

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE: A CASE OF TELECOMMUNICATION FIRMS IN KENYA**

BY

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**A management research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA),
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DECLARATION

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

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

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DEDICATION

In praise of God for making all this possible.

This study is dedicated to my mother Mariana for her untiring motivation, support and love: She believed in my dreams and worked tirelessly to make them a reality, you are simply the best; To Pauline Daudi, you are my inspiration, my strength, my pride and joy. Thank you for standing by me all through my academic struggles.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANOVA	Analysis of variance
APM	Adaptive project management
B2B	Business to Business
CA	Competitive advantage
CA*	Communications Authority
CCK	Communication commission of Kenya
CCNA	Cisco certified network associate
CEO	Chief executive officer
CISSP	Certified information system security professional
COS	Conditions of satisfaction
CPA	Certified public accountant
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
HR	Human resources
IBA	Institute of business administration
ICT	Information communications technology
IT & N	Information, technology and networks
IT	Information technology
ITIL	Information technology infrastructure library
JIT	Just in time
LPTC	Learning technician professional certificate
PM	Project management
PMI	Project management institute
POS	Project overview statement
RBT	Resource based theory
SD	Standard deviation
SME	Small and medium enterprises
TPM	Traditional project management
WBS	Work breakdown structure
xPM	Extreme project management

ABSTRACT

Today's competitive environment has pushed corporate firms, both in the private and public sector, to employ project management techniques in order to be successful as well as enhance efficiencies in their business processes. The current study investigated the effect of project management on organizational competitive advantage by conducting a case study of telecommunication firms in Kenya. The study sought to establish the project management approaches used by telecommunication firms in Kenya; the competitive positioning of telecommunication firms in Kenya and to determine the effect of project management approach on organizational competitive advantage in telecommunication firms in Kenya.

The study used a descriptive cross sectional survey. The target population consisted of three telecommunication companies in Kenya which included Telkom Kenya Limited, Safaricom Limited and Airtel Kenya Limited. The study conducted a census of all the three firms in Kenya by selecting 70 respondents working in project related tasks spread across different departments in the respective organizations. Primary data was used and was collected using questionnaires. Means were used to identify the project management approaches and competitive positioning of the firms. Standard deviation was also used to establish consistency of application of the project management approaches and the competitive positioning of these firms. Correlation analysis, regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were used to establish the strength of the relationship between the study variables.

The study established that all the three organizations employed project management approaches variously in their business process. The study also established that

Safaricom Limited was leading in terms of competitiveness in the Kenyan market, Telkom Kenya Limited ranked second and Airtel Kenya Limited ranked third in terms of competitiveness. The study lastly established that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between use of project management approaches and organizational competitive advantage. The results indicated that project management approaches were responsible for 64.3 % of organizational competitive advantage in the three telecommunication firms.

The study recommended that firms in the telecommunications sector as well as in general business environment should consider using project management approaches to run and manage their project initiatives in order to improve their efficiencies and reduce operational costs. The study also recommended enhancement of project management capabilities for employees through training in order to improve on project management skills of the workforce which ultimately improves competitiveness of the organizations. The study recommended for financial development of the organizations' project management cultures which improves the productivity, profitability and competitiveness of the organizations in the market place. The study lastly recommended for the documentation of key lessons, deliverables and challenges after successful implementation of project initiatives for future reference.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Today's competitive environment has pushed all corporate firms, both in the private and public sector, to look for superior ways to realize competitiveness. The deliberate search for success has led to some firms employing project management techniques in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in their business processes (Shwalbe, 2011). A cross section of scholars contend that progressive modern organizations have increasingly focused on executing a variety of particular tasks such as development of new products and process re-organization by way of projects (Pinto, 2010; Rocha & Albergarias, 2012). The concept of project management is relatively new in its application to the general business processes and scholars agree that it can be applied in a variety of ways. For instance, Richardson (2010) opines that there is a proliferation of a variety of approaches to project management cues employed in work in organizations and no single approach has been broadly accepted as being distinctly better than the others.

Larson & Gray (2011) identified three key project management approaches, that is, the traditional project management (TPM) approach; the adaptive project management (APM) approach and the extreme project management (xPM) as the most commonly used across different industries. They further assert that the three can be customized to fit any firms' environment within its' unique needs. Such fit would thus support the organization to realize benefits ranging from competitive market advantage, cut operational costs, satisfy compliance requirements, improve employee morale and help them achieve their strategic objectives. Pinto *et al.* (2010) and Rocha

et al. (2012) posit that globally, organizations that use project management tools experienced better results than those that do not.

The Kenyan telecommunications sector like in most parts of the globe continues to be a trend setter in many fronts (Omenye, 2013). The sector has exhibited an abrupt paradigm shift in market transition, bolstered by rapid development of ICT and high demand from customers. The telecommunication firms operate in a highly competitive environment which is complicated and clouded by a myriad of government regulations. The need for the sector to balance between careful compliance with the progressive government regulations and rapid network expansion to meet increasing customer demands has forced the sector to consider new approaches for efficiency.

Some of the firms have resulted to employing project management approaches to implement their new undertakings (Omenye, 2013). Some research work shows that about 80 per cent of top global executives believe that PM is a core competence which can help their organizations achieve and sustain competitiveness. The foregoing infers that an elaborate organizational commitment to PM can lead to better results and long term business value for organizations (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Shawlbe, 2011; Oliomogbe & Smith, 2013). The Kenyan telecommunications industry therefore may benefit from the use of PM approaches.

1.1.1 Project management.

A project management approach is a set of guidelines or principles that can be tailored and applied to a specific business situation. Wysocki (2003) states that a PM approach

involves adopting project execution at every level to deliver value at every stage within an organization as a collective single whole. There are three common project management approaches, which include: traditional project management approach (TPM); adaptive project management approach (APM); and extreme project management approach (xPM). Scholars posit that some organizations are reaping benefits from investing time, money and resources from building organizational PM expertise.

Research links project management approaches to benefits like lower costs and improved productivity, greater efficiencies, improved customer and stake holder satisfaction, higher quality, increased reliability, higher profit margins, better internal co-ordination, realizing strategic goals and higher worker morale (Shwalbe, 2011; Project Management Institute-PMI, 2010). Wysocki (2003) posits that the characteristics of different project initiatives can be used in choosing the PM approach that best suits particular organizational needs.

1.1.2 Organizational competitive advantage

Organizational competitive advantage is an advantage gained over competitors by offering consumers greater value, either by means of lower prices or by providing greater benefits and services that justify a higher price (Al-alak *et al*, 2011). Organizations focus on the elements involved in competitive advantage in their quest to identify sources of competitive advantage. Superior resources (tangible resources) and superior skills (intangible resources) have been identified as sources of competitiveness for most organizations. Further, resources that are rare, valuable, non-imitable and non- substitutable are touted to hold greater potential of developing

competitiveness in organizations. Competitive advantage in this case is realized only when organizations combine an assortment of resources and skills in such a way that they achieve a unique competency or capability that is valued in the market place (Hoffman, 2000).

Intangible assets are listed as major contributors to an organizations competitive advantage due to their ability to combine with other resources in unique and enduring ways that produce superior outcomes. Project management is one best example of such combination of resources and skills in the current business environments. It can help organizations in meeting time and budget goals as well as in creating competitiveness and value for the organization (Crawford & Cooke-Davies, 2012).

1.1.3 Project management and organizational competitive advantage

Scholars acknowledge that use of PM approaches in organizations lead to improved organizational competitive advantage, achieved through improved operational processes and efficiency in the use of scarce organizational resources. The PM approaches also help organizations learn from their past successes and continually redesign their operational processes to optimize the organization's project culture. Firms using PM approaches thus realize value through the tools ability to help the organization tweak the standard and tested approach in delivery of effectiveness and/or use most of it to fit their different project initiatives instead of thinking through a complete project plan each time they launch a new project initiative thus realizing efficiency (Richardson, 2010).

The two prospects positively reduce the time to market for the organizations' products and services thus improving the competitive positioning of the organization in the market place. Alternately, the organization benefits from the particular tacit knowledge and collective learning drawn during the process of implementation and these can be used to enhance the processes for better outcomes (Turner, 1999; Richardson, 2010).

1.1.4 Telecommunications firms in Kenya

The telecommunication sector in Kenya is one of the key drivers of the country's economy. The development of a large scale telecommunications infrastructure, capable of delivering efficient and affordable info-communication services has been touted as a critical prerequisite for the country's economic growth. The Kenyan telecommunications business is exhibiting signs of an abrupt paradigm shift with symptoms of a market in transition, bolstered by rapid development of ICT and high demand from customers (Omenye, 2013). The firms in the sector are largely involved in the provision of fixed network voice services, mobile network services, mobile money transfer services, internet services as well as broadband services (Ngobia, 2014; Tyler, 1991; CCK annual report, 2013).

The firms have had to deal with steady growth in subscriber numbers, thus resulting to the expansion of their networks. Besides the pressure of rapid expansion of the networks, the firms have also faced increased rivalry through value addition and demands by their subscribers to offer standard services hence the need to consider new approaches like the use of PM approaches to implement their new undertakings (Omenye, 2013). This study used data from the big three telecommunication firms

which include: Safaricom Limited, Airtel Kenya and Telkom Kenya Limited to establish the contribution project management has had to their competitive advantage.

1.2 Statement of problem

A substantial body of previous research points to project management as one of the key business solutions in realizing competitiveness and improving business results in modern firms. A cross section of scholars contend that modern organizations are increasingly focusing on executing a variety of particular tasks in the form of projects to develop new products as well as in re-organization (Pinto, 2010; Rocha & Albergarias, 2012). Researchers, among them Jugdev & Thomas (2002) explored the constructs of PM maturity models and noted that firms which used a PM approach as essential building blocks of business value enhanced their performance and outcomes. Despite this assertion, research focusing on project management and how it fully contributes to organizational competitive advantage though nascent, still remains scanty.

A study done by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2009) showed that about 80 per cent of top global executives believed that PM is a core competency which could help their organizations remain competitive. This infers that an elaborate organizational commitment to PM can lead to better results and long term business value (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Shawlbe, 2011; Oliomogbe & Smith, 2013). Emmanuel (2013) evaluated the dynamics of project strategy in innovative enterprises in the banking sector and noted that project autonomy and stakeholder input enhanced the organizations competitive advantage. Mukhwana (2013) investigated the challenges facing implementation of Telehealth projects in Kenya and found that lack of use of a

defined PM approach by telecommunication firms was one of the key issues that led to the failure of such projects. Olunga (2007) identified use of PM cues as a response employed by Safaricom Limited to changes in the telecommunications industry.

The foregoing studies fell short of directly linking PM approaches to the outcome of competitive advantage. This study therefore sought to bridge these gaps by directly linking PM to firm competitive advantage and mainstream business organizational environment away from its generic use in the non-governmental community based organizations. The study sought to answer the following broad question: what is the effect of applying project management approaches on organizational competitive advantage in the telecommunication firms in Kenya?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to establish the effect of project management approaches on the competitive advantage of telecommunication firms in Kenya.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish the project management approaches used by telecommunication firms in Kenya.
- ii. Establish the competitive positioning of telecommunication firms in Kenya.
- iii. Determine the effect of project management approach on organizational competitive advantage in telecommunication firms in Kenya.

1.4 Importance of study

The results of this study will be of value to the general telecommunications and IT managers who are tasked with implementing different projects for their organizations in light of competing organizational resources. The results of this study will be of value to managers in the three firms by providing information on the effectiveness and contribution of their PM initiatives to their overall competitive advantage.

The results of this study will also serve as a source of information and reference to other organizations interested in applying project management approach in the delivery of their business goals and objectives.

This study will be useful to researchers and academicians because they will be able to use this study as a basis and reference for further research. They may use this study to build on the project management knowledge in the business world.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This comprises of the theoretical framework on which the study is founded on and also summarizes information from other scholars who have carried out their research in the same field of study closely related to the theme and objectives of this study. The major areas of project management and organizational competitive advantage which greatly contributed to the conceptualization of this study are also discussed.

The thinking to position project management approaches as superior sources of value influencing the outcome of organizational competitive advantage is founded on the Resource Based Theory (RBT). This theory positions competitiveness to be as a result of unique configuration of firm resources. Drawing from RBT, the three project management approaches if configured distinctively can drive the strategic outcome of competitiveness (Wenerfelt, 1991).

2.2 Project management

A project is a sequence of unique, complex, and connected activities having one goal or purpose and that must be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification. Scholars have identified five constraints of scope, quality, cost, time and organizational resources which operate on every individual project initiative in organizations. These constraints are interdependent and form a system that must remain in balance for the project to be in balance. A change in one can cause a change in another constraint to restore the equilibrium of the project (Wysocki, 2003). Project management is a method and a set of techniques based on

the accepted principles of management used for planning, estimating, and controlling work activities to reach a desired end result on time, within budget and according to specification. It consists of a combination of processes applied to different projects in order to deliver a specific service or product (Shwalbe, 2011; Pinto, 2011).

Organizations continue to reap benefits from investing in time, money and resources from building organizational PM expertise (Shwalbe, 2011; PMI, 2010). Benefits like lower costs and improved productivity, greater efficiencies, improved customer and stake holder satisfaction and greater competitive advantage have been realized in almost all organizations. Project Management Institute (2010) underscored other benefits of organizational projects like shorter development times; higher quality and increased reliability; higher profit margins; better internal co-ordination; positive impact on meeting strategic goals and higher worker morale.

A project management approach is a set of guidelines or principles that can be tailored and applied to a specific situation. Wysocki (2003) posits that the characteristics of different organizational project initiatives suggest what subset of the traditional approach should be used on the project and this concept has to be extended to encompass choosing the PM approach that will be employed based on the characteristics of the project at hand. In this study, three project management approaches have been discussed which include traditional project management approach, adaptive project management approach and extreme project management approach.

2.2.1 Traditional project management approach

This approach is defined by a single cycle on a fixed scope, budget and time. It does not advocate for changes after the planning phase has been done and managers have to stick to the project plans until the end. This approach follows the phases of traditional project management to deliver results which include defining the project scope, planning on how to do the project, executing the project, controlling the project progress and the closing stage (PMI, 2010). Scoping the project forms the basis for deciding if a particular function or feature is within the scope of the project initiative or not. Since this approach assumes that project teams have a clear understanding of what is to be done in a particular project initiative, the problem is clearly stated and project goals clearly established.

The approach also involves definition of project objectives and the success criteria for the project initiative. The project team also lists the assumptions, risks and obstacles that may hinder the success of project initiatives. The project overview statement (POS) is developed in this stage and becomes the foundation for future planning and execution of the project initiative and the reference document for questions or conflicts that may arise during the implementation of the project initiative (Turner, 1999; Wysocki, 2003). The planning phase is indispensable in this approach because it's the roadmap to how the work will be performed as well as a tool for decision making. The project plan clearly identifies the project activities with estimates on their duration, the resources to be used and what criteria must be met in order for the project to be declared complete and successful. A project network is then constructed and analyzed and then a project proposal developed.

The project plan suggests alternative approaches, schedules, and resource requirements from which the project manager selects the best alternative. However, this approach does not allow flexibility for change, despite this being inevitable. Once the best alternative has been selected, the management works to execute the plan to the letter without making any changes in the course of the project implementation (Longman & Mullins, 2004). The work breakdown structure (WBS) and project network diagrams are some of the tools widely used to identify the activities that must be performed from the beginning to the completion of the project as stated in the POS (Turner, 1999).

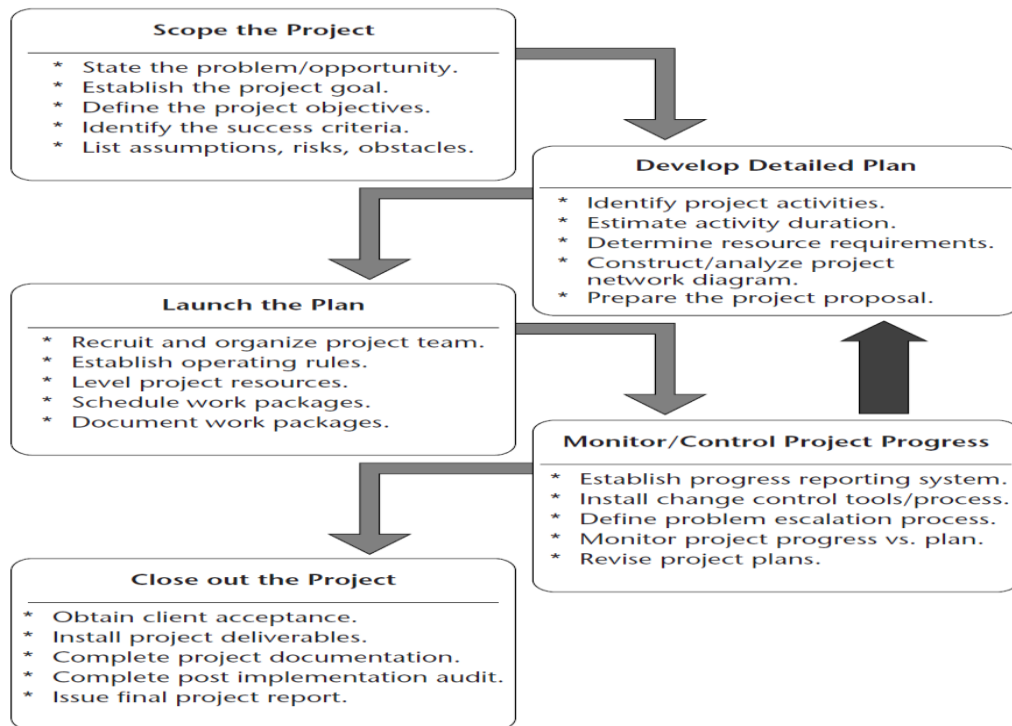
The project plan is then launched for execution. The project team is recruited and organized and team operating rules developed and established. Organizational resources are provided and work packages documented and scheduled. The project teams perform the tasks that define their respective jobs since each member knows what is expected of him or her, how to accomplish the work, and when to have it completed. The specific resources (person power, materials, and money) that will be required to accomplish the work defined in the plan and workers are assigned to activities and the activities scheduled with specific start and end dates (Turner, 1999; Wysocki, 2003).

Scholars posit that the project plan does not always go according to plan. The project manager must have a system in place that constantly monitors the project progress against the project plan earlier developed or lack thereof. The monitoring system summarizes the completed work measured against the plan and also looks ahead to forewarn of potential problems. In this stage, the project initiative is monitored and

controlled to completion. Progress reporting systems are established and change control tools or process are installed as well as definition of problem escalation processes. Progress reports are used to tell exactly how well the project is doing with respect to the plan and how to correct variances from this plan. These reports include weekly or biweekly reports, Graphical reports and gantt charts. Once there is a significant variance from the plan, corrective action is instituted and organizational resources might have to be reallocated (Wysocki, 2003; Richardson, 2010).

The closing phase is a formal means of signaling the completion of the project initiative. The closing phase evaluates what occurred during the project and provides historical information for use in planning and executing later projects. A project notebook is used to document this information for future reference by summarizing the deliverables of the project against the expectations of the different project stakeholders. The lessons learnt by the organization should also be captured in this phase. The closing phase is very important but unfortunately it is most often neglected or omitted by organizations (Turner, 1999; Collyer, 2009). This relationship is presented in figure 1:

Figure 1: Traditional project management approach



Source: Wysocki R. K. (2003), *Effective project management: Traditional, Adaptive, Extreme*, 3rd Edition, Wiley Publishing Inc.

2.2.2 Adaptive project management approach

This approach is defined by a fixed number of cycles on a fixed budget and time. The scope is variable with just-in-time planning (JIT Planning) for each cycle. This approach embraces changes that may occur in the course of project implementation. The APM approach is an iterative and adaptive five-phase approach designed to deliver maximum business value to organizations within the limits of their time and cost constraints. It incorporates selected tools and processes from TPM approach but ensures that the project scope is variable and implemented within a specified time and budget. The business value is maximized by adjusting the scope at each iteration by allowing the management to review contribution of the project initiative to the business value. The following phases have been defined for the APM approach: the

version scope phase; the cycle plan phase; the cycle build phase; client check point phase; and post revision review phase (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Vehedi, 2008).

The version scope phase is the beginning for this approach with two major stages of defining and planning. This phase expects that there is more than one version of the project solution and information gathered during this version informs management about any further enhancements they might want to consider in future versions. The defining stage is completed at high levels of management from where the conditions of satisfaction (COS) are determined and a clear communication link established between the parties. The POS and prioritization of the project scope is then written to guide implementation of the project initiative. The planning stage includes all the stakeholders and core project team developing the prioritized functions required by the project initiative and a mid-level WBS. They ensure that the length of the cycles and number of cycles is clearly defined. The version plan does not provide a detailed definition of the work to be done or of a schedule. This is done in the cycle plans (Vehedi, 2008).

The cycle plan phase is similar to the TPM approach but different in that the manager employs JIT planning where he works only on the part of the WBS that corresponds to the upcoming cycle instead of the whole WBS. Planning is done in segments where each chunk represents work that will require only a short time to complete at each iteration. Secondly, managers use whiteboards, Post-It notes and marking pens instead of using project management software to develop the low level WBS for this cycle. Dependencies and schedule is also defined and developed for each cycle and activities

partitioned to sub teams so that they are able to develop micro plans (Wysocki, 2003; Collyer, 2009).

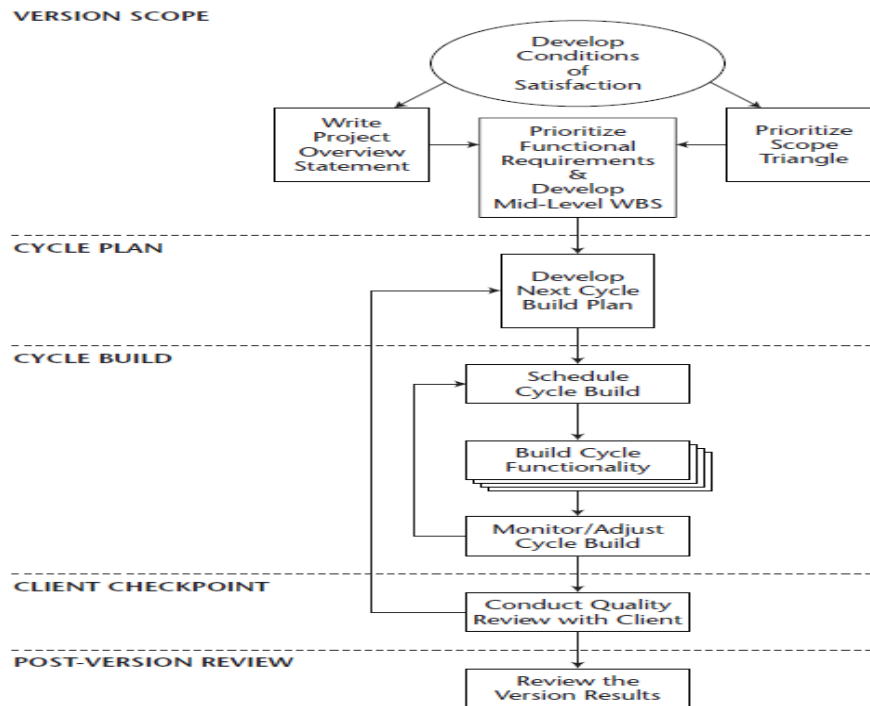
The cycle build phase works best as a team event, where teams schedule the cycle build to build cycle functionality and monitor or adjust the cycle build. The team begins the creation of the micro-level schedule by taking the tasks that make up this cycle's functionality and further decompose them to the subtask level. Once the micro-level WBS has been created, Post-It notes for each of these subtasks are made and laid out in a time scaled network diagram. A grid showing the time lines on a daily basis is done with complete resource allocation. The functionality prioritized for this cycle is then built. Even though the cycle is short and the build not very complex, things will not go according to plan. Depending on the severity, managers either finish the current cycle or cancel the current cycle and immediately move into the cycle plan phase for the next cycle (Turner, 1999; Collyer, 2009).

In the client check point stage, the team and the management spend valuable time looking at what was done, reflect on what was discovered and learned since the last checkpoint, and plan the functionality that will be built in the next cycle. Daily team status meetings, scope banks, issue logs and prioritized scope matrix are used to continually monitor and adjust the cycle build schedule. One of the real advantages of this approach is that the management is a decision maker in all critical junctures in the project implementation process (Vehedi, 2008; Collyer, 2009).

Post-revision review phase follows at the end of every version to look for ways to further increase the business value of the project initiative. What has been learnt is

employed in the next version and delivers more business value for the organization (Vehedi, 2008; Collyer, 2009; Wysocki, 2003). Figure 2 depicts this;

Figure 2: Adaptive project management approach



Source: Wysocki R. K. (2003), *Effective project management: Traditional, Adaptive, Extreme*, 3rd Edition, Wiley Publishing Inc.

In situations where the initial version scope misses the mark, there will be discoveries appearing in the first few cycles. These discoveries and lessons can create a big disconnect between the original direction of the project and the correct one that is now indicated. Once this is evident, there is a need to revise the version plan and basically start over (Vehedi, 2008; Wysocki, 2003).

2.2.3 Extreme project management approach

This approach is defined by unknown number of cycles on a variable budget and time. The scope is unknown with JIT planning for each cycle. This approach values changes in the course of project implementation. xPM approach is used in situations

where the goal is not clearly defined and the solution cannot also be defined (Vehedi, 2008). xPM approach is an unstructured iterative approach which assumes that learning and discovery moves the project initiative forward. This approach iterates in an unspecified number of short cycles (1- to 4-week cycle lengths) in search of the project goal or solution. It may find an acceptable solution, or it may be cancelled before any solution is reached. In this approach, there is no constrained scope triangle although the project can be stopped after its success or when it fails. xPM approach consists of four stages which are: initiate stage; speculate stage; incubate stage; and review stage (Richardson, 2010).

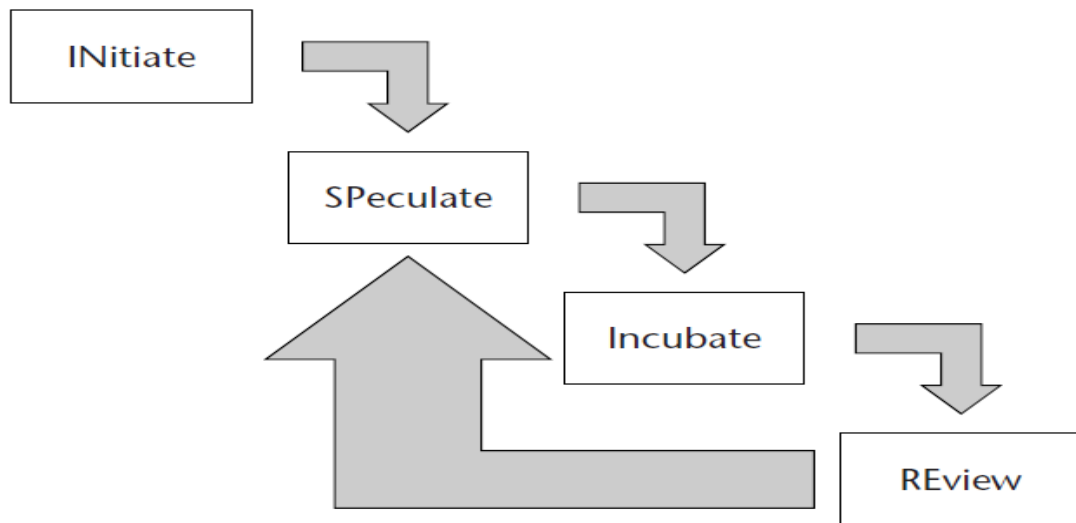
The initiate stage is a mixture of selling the idea, establishing the business value of the project, brainstorming possible approaches, forming the team and getting everyone on board and excited about what they are about to undertake. Strong working relationships and team building efforts are developed between all the stakeholders. An idea for a product or service is proposed and a project commissioned to investigate and produce it. Before launching the product, the management must be convinced that the idea is worth pursuing. The project requestor documents and demonstrates the business value in the proposed undertaking using the POS.

The speculation stage defines the beginning of a new cycle and starts with a brainstorming session. The input will either be a blank slate or output from the previous speculate-incubate-review cycle. All the stake holders participate in the brainstorming session to explore ideas and identify alternative directions for the next incubate phase. Several directions may eventually be pursued in parallel in the next cycle (Vehedi, 2008).

The incubation stage establishes the cycle plan and assigns the required resources to the project teams. The teams then collaborate to produce the deliverables stated on the POS. Even though this phase has a prioritized list of deliverables that are to be produced in this cycle, this approach still maintains the spirit of exploration. It's assumed that learning and discovery experience may result in mid-cycle corrections that arise from that exploration. Sub teams, working in parallel, execute the plan developed in the previous phase. The teams share ideas and cross-fertilize discoveries and learning moments with one another. Mid-phase corrections with the collaboration of the management are likely as the sub teams learn and discover together. New ideas and a redirection or clarification of the goal is likely to come from the learning and discovery experiences (Richardson, 2010; Wysocki, 2003).

In the review stage, learning and discovery is applied from the previous cycle. The project goals are revised and reprioritization of the project requirements done in accordance with the lessons learnt in the previous cycle. The management proceeds to make go or no go decisions for the next cycle (Longman & Mullins, 2004; Turner, 1999; Vehedi, 2008). This is displayed in Figure 3;

Figure 3: Extreme project management approach



Source: Wysocki R. K. (2003), *Effective project management: Traditional, Adaptive, Extreme*, 3rd Edition, Wiley Publishing Inc.

2.3 Organizational competitive advantage

Hoffman (2000) notes the ambiguity in defining the construct of competitive advantage in available literature. Scholars like Porter (1985, 1991); Barney (1991) and Rothaermel (2008) have made commendable attempts without demystifying this construct. Al-alak *et al* (2011) defines this construct as an advantage gained over competitors by offering consumers greater value, either by means of lower prices or by providing greater benefits and services that justify a higher price. This definition heavily borrows from porter's five forces of competitive theory which views competitive advantage along three dimensions of cost, differentiation and focus. Organizations have to focus on the elements involved in competitive advantage in their quest to identify the sources of competitive advantage (Hoffman, 2000).

Superior skills and superior resources have been identified as sources of competitive advantage for organizations. Barney (1991) clarifies that those resources that are rare,

valuable, non-imitable and have no substitutes hold the potential to develop organizational competitive advantage. The concept of core competencies has further been touted as another source of competitive advantage. Competitive advantage is realized only when organizations combine an assortment of resources and skills in such a way that they achieve a unique competency or capability that is valued in the market place (Crawford & Cooke-Davies, 2012). Scholars posit that intangible assets contribute the most to value generation and consequently achievement of competitive advantage for the organization (Vallejo-Alonso *et al* 2011; Hoffman, 2000).

Firms may succeed in establishing competitive advantage by combining skills and resources in unique and enduring ways thus gaining the ability to focus on collectively learning how to coordinate all employees' efforts in order to facilitate growth of specific core competencies. Project management is a best example of such a combination of resources and skills in the current business environments and should not just be about meeting time and budget goals but also creating competitive advantage and value for the organization (Shenhar, 2012).

Scholars have also noted that organizations should use different types of information to establish whether competitive advantage has been achieved according to the orientation type of the firm. Measures of customer inputs such as satisfaction and loyalty; balancing of competitor focus to complete the assessment of competitive advantage of a firm should also be used. A competitor oriented firm will emphasize more on relative resources or cost positions while customer oriented firm will emphasize on segment differences and differentiation advantages. Strategic management literature has identified factors used to establish how firms develop and

maintain competitive advantage in different industries like quality image, market profile, coalition formation, forward integration, expertise, culture, information technology, meeting customer needs on time and every time (Crawford & Cooke-Davies, 2012; Hoffman, 2000).

Knowledge Management field has also tried to investigate the link between the management of knowledge in contemporary organizations and competitive advantage development by developing variables like organizational effectiveness, efficiency, core competency, costs, knowledge harvesting, filtering, configuration, dissemination and application. Technology transfer has also been identified to be a significant source of competitive advantage for organizations with variables including developing technological learning performance, organizational intelligence, causal ambiguity, firm specificity, complexity, maturity, employee qualification, and innovation orientation. (Vallejo-Alonso *et al*, 2011; Ismail *et al*, 2010; Thomas & Mullaly, 2008)

2.4 Project management and organizational competitive advantage

With a lot of benefits linked to the effective employment of PM approaches in our organizations, more emphasis has been placed on the contribution of these approaches to the organizations competitive advantage. Richardson (2010) acknowledges that the use of PM approach in organizations lead to improved organizational competitive advantage. This is achieved through improved operational processes and efficiency in the use of scarce organizational resources. This can be attested when he touts the use of PM approach as one of the top ten factors leading to project success.

These PM approaches help organizations learn from their past successes and continually redesign their operational processes to optimize on the next organizational project initiative. This leads to development of a positive organizational culture and organizations should consider making continuous investments in improving these PM approaches. Value is achieved by helping the organization tweak the standard and tested approach or use most of it to fit their different project initiatives instead of thinking through a complete project plan each time they launch a new project initiative. This positively reduces the time to market for the organization's products and services thus improving the competitive positioning of the organization in the market place (Turner, 1999; Richardson, 2010). For better success, these approaches must become part of the organizational culture, as well as formally be communicated and installed on ongoing processes supported by management with input from the appropriate stakeholders.

In most cases, PM approaches are defined by industries or consulting organizations to fit their general class of problems, organizational culture, and other such factors and then sold as best practices to organizations in form of consulting services. Managers should learn that buying a commercial PM approach and installing it unaltered in an organization would typically result in minimal or nil value. For it to be successful all the stakeholders need to be convinced of its value addition as well as customized to fit the organizations strategic objectives (Wysocki, 2003; Longman & Mullins, 2004).

2.5 Summary and conceptual framework

The researcher provides a summary conceptualizing the study and provides a diagrammatic representation of the relationships existing between the variables under study.

2.5.1 Summary

In this study the researcher aims to establish the contribution PM approach has on organizational competitive advantage in telecommunication firms in Kenya. It has been established that organizational benefits can be realized from investing in time, money and resources to build organizational project management expertise in almost all organizations (Shwalbe, 2011).

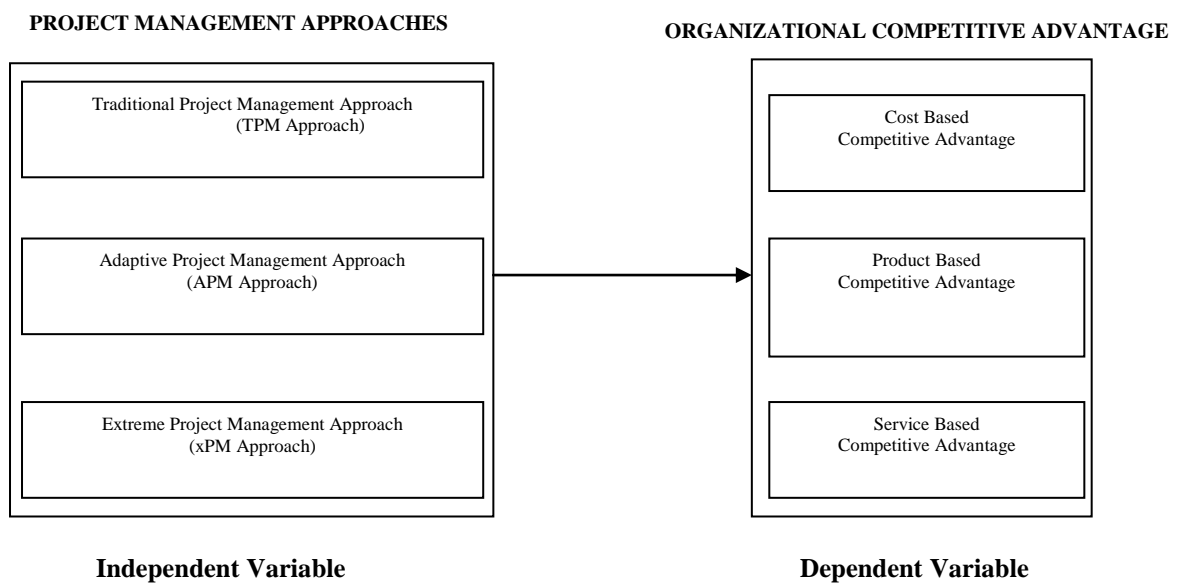
It has also been established that firms may employ project management to establish competitive advantage by combining skills and resources in a unique and enduring way. This combination of an assortment of resources and skills helps the firms gain the ability to focus on collectively learning how to coordinate all employees' efforts in order to facilitate growth of specific core competencies (Shenhar, 2012).

It has also been established that use of PM approaches in organizations lead to improved organizational competitive advantage which is achieved through improved operational processes and efficiency in the use of scarce organizational resources. In the Kenyan telecommunication environment, increased competition and demand from customers, has forced some firms, if not all, to consider the use of project management approaches to implement their new undertakings (Omenye, 2013).

2.5.2 Conceptual framework

PM approaches were identified as the independent variables with main approaches being: traditional project management approach; adaptive project management approach; and extreme project management approach. The independent PM approaches were identified as key factors in this study. Organizational competitive advantage was regarded as the dependent variable derived from the value and quality perspectives with main elements consisting of “cost-based CA, product-based CA and service-based CA”.

Figure 4: Conceptual framework.



CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The researcher used a descriptive cross sectional survey. This helped the researcher to gather data that is systematic and factual about the behavior, opinion and characteristics of the study variables. The design was also useful because it has been advanced in literature as an applicable fact finding tool for educational studies, and was preferred because of its appeal for generalization within a particular parameter (Cooper & Schindler, 2008).

This type of design has also been employed in various studies of similar breadth as the current study such as Mukhwana (2013), who evaluated the challenges facing implementation of Telehealth projects in Kenya, a case study of Safaricom Limited, Nokia and Orange Limited. Ngobia (2013) also used this design in his study of the basis of competition in the mobile phone industry in Kenya.

3.2 Population

The target population consists of those people, events and records with the desired information for the research study (Coopers & Schindler, 2008). The study target population consisted of the three major telecommunications companies in Kenya. They include Telkom Kenya Limited, Safaricom Limited and Airtel Kenya Limited (CA*, sector statistics report, 2014-2015).

3.3 Sampling procedure

The study conducted a census of all the three telecommunication firms in Kenya which entailed examining all the elements in the target population. A census was undertaken because of the small number of members in the population.

Respondents consisted of all Seventy (70) staff identified purposively as working in project related tasks based at the headquarter offices of the three firms in Nairobi. This enabled the researcher to establish the contribution of project management to the organizations competitive advantage. The 70 respondents were spread across various departments in the respective organizations as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Targeted respondents in the three telecommunication firms across departments.

Telkom Kenya Limited	Staff in PM area	Safaricom Limited	Staff in PM areas	Airtel Kenya	Staff in PM areas
IT & N	8	Technical & IT	8	Technology & Customer service	6
HR, Facilities & Security	2	Resources	2	Human Resources	2
Legal & Regulatory Affairs & CEO's Office	2	Risk Management	1	Legal & Regulatory	1
Corporate Communications	1	Corporate Affairs	1	Alliances & CSR	1
Finance	2	Finance	2	Finance	2
Quality and Audit & Investigations	1	Internal Audit	1	Internal Assurance	1
Marketing and Strategy & Orange Money	2	Strategy & Innovation	2	Enterprise Services	2
Mass Market	1	Consumer Business	2	Marketing	2
Customer Care & B2B Marketing	2	Customer Management	2	Mobile Services	2
Business Market	1	Enterprise Business	1	Telemedia Services	1
Business Transformation & SME	1	Marketing	1	Supply Chain	2
Carrier Services	1	Financial Services	1		
TOTAL	24		24		22

Source: Author.

3.4 Data collection

The researcher used primary data because it was the only method that could be used to collect the information required by the researcher. A structured questionnaire comprising of both open ended and closed ended questions was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A sought to establish the background information of the respondents; Section B sought to establish the PM approach used in the respective organizations and the competitive positioning of the firms in the Kenyan telecommunications market; Section C sought to investigate the contribution of project management towards the organizations' competitive advantage.

The questionnaires were administered using the "drop and pick method" as well as via the internet "on-line questionnaire" to conveniently collect the respondents' views. This method was used by Olunga (2007) and proven to increase the response rate, faster to administer and cost effective.

A pilot study comprising 10% of the study's respondents was conducted to find out if the respondents could answer the questions without difficulty. They were asked to evaluate the questions for relevance, comprehension, meaning and clarity. The instrument was modified on the basis of the pilot test.

The Cronbach Alpha was used to test reliability of the instrument and the items were found to meet the standard threshold of 0.7. The data collection instrument was also subjected to an examination by panel experts and the researcher's supervisors to ascertain its content validity and was ratified as valid.

3.5 Data analysis

The data collected was coded and analyzed using graphs, tables and percentages to provide summaries of the respondents under study. Means were used to identify the project management approaches and competitive positioning of the telecommunications firms in Kenya. Standard deviation was used to establish consistency of application of project management approach and the competitive positioning of these organizations.

The researcher used correlation analysis, regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to establish the direction and strength of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables as well as the significant differences between the project management approaches (independent variable sub-constructs) used in the firms in relation to the organizations' competitive advantage (dependent variable).

These were tested under the model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$

where Y = Organizational competitive advantage; β_0 = Constant; β_1 , β_2 and β_3 are the beta coefficients that describe the effect of project management approaches that is traditional approach (X_1), adaptive approach (X_2) and extreme approach (X_3) on organizational competitive advantage. ε represents the error term.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the study as set out in the research methodology. The chapter also provides the interpretation of the results of the data derived from the 70 respondents within the three telecommunication companies in Kenya which included Telkom Kenya Limited, Safaricom Limited and Airtel Kenya Limited and in comparison to the literature review.

All the 70 respondents issued with the questionnaire responded and returned their questionnaires. The realized response rate was therefore 100% and was deemed to be excellent. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), 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 considered to be excellent. This excellent response rate is attributed to the extra efforts made by the researcher in developing an on-line questionnaire and making courtesy calls to remind the respondents to fill-in and return the questionnaires.

4.2 Demographic information

This section sought to ascertain the general information on the respondents involved in the study with regard to the departments/ business unit they serve, their length of service to the organization, their highest academic qualifications and the particular project initiatives that were being implemented in their respective departments.

4. 2. 1 Respondent's work stations

The respondents were asked to indicate the specific department/ business unit under which they served in their respective organizations. The findings are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by departments in respective organizations

s/n	Department	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	IT	8	33	8	33	3	14
2	Facilities	1	4				
3	Human Resources	1	4	2	8	2	9
4	Legal and Regulatory	2	8	0	0	1	5
5	Corporate Affairs	1	4	1	4	1	5
6	Finance	2	8	2	8	2	9
7	Quality and Audit	1	4	1	4	1	5
8	Risk Management			1	4		
9	Mobile Services	2	8	1	4	2	9
10	Customer Business	1	4	2	8		
11	Customer Care	2	8	2	8	3	14
12	Enterprise Services	2	8	1	4	2	9
13	Carrier Services	1	4				
14	Marketing			1	4	2	9
15	Strategy			2	8		
16	Supply Chain					2	9
17	Tele-media Services					1	5
TOTALS		24	100	24	100	22	100

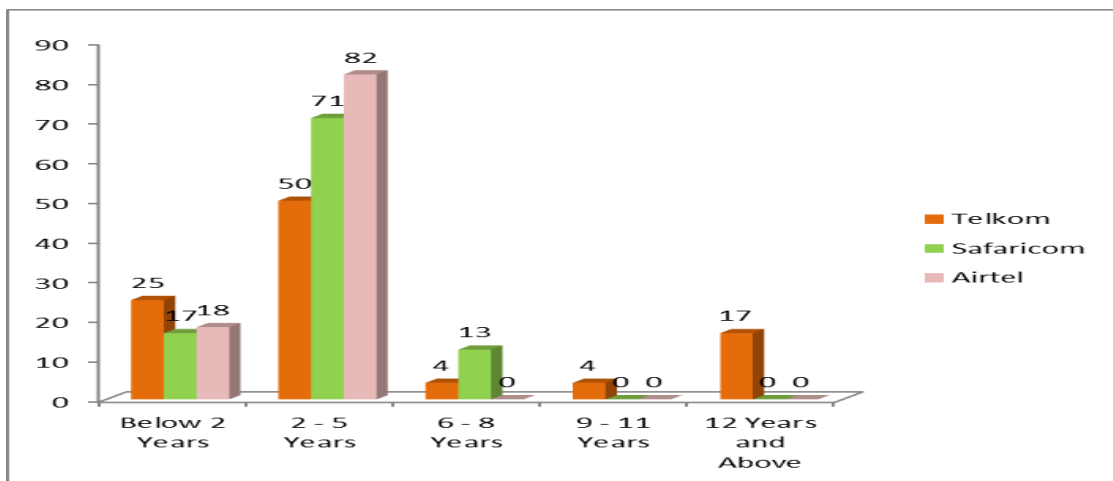
Source: Field data.

From the foregoing table, the respondents were drawn from a good spread of all organizational functional departments thus being a representative sample of all the departments within the respective organizations. This was an important aspect of the study due to its need to collect data that was unbiased.

4.2.2 Respondent’s employment tenure

The respondents were also asked to indicate the period they had served in their respective organizations. The findings are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Respondents employment tenure



Source: Field data

The findings indicate that majority of the respondents in all the organizations served for a period of 2-5 Years. This was an indication that majority of the respondents had served in their organization for a period running between 2 to 5 years which lies within a reasonable strategic implementation period and therefore had a good understanding of the processes going on in the organization and/or had been there long enough to give credible information in regard to project management and organizational competitive advantage in their respective organizations. It is notable that Telkom Kenya Limited had the highest number of employees who have served

for more than nine (9) years, implying that among the three players it had the most long serving workforce.

4.2.3 Respondent’s academic and professional qualifications

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest levels of academic qualifications and state the professional courses which they had realized completion. The findings are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents academic qualifications

	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Highest education Level						
Primary Education		0		0		0
Secondary Education		0		0		0
Undergraduate Education	19	79	19	79	19	86
Postgraduate Education	5	21	5	21	3	14
TOTAL	24	100	24	100	22	100

Source: Field data.

The findings indicate that the collective majority (81%) of the respondents in all the three organizations had attained an undergraduate degree and that twenty nine percent (29%) had completed their postgraduate studies. This shows that the three telecommunication firms employ staffs who are highly educated.

Table 4 indicates the percentages of the respondents who completed professional studies in the respective organizations.

Table 4: Professional courses completed by respondents in respective organizations

Professional Courses	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Project Management	4	17	2	8	1	5
CCNA/ CISSP	3	13		0		0
ITIL	1	4		0		0
LPTC	1	4		0		0
CPA/ IBA -Finance	2	8		0	1	5
TOTAL	11	46	2	8	2	10

Source: Field data.

The findings indicate that across all the three firms, employees who were the study respondents generally had good professional competence. Telkom Kenya Limited had the majority of respondents who had completed professional courses at forty six percent (46%), Airtel Kenya Limited ranked second at ten (10%) percent and lastly Safaricom Kenya Limited with eight percent (8%). The prospect of highly professional employees lies in their ability to dispose professionalism in work and also their ability to learn fast and share knowledge which is highly useful in the very competitive telecommunications industry.

4.2.4 Respondents view on presence of project management initiatives

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether there were project initiatives being implemented in their departments in the respective organizations. The findings are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Presence of running departmental project initiatives in respective organizations

Running Project Initiatives	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Yes	24	100	24	100	22	100
No	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	24	100	24	100	22	100

Source: Field data.

These findings indicate that all organizations had departmental project initiatives currently being implemented with respondents affirming the existence of such initiatives. This was a good realization which confirmed that the study variables and aspects of project management approaches were naturally in existence in the study context.

4.3 Project management approaches

The first objective of the study was to establish the particular project management approaches employed by the telecommunication firms in Kenya and specifically in the three major firms under study. To achieve this, the respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on the questionnaire items on the subject. The responses were rated on a five point likert scale where: 5 being to a very large extent; 4 being to a large extent; 3 being to a moderate extent; 2 being to a less extent and 1 being to a least extent. The mean and standard deviations on these particular items and responses were generated and are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Statements on use of project management approach in respective organizations

TRADITIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Our project goals are clearly documented at the start of our project initiatives.	4.17	0.80	3.79	0.41	2.77	1.08
Our project plans are clearly documented for ease of reference.	3.71	0.84	3.58	0.81	3.36	1.30
The budget allocated to our project initiatives is fixed.	2.42	1.04	3.58	0.70	2.55	0.89
The scope of most of our project initiatives is fixed.	3.71	0.94	3.50	0.87	3.14	1.22
Our project plans have defined start and end dates.	3.63	1.32	3.75	0.66	2.41	0.83
The project plans developed are followed to the letter.	3.00	1.04	3.33	0.90	2.95	0.77
We have systems to monitor the progress of the projects being implemented in this department.	3.21	1.12	3.71	0.79	3.05	0.64
We compare actual performance against the desired performance for our project initiatives.	3.13	1.20	3.21	1.04	3.23	0.52
After implementation of our projects initiatives, key lessons are documented for future reference.	3.58	1.19	3.71	0.68	2.73	0.91
Sum of Means	30.56		32.16		26.19	
Mean	3.40		3.57		2.91	

ADAPTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The scope of most of our project initiatives is variable.	3.13	1.17	3.17	0.94	2.91	1.08
Additional funding is provided during the implementation of our project initiatives.	3.29	0.68	3.17	0.62	3.00	0.74
Revised project plans are developed after the management reviews the actual project progress against desired progress.	4.08	0.64	3.71	0.79	2.68	0.82
The time plan for our project initiatives is varied during the course of the project execution.	3.83	0.83	4.08	0.49	3.00	0.74
Daily progress meetings are held to monitor the progress of our project initiatives.	3.17	0.94	4.13	0.78	3.18	0.65
Changes are incorporated into our project plans during the course of the project execution.	3.50	1.38	3.92	0.76	2.32	1.14

We have systems to monitor the progress of the projects being implemented in this department.	3.21	1.12	3.71	0.79	3.05	0.64
We compare actual performance against the desired performance for our project initiatives.	3.13	1.20	3.21	1.04	3.23	0.52
The management recommends changes to our project plans after reviewing progress reports.	3.79	0.96	3.71	0.54	3.73	0.62
The projects implemented in our department are clearly aligned with the overall organizational objectives.	4.33	0.75	4.25	0.52	4.05	0.98
Sum of Means	35.46		37.06		31.15	
Mean	3.55		3.71		3.12	

EXTREME PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The scope of most of our project initiatives is unknown.	2.17	1.49	2.50	1.13	2.00	1.31
All the stakeholders are involved when reviewing project plans in our organization.	3.67	1.14	3.42	0.70	2.41	0.58
The lessons learnt during project implementation are used as feedback to develop on the revised project plans.	2.96	1.37	3.71	0.61	3.14	0.46
We have systems to monitor the progress of the projects being implemented in this department.	3.21	1.12	3.71	0.79	3.05	0.64
Brainstorming sessions are used to review and improve on our project initiatives.	2.33	1.07	2.75	0.78	2.64	0.64
We compare actual performance against the desired performance for our project initiatives.	3.13	1.20	3.21	1.04	3.23	0.52
The management recommends changes to our project plans after reviewing progress reports.	3.79	0.96	3.71	0.54	3.73	0.62
Changes are incorporated into our project plans during the course of the project execution.	3.50	1.38	3.92	0.76	2.32	1.14
The projects implemented in our department are clearly aligned with the overall organizational objectives.	4.33	0.75	4.25	0.52	4.05	0.98
Sum of Means	29.09		31.18		26.57	
Mean	3.23		3.46		2.95	

Source: Field data.

All the questionnaire items on PM approaches produced means that were averagely over 3.5 and standard deviations that were less than (1) one thus falling within acceptable variations. This implied that items provided captured the aspects of project management approaches very well and that the respondents were also able to understand them as representative of the concept under study. All the three organizations employed project management approaches variously in their business process. The collective means on use of the three approaches is presented in Table 7;

Table 7: Means of project management approaches in respective organizations

Project management approach	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Traditional project management approach	3.4	0.51	3.6	0.2	2.9	0.32
Adaptive project management approach	3.5	0.44	3.7	0.41	3.1	0.49
Extreme project management approach	3.2	0.69	3.5	0.56	2.9	0.32

Source: Field data.

Telkom Kenya Limited largely employed adaptive project management approach in its business processes with a mean of 3.5 and moderately employed both traditional project management approach and extreme project management approaches with means of 3.4 and 3.2 respectively.

Safaricom Limited largely employed all the project management approaches in its business processes. This is evidenced by a mean of 3.6 for traditional project management approach; a mean of 3.7 for adaptive project management approach and a mean of 3.5 for extreme project management approach. Their approach was a fairly balanced mix of the three approaches.

Airtel Kenya Limited moderately applied all the project management approaches in their business processes with means of 2.9 for traditional project management approach; 3.1 for adaptive project management approach and 2.9 for extreme project management approach. However, their application looks comparatively lower to that of the other two firms.

4.4 Organizational competitive advantage

The Second objective of the study was to establish the competitive positioning of the telecommunication firms in Kenya. To do this the respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on relevant statements on how their organization has attained its competitiveness in the Kenyan market. The responses were rated on a five point likert scale where: 5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree; 2 = disagree and 1 = strongly disagree. The mean and standard deviations were generated and presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Statements on respective organization’s level of competitiveness

Statement	Telkom		Safaricom		Airtel	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Our organization offers competitive prices for our products in the Kenyan market.	4.83	0.373	3.92	1.077	3.36	1.226
Production costs for our products and services have been reduced significantly over the last fiscal year.	3.58	0.759	3.46	0.576	2.59	1.073
The management ensures timely funding of project initiatives in our organization.	3.08	0.759	3.75	0.52	3.23	1.312
Our organization allocates an annual budget for providing project management training to its employees.	2.58	1.288	3.46	1.04	2.45	1.033
The delivery of our organization’s new products/ services in the Kenyan market has been significantly improved.	3.92	0.812	3.92	0.571	3.18	0.386

The quality of our organization's products and services rolled out in the market been significantly improved.	3.79	0.999	3.88	0.525	2.77	0.849
The speed of delivery of our products in the market has been significantly reduced over the last fiscal year.	2.75	1.451	3.63	0.807	3.18	0.777
The quality of service provided to our customers has been significantly improved over the last fiscal year.	3.79	1.19	4.04	0.538	2.82	0.777
Our organization has significantly enhanced the resolution of its customer complaints.	3.54	1.29	4.08	0.571	2.82	0.649
We have consistently achieved our business results over the last six months.	3.58	0.954	4.29	0.676	3.73	0.862
TOTAL	35.44	9.875	38.43	6.901	30.13	8.944

Source: Field data.

The study indicated that Safaricom Limited was leading in terms of competitiveness in the Kenyan market with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.270; Telkom Kenya Limited was ranked second with a mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.64 and Airtel Kenya Limited was ranked third with a mean of 3.01 and a standard deviation of 0.39.

4.5 Effect of project management on competitive advantage

In determining the effect of project management approach on organizational competitive advantage in the respective telecommunication firms in Kenya, the study used correlation analysis, regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests to establish the strength of the relationship between the study variables, whether there are any significant relationships between the two and if any differences exist among the three project management approaches in their effect to organizational competitive advantage. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Correlation analysis of effect of project management approaches on organizational competitive advantage

Variables		Stress	Organizational Performance
Project management approaches	Pearson Correlation	1	.802*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.03
	N	70	70
Organizational competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.01*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.02	
	N	70	70
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Field data.

Pearson's product moment correlation statistic was used to test the relationship between project management approaches and organizational competitive advantage. As can be discerned in Table 9, there is a statistically significant strong positive relationship between project management approaches and organizational competitive advantage with correlation coefficient $r = .802$, and $p < 0.01$.

Table 10: Regression analysis results of the effect of project management approaches on organizational competitive advantage.

Model	R	Rsq	Adjusted Rsq	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					Rsq Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
1	.802 ^a	0.643	0.642	0.51054	0.543	352.165	1	70	0

Source: Field data.

The results indicate that project management approaches are responsible for 64.3% of the variation in organizational competitive advantage in the three telecommunication firms, while 35.7 % of that competitiveness can be explained by other factors which are not represented in this study. The coefficient of determination R^2 of .643 depicts that there is a change of that magnitude in every 1 unit measure of organizational competitive advantage attributed to project management approaches. The effect is significant at 0.00 levels which is within the acceptable significant level of .01. This effect is positive and strong. These results therefore satisfy the proposed model.

Table 11: ANOVA results on the project management approaches

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.217	22	1.2434	4.214	0.002
	Residual	80.431	48	0.5123		
	Total	86.648	70			

Source: Field data.

The P value in the study is less than 5 % level of significance as indicated by $\text{sig} < 0.002$. This means that the regression model is significant and therefore fit for this study. The coefficients of the regression model are provided in Table 12.

Table 12: Estimation of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.399	2.380		1.241	0.017
	X1	0.340	0.290	0.164	1.217	0.001
	X2	0.389	0.560	0.191	1.719	0.005
	X3	0.354	0.190	0.161	1.311	0.011

Source: Field data.

The regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.399 + 0.340X_1 + 0.389X_2 + 0.354X_3$$

The regression equation shows that organizational competitive advantage is significantly influenced by TPM approach, APM approach and xPM approach. The regression coefficient for traditional approach is 0.340. This means that the relationship between traditional approach and organizational competitive advantage is positive. This implies that use of TPM approach leads to an increase in organizational competitive advantage and vice versa.

The regression coefficient for APM approach is 0.389. This means that the relationship between APM approach and organizational competitive advantage is positive. This denotes that employment of APM approach leads to an increase in organizational competitive advantage in the Kenyan telecommunications industry and vice versa.

The regression coefficient for xPM approach is 0.354. This means that the relationship between xPM approach and organizational competitive advantage is positive. This indicates that use of xPM approach in organizations enhance organizational competitive advantage in the market place.

4.6 Discussion of findings

The study established that all the three firms had project initiatives running in every department represented which was a clear indication that all the organizations employed PM approaches in their business processes. This was confirmed by the fact

that all the three organizations employed PM approaches variously with Telkom Kenya Limited largely employing APM approach in its business processes with a mean of 3.5; Safaricom Limited largely employed all the PM approaches with means of 3.6 for TPM approach, 3.7 for APM approach and 3.5 for xPM approach; Airtel Kenya Limited moderately employed all the project management approaches with means of 2.9 for TPM approach, 3.1 for APM approach and 2.9 for xPM approach. These findings augment the notion of Larson & Gray (2011) that all the three project management approaches are commonly used across different industries and that the three could be customized to fit any organizational environment within its unique needs.

The study established that Safaricom Limited was most competitive with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.270. Telkom Kenya Limited was ranked second in terms of competitiveness with a mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.641 and Airtel Kenya limited was ranked third in terms of competitiveness with a mean of 3.01 and standard deviation of 0.390. This indicates that the project management approaches used by the telecommunication firms influenced their competitiveness in the market place. This can be explained by the Pearson's product moment correlation statistic of .802 which showed that there was a statistically significant strong positive relationship between project management approaches and organizational competitive advantage.

The regression analysis results indicated that project management approaches were responsible for 64.3% of organizational competitive advantage in the three telecommunication firms with individual regression coefficients of 0.340 for TPM

approach; 0.389 for APM approach; and 0.354 for xPM approach. The findings augment the notion of Pinto *et al.* (2010) and Rocha *et al* (2012) that organizations that use project management tools experience better results than those that do not. The findings go further to establish that concurrent use of the PM approaches in a good mix provides the opportunity to yield better results as can be observed in Safaricom Limited leading in terms of competitiveness in the market place.

The study further established that there was no significant difference between the various PM approaches used in the telecommunications organizations in regards to their competitiveness in the Kenyan Market. This shows that the organizations do not prefer any single approach and mostly employ all the approaches according to the project needs and characteristics. However, it can be observed that the firm that had a good mix of the three approaches tended to be more competitive than those that opted to predominantly use one single approach. These findings augment the notion of Richardson (2010) that there is no single approach that has been broadly accepted as being distinctly better than the others. The findings however shed more light onto this notion when they establish that a good mix of the three approaches enhance organizational competitiveness as can be observed in Safaricom Limited.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study in line with the objectives of the study. The researcher intended to establish the effect of project management approaches on organizational competitive advantage in telecommunication firms in Kenya. The specific objectives sought to establish the project management approaches used by telecommunication firms in Kenya; to establish the competitive positioning of telecommunication firms in Kenya and to determine the effect of project management approach on organizational competitive advantage in the telecommunication firms in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of findings

The study established that all the three firms had project initiatives running in every department which was a clear indication that all the organizations employed project management approaches in their business processes.

The study also established that Safaricom Limited was most competitive with a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.27. Telkom Kenya Limited was ranked the second in terms of competitiveness with a mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 0.64 and Airtel Kenya limited was third in terms of competitiveness with a mean of 3.01 and standard deviation of 0.39. The findings further established that concurrent use of the project management approaches in a good mix provides the opportunity to yield better results.

The study established that there was no significant differences between the various project management approaches used in the telecommunication organizations in regards to their competitiveness in the Kenyan market. Furthermore, the study established that the relationship between TPM approach and organizational competitive advantage was positive and the use of TPM approach in organizations enhanced their competitive advantage and vice versa. It also established that the relationship between APM approach and organizational competitive advantage was positive. This denoted that employment of APM approach in organizations highly increased an organizations' competitive advantage in the Kenyan telecommunications industry and vice versa. The study established that the relationship between xPM approach and organizational competitive advantage was positive. This indicated that use of xPM approach in organizations' enhance their organizational competitive advantage in the market place.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that the three project management approaches are currently and commonly applied by the telecommunication firms in Kenya to realize positive results for the organizations and that a good mix of the three approaches provides the opportunity to yield better results.

The study concluded that Safaricom Limited was most competitive; Telkom Kenya Limited was ranked second in terms of competitiveness and Airtel Kenya limited was ranked third in terms of competitiveness in Kenya.

The study concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between project management approaches and organizational competitive advantage. This study also concluded that project management approaches were significantly responsible for the organizations' competitive advantage in the three telecommunication firms in Kenya.

5.4 Recommendations

The study established that the three project management approaches were commonly and currently applied by the telecommunication firms to realize positive results. This study therefore recommends the use of PM approaches to run and manage project initiatives in the telecommunications sector as well as in the general business environment. This improves the firms' efficiencies and reduces operational costs.

The study established that PM approaches used by the telecommunication firms' influenced their competitiveness in the market place. This study therefore recommends the enhancement of PM capabilities for the organizations' employees through training to improve the PM skills of the workforce which ultimately improves the competitiveness of the organizations.

The study established that project management approaches were highly responsible for the organizations' competitive advantage in the three telecommunication firms in Kenya. This study therefore recommends the financial development of the organizations' project management cultures which improves their productivity, profitability and competitiveness in the market place. The study finally recommends the documentation of key lessons, deliverables and challenges after a successful implementation of project initiatives for future reference.

5.5 Limitations of the study

One limitation in this study is that factors like technology, finance, human capital, organizational structure and organizational policies were not considered. These factors contribute to the 35.7 % of organizational competitiveness and should be considered in order to enhance the accuracy of the study.

Another limitation of the study was that the correctness of formulated objectives was not discussed. This is because there was little or no consensus as to what constitutes a valid set of performance criteria which could be used while assessing the performance of organizations in any industry. Investigating this aspect was not part of the study.

5.6 Suggestions for further study

This study sought to investigate the effect of project management on organizational competitive advantage in telecommunication firms in Kenya. This study could also be replicated in another industry to show the project management approaches employed by organizations in other industries and whether use of project management yields the same gains.

Other data collection methods different from the semi-structured questionnaire can also be used to conduct this study. Employing other data collection methods may accurately capture the different variables under study thus providing the researcher with more information for analysis.

Future researchers may consider introducing a moderator variable in the current study's direct relationship. The moderating variable may check the effect of PM on an organizations' competitive advantage and may provide positive or negative results.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

Introduction

Please note that your responses will be confidential and shall not be revealed to any third party. Your views, opinions and evaluations are important in this research. Please answer all the questions to the best of your knowledge.

SECTION A: background information

1. Department/Business Unit.

.....

2. Period of service in your organization.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Below 2 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 - 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 – 8 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 – 11 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 years and above | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. What is your highest academic qualification (Please tick as appropriate).

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Primary Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Secondary Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Undergraduate Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Postgraduate Education (E.g. MBA, PHD e.t.c) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Professional Courses (E.g. PMP, Prince 2, e.t.c) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please specify:

.....

4. Our department has a number of projects being implemented this financial year.

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------|
| Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please turn over

SECTION B: project management approach

Please indicate to what extent your organization uses project management approach in its business processes by ticking appropriately where 1 = Least Extent; 2 = Less extent; 3 = Moderate extent; 4 = Large extent and 5 = Very large extent.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH		1	2	3	4	5
1	Our project goals are clearly documented at the start of our project initiatives.					
2	Our project plans are clearly documented for ease of reference.					
3	The budget allocated to our project initiatives is fixed.					
4	The scope of most of our project initiatives is fixed.					
5	The scope of most of our project initiatives is variable.					
6	The scope of most of our project initiatives is unknown.					
7	Our project plans have defined start and end dates.					
8	The time plan for our project initiatives is varied during the course of the project execution.					
9	The project plans developed are followed to the letter.					
10	Additional funding is provided during the implementation of our project initiatives.					
11	Revised project plans are developed after the management reviews the actual project progress against desired progress.					
12	The lessons learnt during project implementation are used as feedback to develop on the revised project plans.					
13	Changes are incorporated into our project plans during the course of the project execution.					
14	All the stakeholders are involved when reviewing project plans in our organization.					
15	We have systems to monitor the progress of the projects being implemented in this department.					

Please turn over

PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPROACH CONTINUED		1	2	3	4	5
16	Daily progress meetings are held to monitor the progress of our project initiatives.					
17	We compare actual performance against the desired performance for our project initiatives.					
18	Brainstorming sessions are used to review and improve on our project initiatives.					
19	The management recommends changes to our project plans after reviewing progress reports.					
20	After implementation of our projects initiatives, key lessons are documented for future reference.					
21	The projects implemented in our department are clearly aligned with the overall organizational objectives.					

Please turn over

SECTION C: organizational competitive advantage

Please indicate to what extent you think your organization has attained its competitiveness in the Kenyan market by ticking appropriately where 1 = Strongly disagree (Totally unimportant); 2 = Disagree (Unimportant); 3 = Neither agree or disagree (indifferent); 4 = Agree (Important) and 5 = Strongly agree (Very important).

Organizational Competitive Advantage		1	2	3	4	5
1	Our organization offers competitive prices for our products in the Kenyan market.					
2	Production costs for our products and services have been reduced significantly over the last fiscal year.					
3	The management ensures timely funding of project initiatives in our organization.					
4	Our organization allocates an annual budget for providing project management training to its employees.					
5	The delivery of our organization's new products/ services in the Kenyan market has been significantly improved.					
6	The quality of our organization's products and services rolled out in the market been significantly improved.					
7	The speed of delivery of our products in the market has been significantly reduced over the last fiscal year.					
8	The quality of service provided to our customers has been significantly improved over the last fiscal year.					
9	Our organization has significantly enhanced the resolution of its customer complaints.					
10	We have consistently achieved our business results over the last six months.					

****Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this Questionnaire****

APPENDIX 2: MBA Project supervision allocation form

0773100344
0721420573



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
MBA PROJECT SUPERVISION ALLOCATION FORM**

SECTION A: (To be completed by the Student)

Name of Student: Kennedy NZOKA Reg. No.: D61/61753/210

Proposed Title of the Study:

The effects of 'project perspective' on organizational
Competitive Advantage: Case study of Telkom Kenya Limited

Specialization (Tick as appropriate):

Operations Management

Management Information Systems

Procurement & Supply Chain Mgt.

Suggested Supervisors: (1) Mr. Okwiri (2)

Signature of Student: [Signature] Date: 25/10/2013

SECTION B (To be completed by the Department)

Name of Supervisor Allocated: Charles N. Naxiuli

Allocated Moderator: Dr J. M. NJIHA

Total number of students allocated to the supervisor within the year to date:

Acceptance by Supervisor:

Name: Signature: Date:

Approval by the Thematic Coordinator:

Name: Auelo E.O. Signature: [Signature] Date: 15/10/14

Approval by Chairman of Department:

Name: Dr NJIHA Signature: [Signature] Date: 10/2/14

Note:

- Original to be filed in the Department
- Copy 1 (Photocopy) to be filed by thematic Coordinator
- Copy 2 (Photocopy) to be filed by the Supervisor

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPT. OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
P. O. Box 30197 - 00100
NAIROBI


APPENDIX 3: Proposal correction form

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

PROPOSAL CORRECTION FORM

Student Name.....KENNEDY NZIOKA.....
Registration Number.....D61/61753/2010.....
Department.....SCHOOL OF BUSINESS.....
Specialization.....BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT.....
Title of Project Proposal...PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND
ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: A CASE
OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS FIRMS IN KENYA.....

The student has done all the corrections as suggested during the Proposal Presentation and can now proceed to collect data.

Name of Supervisor...G.N. KAMUKI.....Signature........Date...26/9/14.....

APPENDIX 4: Recommendation letter from MBA coordinator



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
MBA PROGRAMME

Telephone: 020-2059162
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE... 29th September 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter Mr. KENNEDY NZIOKA

Registration No..... D61/61753/2010

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

PATRICK NYABUTO
MBA ADMINISTRATOR
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

