Chief Accountant	M	40-50	More than 10	Postgraduate
Radio	Head of Radio	M	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate
KTN	Manager	F	30-40	1-5	Undergraduate

Table 4.1 above is a summary of the demographic information of the respondents. From the findings, it was noted that majority of the managers interviewed are male. The respondents' percentages were 69.2% and 30.8% for male and female respectively. It was also noted that most of the respondents are aged between 30 to 40 years and most have also worked with the organization for more than one year. All the respondents have higher level of education. This implies that the senior management staff is matured, experienced and well educated. This is a competitive advantage which needs to be sustained continuously.

4.3 Rivalry in the Media Industry and major competitive strengths of Standard Group ltd.

This section was aimed at establishing the respondents' views on whether rivalry in the industry is intense and factors contributing to the rivalry. It also highlights the strengths of Standard Group ltd. All respondents agreed that there is intense competition within the media industry. Factors such as technological development, price wars, poaching of staff among the industry players, variety of products and services were cited as the factors that contribute to the rivalry.

Standard Group's major competitive strengths include: investment in the latest technology in print and broadcast media, well organized sales' distribution, differentiated products, high capital outlay in productive assets, strong brand and key talent in human resource. The organization also has unique pullouts every day of the week, well designed pages, catchy headlines and bold reporting of news.

4.4 Strategies for sustainable competitive advantage

The findings from the study revealed that the strategies for sustainable competitive advantage used by Standard Group ltd are: Cost reduction, technological innovations, product development, product differentiation, continuous brand development, continuous staff training, reconfiguration of the value chain, aggressive promotional campaigns, strategic alliances and wide range of good quality products and services.

From the findings, it was also noted that many respondents highlighted the following strategies as the most used by the company to compete effectively: Technological innovation, quality products and services, and cost reduction. The response rate for these three strategies was 69.2%. The percentage of respondents who said product development, differentiation, aggressive promotions and wide range of products and services was 61.5%. It was also noted that 53.8% of the respondents highlighted continuous staff training and brand as the strategies used by the organization to compete effectively in the market. It was only 46.1% and 23% of the respondents said configuration of value chain and strategic alliances respectively as the strategies used by Standard Group ltd to compete effectively in the market.

4.5 Challenges faced by Standard Group ltd in applying the Competitive strategies

Rapid increase in competition poses a major challenge hence the need for efficient development of products and services that can satisfy a more demanding customer base and build a long term customer loyalty and trust. Customer needs continue changing always and thus the organization ought to be conversant with these needs hence to adopt them. It was also noted that the newspaper is not perceived well within the central regions of Kenya due to historical backgrounds as it was seen as pro government during the era of the second president of Kenya.

Poaching of staff within the media industry is a great challenge. Each media house always tries to poach from their counterparts the best talent. This in turn increases the costs of maintaining the best talent. Some media house employees have good public image especially news anchors and are always on the competitors' radar.

Technological advancement poses a challenge to the organization. Technologies continue changing with the times and thus the organization has to conform to these changes. Multiplicity of sources of information such as social media poses a challenge as people get real time news thus by the time it is in either the print or broadcast media it will have already been consumed. This has reduced the sales of the organization. Technological advancement needs high finance costs which at times are beyond the organization's reach.

Stringent regulatory framework also poses a challenge to all the media houses. Media bills have been brought out by the legislative arm of the government. Some of the bills are not conducive to the media industry thus hampering the growth of the industry. The digital migration which media houses are required to adhere to will change the media houses way of operations after having invested a lot in infrastructure which will be obsolete with the onset of the digital migration.

Foreign exchanges also pose a challenge to the organization because the news print is bought from the western countries. This news print is bought using the US dollars and when the rates are normally not constant. The higher the exchange rate, the higher the price of newsprint and the fluctuation of the rates also affect budget making.

4.6 Major actions being taken to compete effectively in the market

Findings from the study revealed that the respondents were using various actions to compete effectively. The actions include: Price cuttings, technological innovations, continuous improvement of the products, brand visibility, retention of good talent and continuous training of staff in key departments such as editorial. The organization has also added more radio transmitters in areas where there was no coverage. They have also redesigned the newspaper and launched new products.

The value chain has also been reconfigured for more efficiency so as to compete effectively in the market. The findings also noted that the organization has launched the "New Counties'' section, started the Wednesday Life pullout and having a pullout every day during the world cup. The Standard Group ltd has also hired new good writers in the last one year to compete effectively in the market.

Most readers have been acquired as a result of the new counties section. Wednesdays' pullout was an instant hit and unique stories were got through the hiring of good writers. The new transmitters have enabled the broadcast to reach many people, rebranding has attracted many commercial adverts and new markets have opened up through the county governments.

4.7 Discussion of Results

An organization exists in the context of a complex political, economic, social, technological and legal world environment. When adopting any form of strategy, an organization should consider these factors so as to acquire a strategic position in the operating environment. It should strive to take advantage of opportunities and manage challenges as well as threats accordingly. The study sought to establish the competitive strategies used by Standard Group ltd to sustain its competitive advantage in the media industry in Kenya.

The findings indicated that most of the respondents were male and that they are all competent enough to manage the various departments of the company. It was noted that the managers are mature, well-educated and have the required skills. From the analysis of data collected it can be deduced that there is intensive rivalry in the market and thus Standard Group ltd ought to have ways of outwitting its competitors in the market. A business strategy is built on a set of functional strategies, representing the competitive weapons that a company employs to compete in a given industry. Due to the changing environment, there is a need to think about sustainable competitive advantage. Porter (1988) argues that operational effectiveness, although necessary to superior performance is not sufficient as its techniques are easy to copy. However, the essence of strategy is to choose a unique and valuable position that is more difficult to imitate and give an advantage over competitors.

4.7.1 Comparison with Theory

The concept of competitive strategies and competitive advantage are as important in Standard Group ltd as in other organizations in other sectors and industries. Ansoff's market strategies and Porter's competitive strategies have also been applied in Standard Group ltd as they try to maintain and gather new clientele. Firms develop new products so as to remain competitive ahead of their competitors in the market which they operate (Ansoff, 1990).

The findings of the study confirm the basic tenets of Resource Based theory which saw organizations as bundles of resources which can be utilized to achieve a position of advantage over other competing firms in the industry. It is these resources and the way they are combined that make firms different from one another. The capabilities of Standard Group ltd enabled development of strategies to respond to challenges and opportunities emanating from the changes occurring in its external environment. Therefore, the findings are consistent with the current theories.

4.7.2 Comparison with other Studies

From the study findings, it was observed that several of the observations were in line with studies from other authors. In observing the sustainable strategies used by the Standard Group ltd, it was in conformity with Nduta(2012) who noted the application of Porter's(1985) generic strategies at Siginon Freight ltd, Kenya. Other scholars who have observed the application of the generic strategies include: Ali (2012) who studied developing sustainable competitive advantage by Barclays Bank of Kenya ltd. He observed the use of technology to sustain competitive advantage.

Barney and Hesterly (2008) stated that a firm that chooses a cost leadership business strategy focuses on gaining advantage by reducing its costs to below those of all its competitors. This cost leadership was also noted with regard with Standard Group ltd thus a confirmation. The findings of the study was also conforming with Porter (1985) who noted that reconfigured value chains stems from: a different production process, differences in automation, direct sales instead of indirect sales and a new distribution channel. It was therefore clear to conclude that the findings of the study had clearly been in conformity with mentioned scholarly findings from other scholars.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the data findings, conclusion and recommendations drawn in the quest of addressing the research question. The chapter concludes by suggesting recommendations for adoption to ensure sustainable competitive advantage and also suggestion on areas for future research. The recommendations and suggestions are based on the findings in the previous chapter and the study objective.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The objective of this study was to determine the strategies Standard Group ltd uses to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The research findings shows that the Standard Group has an advanced technology, a strong brand, highly skilled employees, well differentiated products and services, wide market coverage among other resources that make it have a competitive edge above other industry players. It is for this reason that it has managed to withstand the test of times since inception in 1902.

Its successful operations have earned accolades over the past decade as a result of successful strategies. The study also showed that Standard Group ltd has well formulated policies and procedures. It was also established that there was stiff competition in the market coming from particular rivals in the media industry.

In summary, the study revealed that respondents were aware of the strategies used by The Standard Group ltd, in its processes and challenges that the organization is facing in the process of achieving its objectives. The respondents were also knowledgeable about the operations in the organization as they were engaged in the day to day management and operations of its strategy formulation and implementations. As a result of the above, the researcher felt that the results obtained from the respondents reflects the true position of the organization.

Standard Group ltd operates in a complex, dynamic, highly competitive and regulated environment. It has responsibilities to shareholders, customers, employees and communities together with the underlying objective of the firm which is to provide information and entertainment. Towards the attainment of these objectives, the firm has endeavored to modernize its infrastructure through employment of new technologies and continuous training and maintaining workforce that is motivated and willing to steer the organization.

In pursuit of achieving competitive advantage, the company has faced a number of challenges. The rapid increase in competition poses a major challenge to firms. This has therefore led to the need for efficient development of products that can quickly satisfy a more demanding customer base and build a long term customer trust. It is difficult to satisfy the ever changing and diverse customer needs and preferences. Customers have high expectations and can easily switch to the services offered by the competitors.

5.3 Conclusion of the Study

The Standard Group ltd faces the normal external challenges affecting all other media houses like poaching of staff, regulatory framework, competition, changing customer needs and preferences and technological advancements. In conclusion, sustainable competitive advantage is no doubt not easy for any company in any industry to achieve.

For a company to remain competitive in the long run, it must have strategies in place that cannot be easily imitated by other players. It must ensure that its competitiveness stems from uniqueness. Therefore, there must be a fit between the day to day operations of the company and its drivers of competitive advantage. Resources must be mobilized to enhance competitiveness. From the resources of the company, there was a high chance of developing through personnel and information technology infrastructure strategies that would be difficult to be imitated by their immediate competitors.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

The study can further be enriched to cover all the other managers and executive directors. This will establish if the strategies used are the same and if appropriate. The study also recommends that the company should be more aggressive in the market so as to eradicate the perception on the ground especially in central region of Kenya.

The company should avoid mass hiring and should follow the laid down Human resource policies when terminating employees’ contracts. This will reduce legal suits brought about by employees who have been terminated wrongly. The company needs to harmonize staff remuneration so as to boost the morale of the employees. Competitive remuneration as compared to competitors also needs to be given to the editorial team so as to avoid continuous poaching of staff.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to an individual organization and this may not provide appropriate information to policy formulators in the industry. The study only allowed for an in-depth study of Standard Group ltd and cannot be generalized to other organizations and show industry trends. Time was a constraint both by the researcher and respondents.

The researcher was constrained because of time due to tight schedule of work and also as a family man. The study is based on historical data and interview and therefore is always going to be difficult to make a conclusion from findings which might be usable to the future. Most of the senior managers have also not stayed with the company for long and therefore lack the knowhow and weaknesses of the company.

5.6 Areas suggested for further research

The study focused only on Standard Group ltd and not all Media houses in Kenya. Its findings were therefore limited. Researchers can conduct further study to establish competitive strategies used by other media houses. This will provide a framework for both decision makers and policy formulators in the industry. It is possible that other top media houses apply certain effective and efficient strategies that would add to the body of knowledge in the field of strategic management. Research should also be done on all top performing companies in East Africa in order to come up with widely used strategies across industries. This will greatly improve the understanding of competitive strategies being practiced by the best companies in the region to sustain their competitive advantages.

Technology is ever changing and many companies have embraced technology and are now using it as a strategy to constantly innovate and redefine themselves. A study is therefore needed on technology and innovation as a strategy in the media industry. Most of the population is techno savvy especially the youth and a study needs to be done on how to capture this market niche. There is a clear need to expand the bracket of respondents to be interviewed. The views of other stakeholders such as staff in the field would be able to enrich the findings of the research in showing whether initiatives forwarded are assisting the company sustain its competitive advantage.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

The Respondent,

Standard Group Ltd,

P.o Box 30080 -00100, Nairobi.

28th January 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am a post graduate student in the School of Business, University of Nairobi. I am pursuing a Masters of Business Administration (MBA), Strategic management and currently undertaking a management research project as part of the course requirements. The topic of the research project is: **''Competitive Strategies used by Standard Group Ltd to sustain its Competitive Advantage in the Media Industry''.** You are therefore requested to kindly assist in granting an opportunity for the interview at your convenience. The information provided will be kept confidential and will only be used for the project's purpose. A copy of the final report will be given to you upon request. A copy of sample questions purely to assist in preparation is hereby attached. Your assistance and co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Charles Barsorei Cherono.

Appendix II: Interview Guide

SECTION A: General Background. ***Note:*** *Tick or Underline where appropriate*

What is your position in the organization and department…………………………

1. Sex (a) Male (b) Female
2. Number of years worked in the Company
    a) Less than one year
    b) 1-5 years
    c) 5-10 years
    d) More than 10 years
3. Age Group
    (a) Under 30 years
    (b) 30-40 years
    (c) 40-50 years
    (d) Over 50 years
4. Highest level of education
    (a) Primary school
    (b) Secondary school
    (c) Certificate level
    (d) Diploma level
    (e) Undergraduate level
    (f) Post graduate level
    (g) Others (Specify)

SECTION B: Strategies for Developing Sustainable Competitive Advantage. ***<u>N/B</u>*****:** ***Answer as per your section or department.***

5. Do you think there is a high competition in the Media Industry?

    (a) Yes

    (b) No

6. What are the competitive strengths for your organization?

    i. ……………………………………………………………………………..

    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………..

    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………..

    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………..

7. Are there any competitive weaknesses in your organization? If any, specify

    i. ……………………………………………………………………………………..

    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………..

    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………………..

    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………………..

8. What major actions does your organization adopt or use to compete effectively in the market?

    i. ……………………………………………………………………………………

    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………

    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………………

    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………………

9. To what extend do you agree with the statement that: Your media house has good strategies to outperform other media house?
    (a) Agree
    (b) Disagree
    (c) Not sure
10. What methods have your organization applied in the last one year to stay competitive?
    i. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………………
11. To what extend have the methods applied in (10) above to stay competitive lead to competitive advantage?
    i. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………………
12. What strategies for sustainable competitive advantage have your organization used?
    i. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    ii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iii. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    iv. ……………………………………………………………………………………
    v. ……………………………………………………………………………………

13. What challenges does your organization face in applying the competitive strategies?

i. ………………………………………………………………………………………

ii. ………………………………………………………………………………………

iii. ………………………………………………………………………………………

iv. ………………………………………………………………………………………

v. ………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix III: Standard Group ltd Senior Management Structure