

**AGILITY STRATEGIES AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF
COCA-COLA BEVERAGES AFRICA-KENYA**

MOSES OTIENO OMONDI ANGIRA

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DECLARATION

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



Sign.....

Date 21st August, 2021...

Moses Otieno Omondi Angira

D61/75311/2014

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



Sign.....

Date 24 August, 2021...

Dr. Caren Angima

Senior Lecturer

School of Business

University of Nairobi.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my entire family. To Emelia and Eliana, this is an inspiration to spur pursuance of intellect in all frontiers, an exemplification that you can achieve anything that your heart so desires.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBL	-	Crown Beverages Limited
CAP	-	Competency Acquisition Plan
CCBA	-	Coca-Cola Beverages Africa
CCBA-K	-	Coca-Cola Beverages Africa- Kenya
COVID	-	Corona Virus Disease
CSD	-	Carbonated Soft drinks
DCT	-	Dynamic Capability Theory
EBL	-	Equator Bottlers Limited
FMCG	-	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
I/O	-	Industrial Organization Theory
ISO	-	International Organization for Standardization
KAM	-	Kenya Association of Manufacturers
NBL	-	Nairobi Bottlers Limited
PESTEL	-	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors
RBT	-	Resource Based Theory
SQM	-	Strategic Quality Management

ABSTRACT

The operating environment for a modern firm is volatile and non-static. Its continued existence and success thus depends on strategies it employs to curb the dynamic changes that if not managed well may contribute to loss of competitiveness in the industry. This study aimed at establishing the agility strategies employed by CCBA-K and their contribution to sustaining CCBA-K's competitive advantage in the beverage industry in Kenya. With CCBA-K as the unit of study, case study design was adopted. The research relied on industrial organization view, resource based theory and dynamic capability theory for its theoretical underpinnings and foundational basis. Data collected was analyzed using content analysis and presented. Innovation, operation dexterity, resource fluidity and strategic quality management were established as the four main agility strategies employed by CCBA-K to sustain its competitive advantage in the Kenyan beverage industry. These strategies help the organization move with speed and be flexible to not only the local environment but also in the international space. The study found out that these strategies are as a result of environmental scanning and a thoughtful process resulting to strategies that have an impact to the organization's competitiveness in the industry. These agility strategies enable CCBA-K to focus on fast and innovative responses to changes in its operating environment, making it able to troubleshoot on possible uncertainties and take on available opportunities in ensuring it achieves or sustains its competitiveness. Innovation as established involves product innovation, package innovation, systems and information technology improvements, innovations to facilitate execution and business sustainability. Speed and flexibility strategies addresses how fast CCBA-K responds to changes in the industry, how fast and flexible resources are deployed to implement and close on established changes or risks in the operating environment and lead time to actualize sales to the customers. A comprehensive quality management system was also established as a competitive strategy that has significantly contributed to the CCBA-K's competitiveness in the industry. The study concludes that competitiveness of an organization in the market is dependent on the strategies it employs and how well they are executed. The study notes that the organization's top leadership has the responsibility of identifying and making decisions on which of these agility strategies it will employ and have them well aligned to the overall organizational objective(s) and goal(s). One of the study's recommendations include the organization should document the implementation of these agility strategies for reference and learning. The study further recommends a holistic approach to identification to implementation of these strategies by incorporating views of frontline staff and drive an organizational wide implementation as opposed to limiting to departmental level.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Modern firm's continued existence in a volatile and non-static environment depends on strategies it employs to curb unprecedented challenges that may impede its success. Otache and Mahmood (2015) observes that the business environment is highly competitive, dynamic and heterogenic. Surrounded by such conditions, there is need by firms to be responsive to such market dynamics and challenges quickly and seamlessly in order to maintain market competitiveness under conditions of environmental instability and uncertainty (Weill & Vitale, 2002;Elali, 2021). Challenges faced by firms globally include among others environmental turbulence as a result of ever-evolving competition, technological changes, demand fluctuations and supply chain disruptions by manmade and natural disasters (Long, 2012). Such level of turbulence in the environment can paralyze a firm's operations and hence its existence. Agility strategies, help organizations focus on fast and innovative responses to changes in its operating environment, making it able to troubleshoot on possible uncertainties and take on available opportunities ensuring it achieves or sustains competitiveness. Being responsive is important to organizations since it helps it track its path on its competitiveness in the market. The agility strategies employed by an organization reflects the types of challenges and potential threats that an organization perceives to contribute negatively to its competitive advantage in the industry. Its ability to implement these strategies is an indicator on its capability to deal with the challenges and threats. Agility is therefore key to success of the contemporary firm considering the nature of challenges it is faced with.

Organizations operate in a complex system that include the environment which needs to be carefully studied and adjusted to in order to gain competitive advantage (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008). There are theoretical foundations upon which this study hinges. These are Industrial Organization theory (I/O), Resource Based Theory (RBT) and Dynamic Capability theory (DC). I/O theory is supportive in this regard since it emphasizes on scanning the external factors to the organization (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008). The organization depends on resources from the environment to build on its competence and influence its behavior (David, 2011). RBT and Dynamic Capability theories are critical in building an understanding on how and why the agile strategies are employed by an organization and how the strategies will influence its competitiveness. Creation of an organization is to pursue desired objectives, however, they are exposed to challenges from different quarters with varied uncertainty level that limit their ability to plan and execute actions to achieve their desired goals. This backdrop calls for continuous reorganization, flexibility and innovation that comes with being agile.

The business environment in Kenya similarly has experienced both good moments and turbulence alike. Influx of additional soft drink players has contributed increased competition in the industry, higher excise duty imposed on soft drink has played out to the disadvantage of the soft drink industry in Kenya. Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya (CCBA-K) is alive to these changes and coming up with strategies to remain competitive in the market. Agility is increasingly being acknowledged to contribute to a firm's competitiveness as beneficial impacts are felt in the organization. There are more empirical support that have emerged linking agility and firm's industry competitiveness (Giachetti,

et.al., 2013). According to Chakravarty et. al. (2013), organizations respond differently to these changes which also occur in variably different forms specific to the desired goal. These may be leveraging on new technologies, reducing market risk exposure, adopting new infrastructural capabilities or making sound decisions on business lines to explore or pursue.

1.1.1 Strategic Agility

Doz and Kasonen (2010) defines strategic agility as the capacity to make strategic commitments while staying nimble and flexible. It is considered to be a means by which organizations transform to reinvent themselves and adapt in order to survive. These strategies basically enable a firm to be sensitive to opportunities and threats and subsequently respond by putting together the required organization resources with speed (Denning, 2018; Overby, Bharadwaj, & Sambamurthy, 2006). Agility, coined in a manufacturing context is consistently gaining traction as a business concept and embraced firm wide (Christopher & Towill, 2002). Agility strategies if employed appropriately should enable an organization to survive and prosper in a tumultuous and competitive environment by establishing systems to enable fast and effective market response.

The following attributes characterize organization agility; ability to seize opportunities, flexibility, identify market shifts, responsive, and leveraging on its competitive edge. According to Glen (2009), the pointers are quick response to strategic opportunities, shorter decision/production/review cycle, focus on risk management, integrating voice of the customer, focus on change management, interdisciplinary project teams, innovation,

contingency planning, use of iterative project management practices, leverages on technology.

The nature and approach of the agility strategies employed is determined largely by an organizations competitive position within an industry. Doz and Kosonen (2008), developed the concept of Strategic agility. They assert that strategic agility is required when the organization is exposed to rapid and complex change. The dynamism of the industry however is not exhaustive and thus the strategies employed vary from one organization to another with the view of sustaining its competitiveness in the industry.

1.1.2 Competitive Advantage

David (2011) defines competitive advantage a firm has as the firm's ability to do whatever it does especially well compared to its competitors in the industry or owns a resource that rival firms desire for them to be competitive. Strategic decisions in business are about achieving some advantage for the organization over competition in the industry. A strategy should have a clear statement of what competitive advantage it will achieve and sustain. According to David (2011), Strategic management should facilitate sustenance of competitive advantage, through sound management of their resources and current core competencies while simultaneously developing new competencies. Therefore, sustainability of a competitive advantage can be achieved when other companies unsuccessfully imitate the company's strategies and while at it, it continues to do what it does especially well than others in the industry.

The dynamism of the industry is non-exhaustive and thus the need for agility if the organization is to sustain its competitiveness. The competitive advantage of an organization is therefore largely determined by the industry. An organization like CCBA-K having been in the beverage industry must have employed different strategies and it is imperative to find out if the agility strategies employed, if available, and their contribution to sustainability of its competitiveness in the industry.

1.1.3 Soft Drink Industry in Kenya

Soft drink industry is one of Kenya's most competitive sectors and due to the size of its market it has attracted both local and multinational companies. This industry is a major contributor to the Kenyan manufacturing industry that is estimated to have expanded by approximately 2.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2020 (KNBS, 2020). The portfolios in the industry are classified as carbonated soft drinks (CSD), mineral water (Still and sparkling), energy drinks and ready to drink juices. These portfolios are then presented to the ultimate consumers in sizes that are apportioned in different packages and prices. Most companies in the sector leverage on marketing, advertisement, brand loyalty, pricing and quality to gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

This industry is currently characterized by competition from different product ranges, among firms of different sizes and business strategies (Owino, 2002). Coca-Cola the mother company upon which CCBA-K is premised, had limited competition in the country since independence (Abdallah, 2000). Unlike then where the competitors available were not spread throughout the country, new competitors have since emerged and the market

has since seen more players come in with new products that pose competition to Coca-Cola products all over the country. Despite some players exiting the industry, new players have also entered the scene, as single entity or in alliances in bid to position themselves in the market. Some players in the industries include Azam Industries, Highlands Industries, Kevian industries, Milly foods, Crown Beverages, Excel Foods, Bidco limited, Treetop, Kenya Canners and Pepsi who recently came back into the scene after a bruising battle with Coca-Cola in bid to control the East-African market in the early 1980s (Abdallah, 2000). Other players have exited the scene such as Softa Bottling Company. Coca-Cola Beverages Kenya has a vision of integrating all the bottlers in the country with currently having merged Nairobi Bottlers limited, Equator bottlers limited, Crown Beverages limited and Almasi Bottlers limited.

Global activities and developments have greatly impacted the industry. Changes in the foreign policies, consumer awareness regarding healthy living, socio-economic dynamics such as Brexit, COVID-19 which are emerging issues with which any manufacturing industry is contending and thus consequential. Intense competition is compounded by cheap imports and substitutes from new entrants threaten the strategic position of the incumbents in the market. Trade liberation, regional trading blocs and free markets approaches among nations open gates for massive imports thus saturating and disintegrates the markets (Owino, 2002). For manufacturing unlike service organizations, competitive strategy is built around the product and allied services are needed to support the product e.g. information about the product, marketing (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008).

1.1.4 Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya

The Coca-Cola Company has managed to build its global stature through its operations that permeate through to local scale across the whole world. The company remodeled to bring together all the bottlers in Africa by forming a one beverage company in the continent, Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) in 2015 as strategic approach to the business that continuously evolve and faces competition. The conception of the idea of having a one unified CCBA is not only strategic but also agile. CCBA-K cannot rely on the Coca-Cola brand alone to remain afloat, it must have had other strategies, agile or otherwise, with regard to the changing market dynamics to sustain its competitiveness.

In Kenya, Coca-Cola has managed to capitalize on the strength of its system to create the customer reach with a local focus through its franchise business through bottlers which comprise Coastal Bottlers Limited, Mt. Kenya Bottlers Limited, Nairobi Bottlers Limited (NBL), Almasi Bottlers, Equator Bottlers Limited (EBL), and the Coca-Cola juices of Kenya. Under the CCBA name, all these bottlers are being amalgamated to form one Coca-Cola Beverages- Kenya (CCBA-K). Some of CCBA-K competitors and industry players are Azam industries, Highlands industries, Kevian industries, Milly foods, excel foods, Bidcoro, Treetop, Kenya Cannery and Pepsi among others.

CCBA-Kenya is headquartered in Nairobi Bottlers plant, Nairobi County along Airport North road and headed by a management team consisting of a General Manager, and functional country directors. NBL is the largest among these bottlers in Kenya with more than 50% contribution of the market share in the soft drink industry. CCBA-K currently

deals with bottling of carbonated soft drinks, mineral water, energy drink and manufacture of juices. It has also expanded on its product portfolio to selling alcoholic product brands from Crown Beverage Limited, under the Campari brand, an arrangement that comes with the acquisition. This broadened scope of operations, integrated approach and diversity in the product ranges are agility approaches that CCBA-Kenya have considered to be competitive advantage in an industry with alcoholic giants such as East Africa Bottling Limited (EABL), Keroche bottling limited among others, Excel foods, highlands in the bottled water market, Bidco in the energy drink market among others.

1.2 Research Problem

Business entities strive to gain and sustain competitive advantage in their respective industries by ensuring that they consistently respond and are flexible to the changes in their environment (Elali, 2021; Muema, 2019). This is achieved by provision of these goods and or services better, in a more effective and efficient ways than their competitors (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Al Shehab (2020) notes that strategic agility reflects how senior management in an organization are capable to adopt, flexible and creative and trouble shoots to forecast unexpected shocks inside and outside the business environment in which it operates and proactively respond to them quickly and effectively to convert them into opportunities, this is achievable by adopting the right agility strategies. Organizations need to be flexible, aggressive, focused and adaptive to change (Doz & Kosonen, 2008). Elali (2021), emphasizes that organizations that are keen on inventing and reinventing itself to align to changes in its environment will remain competitive.

CCBA as an organization looks forward to lead the market in the respective countries in which it operates in Africa and its Kenyan operations are not left on this goal. It is looking forward to merging all the bottlers in the country and leverage on the Coca-Cola brand to achieve this objective. Competition in the Kenyan market is especially rife from new entrants in CSD and juice business. Mineral water business is also expansive in Kenya with many brands in the market and thus as an area of interest for CCBA-K. Agility strategies at CCBA-K will without doubt see into it that the organization sustains its competitiveness. The formation of one CCBA-K is a strategic move that will ensure market consolidation and bring in centralized management. Innovations will be standardized, use of same system unlike the varied approaches adopted in the previous model.

There have been various studies on different strategies employed by NBL and other bottlers in Kenya. However, there are related studies in the industry whose objectives are varied and specific to particular strategies employed in the industry. No known study has been done on CCBA-K in the area of agility strategies. Internationally, a study by Elali (2021) on the importance of strategic agility to business survival during corona crisis and beyond established that successful organizations are distinguished from failures by how they adopt unconventional strategies and philosophies to face new challenges so as to keep pace with rapid developments and successive changes happening in their operating environments to achieve competitiveness. Locally, Muema (2019) in her study to determine the influence of strategic agility to competitive advantage of private hospitals in Nairobi county established that adoption of efficiency improvement strategies and flexibility to adjust to changes in their environments have largely contributed to their competitiveness. Mwenda

(2018), in his study to determine strategic responses to competition in the alcoholic beverages industry – a case of East African Breweries Limited, establishes that the operating environment is not static and as such there is need to by organizations to constantly scan for strategies that will enable it to be responsive to competition and sustain its competitive advantage .This study concludes by identifying competitive intensity, competitiveness of products, competitors resources and capabilities are critical to the strategic responses an organization will take. This study recommends agility in response to the growth of the competition in the alcoholic beverage market space. This study however, does not give specific identification of how the responses have been employed and executed.

This study appreciates the dynamism in the industry and the need to be responsive to be competitive; key element of agility. There is no known study that particularly addresses the agility strategies employed by CCBA-K or any of its subsidiaries and their contribution to its or their competitive advantage. This study therefore sought to fill this gap by answering the research question: What agility strategies are employed by CCBA-K and what is their contribution to sustainable competitive advantage in the beverage industry in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study was to establish the agility strategies and competitive advantage of Coca- Cola Beverages Africa in the Kenyan beverage industry.

1.4 Value of the Study

This study serves as a useful source of information to the Kenyan government, its agencies, manufacturing companies, investors and regulators to come up with well thought policies and programs that will spur growth and sustainability of the manufacturing companies in Kenya. Regulatory bodies mainly the Kenya Association of manufacturers (KAM), can use the findings of the study to improve the framework for agility strategies employed in the manufacturing sector.

The findings of this research also provide information to facilitate and enhance management of manufacturing companies with regard to matters relating to types and nature of agility strategies to employ. Findings of this research can also be used by manufacturing companies in developing their strategies and improvement on cost management, capability utilization and customer satisfaction among others; and subsequently enable the existing manufacturing companies to identify areas to improve on in their areas of operations that can result in increased productivity and profitability through increased revenue or reduction in operational cost.

From a theoretical point of view, the study is a source of information in the field with regard to agility strategies. The conclusions and recommendations arrived at shall contribute to theory with regards to types and nature of agility strategies. This study is also expected to add value to scholars and researchers since it is expected contribute to the body of knowledge on strategic agility and competitive advantage applicable in manufacturing industry in Kenya. It is anticipated that the recommendations will be of great importance to scholars, who may unearth valuable research gaps for research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews theories upon which this study is anchored. The theories are Industrial Organization View (I/O), Resource Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capability Theory. Also covered is a review of empirical literature.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This section reviews relevant views and theories in relation to the study. These are industrial organization theory, dynamic capability and resource based theories.

2.2.1 Industrial Organization Theory

Proponents of the Industrial Organization theory (I/O) assert that industry factors influence competitiveness more than internal factors. Michael Porter's five forces model focuses on analysis of external industry factors as basis for gaining and sustaining competitive advantage, and contends that organization's competitiveness will be primarily determined by industry forces (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008).

The external factors and industry in which a firm chooses to compete has a stronger influence on firms' competitiveness than internal functional decisions (David, 2011), these factors have a great influence on the nature and type of strategies employed to achieve competitive advantage. David (2011) further posits that industry properties upon which firms should focus on to be competitive include: economies of scale, barriers to market entry, product differentiation, the economy and level of competitiveness. Competition in the industry is influenced by industry factors such as ease of entry into the industry by new

entrants, availability of substitutes. Owino (2002), notes that soft drink industry requires large capital investment and a lot of expenditures to ensure that the brand is recognized in the market. These are barriers to entry that largely influence competition in tandem with Michael Porters view. Application of the propositions of this theory by an organization have to factor in the nature and type of strategies to be employed to gain and sustain competitiveness in the industry.

2.2.2 Resource Based Theory

The Resource Based Theory (RBT) proposes an explanation that links competitive advantage to how an organization manages its internal resources. Penrose (1959) whose ideas on RBV were expanded by Wernefelt (1984) to give life to the theory opines that strategy is a balance between exploitation of existing resources and development of new ones. Proponents of this theory assume that there are some resources which are not easily imitated since they are specific to firms and that the variation in resources is a source of competitive advantage depending on how they are employed (Das & Teng, 2000). Hunt (1991) defines resources as anything that has an enabling capacity. The organization is viewed as a collection of valuable, rare, non-substitutable and imperfectly imitable resources that enable it gain and sustain superior returns (Bowman & Ambrosini, 2003). Porter (2008) asserts that competitiveness over time is determined primarily by how exceptionally well an organization allocates and utilizes its resources and capabilities as opposed to structural characteristics of the industry.

Owino (2002), in his study noted that availability of resources and how they are employed is important to influence and determine competitiveness. He also highlights that the types and nature of strategies employed by organizations are centred around their available resources. This is by far an indicator of the impact of resource base an organization has to its competitive advantage. The resources an organization has will therefore have an influence on the nature and types of agility strategies employed and to an extent will play a significant role in its strategic positioning for competitiveness in the industry.

RBT models a firm as an entity with a bundle of distinctive resources that are key to developing a firm's competitive advantage and offering an explanation that a firm's strategic capability depends on its resource capability (Armstrong, 2016). This view gives a practical justification on how resources influence the types and nature of strategies employed by a firm to be competitive and as such provides a conceptual basis for asserting that agility strategies are a sources of competitive advantage and their sustenance thereof.

2.2.3 Dynamic Capability Theory

The Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) attempts to breakdown the complex problem of sustainable competitive advantage in today's dynamic environment (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). This theory is seen to fill gaps identified in RBT. Teece & Pisano (1994) asserts that competitive advantage will belong to those companies that are agile; ability to react fast and be flexible to innovation, and at the same time manage their firm specific capabilities to optimize its competences. This theory assumes that organizations are able to sense, seize

opportunities and reconfigure their resources and capabilities to match the changes in market environment in order to create and sustain competitive advantage (Teece, 2009).

Dynamic capability studies shows that dynamic capability has a positive effect on competitive advantage and that environmental dynamism is an important driver for the effect to be significant (Li & Liu, 2014). Six capabilities are recognized as relevant to firms, these are managerial, marketing, technological, Research and Development, innovation and human resource (Breznik & Lahovnik, 2016). With the dynamism in the modern business environment, this approach is applicable to this study since it stresses the exploitation of the existing firm specific competences to cope with the ever changing environment (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Organizations endowed with dynamic capabilities are assumed to perform better than those with less endowment or lack dynamic capabilities and therefore have a competitive advantage (Breznik & Lahovnik, 2016). This theory is applicable since it mixes both the internal and external views of resource deployment and has a holistic approach to what considerations are to be made in making strategies for competitive advantage.

2.3 Agility Strategies and Competitive Advantage

To achieve competitive advantage, an organization must have strategies in place to enable this to be achieved. Some agility strategies notable in manufacturing industry are product diversification, marketing strategies, leveraging on quality, mergers, take overs, acquisitions, flexible pricing strategies, adopting flexible operations, embracing technology and diversity in the capability build up. Literature provides that for an

organization to be agile, it must show characteristics of flexibility, nimbleness and deftness. The operability of these agility strategies are supported and driven by the following:

2.3.1 Innovation Strategy

Innovation refers to the act of creating new products or processes and it has been identified not only as an important enabler with respect to agility, but also to business success and market competitiveness (Hill & Jones, 2010). Prahalad and Hamel (1990), identifies innovation as one of an organization's critical resource, which represent collective learning. According to Armstrong (2016), an organization's ability to adapt to changing technological advances and customer demands is dependent on its degree of innovativeness. The degree to which an organization shares insights on market trends, continually generates new ideas and uses both its internal and external networks will have an effect on how an organization innovates to adapt.

Hill and Jones (2010), posits that competition is driven by innovation in many industries. Innovation revolutionizes the industry structure and completely change the strength of different competitive forces. Porter (2008), explains in his view referred to as punctuated equilibrium how innovation comes in to reshape the industry by destabilizing a stable industry structure by introducing punctuated periods of rapid change. Successful innovation can transform the nature of industry competition and thus a major source of competitive advantage because it gives an organization something unique that its competitors lack or atleast when they manage to imitate the innovation (Hill & Jones, 2010). Sustainability of competitive advantage therefore depends on imitability of an organization's innovation.

2.3.2 Operational Dexterity Strategy

Organizations aspire to achieve strategic speed and flexibility. Operational dexterity includes both speed and flexibility and as such seen as the ability to identify opportunities faster, adjust to industry changes to grasp available opportunities faster than competitors and commit resources faster to new courses of action or reverse fruitless allocation of resources (Jeneby, 2006). Organization's ability to shift implementation rapidly and deploy resources for innovation is determined by speed and flexibility.

Competitive organizations design their business processes and systems to enable strategic agility initiatives by having modular structures to support it. This modularity enhances higher and faster redeployment potential, flexibility which enhances innovation and adaptability at all levels (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). These structures enables the strategies deployment and thus competitive advantage can be gained as a consequence.

2.3.3 Strategic Quality Management

Quality is an integral part of a product and customers use it to evaluate a product against certain attributes usually related to quality as excellence and those related to quality and reliability. Strategic Quality Management (SQM), a term used interchangeably with Total Quality Management (TPM), is a strategic comprehensive and structured quality approach to management of an organization. Integrating quality with other management practices is key if an organization is to be competitive in the current global marketplace. This integration encompass creating quality awareness, design of quality in the organization and

in the product. All these are built with the sole objective of meeting and exceeding customer expectations (Evans & Lindsay, 1993).

Quality is an inherent part of a competitive organization and thus it is imperative to factor SQM in the organization's strategy. SQM is in tandem with the modern organization practices and share in principles embodied in TQM such as understanding and fulfilling customer needs, responsibility of top management in leading quality, data based approach in problem solving and continuous, teamwork, continuous learning making SQM to addressing quality from strategic management perspective (Juran & Godfrey, 1999).

Managers in manufacturing organizations deal with very critical issues of profitability, cost of operations and quality of goods produced and services rendered. According to Evans and Lindsay (1993), quality is the most significant factor in determining an organization's competitiveness of the three. They argue that high quality of goods and services can give an organization a competitive edge since good quality reduces costs, increases productivity, profits and other measures of success.

2.3.4 Resource Fluidity Strategy

This is the ability to move resources from one place to another where needed. Coined by Doz and Kosonen (2010), resource fluidity in an organization is its ability to reconfigure its internal capabilities, business systems and processes so as to channel resources across various business units for productive use. Agility and competitive advantage is very much dependent on resource allocation and deployment for their actualization.

Jeneby (2006), explored the influence of resource fluidity in adoption of strategic agilities. The faster the resources are mobilized, redeployed rapidly and efficiently used is an important element of agility. Resource fluidity is important since it allows an organization to redeploy and reallocate their resources to new opportunities, new innovation so as to be competitive in the industry or to sustain it.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review and Knowledge Gap

This section discusses empirical studies and explores the methodology, findings and gaps identified. There are studies both in the international and local scopes on similar topic on strategies that have been employed by different organizations to ensure they gain or sustain their competitiveness in their respective industries.

The study by Elali (2021) on the importance of strategic agility to business survival during corona crisis and beyond emphasizes the need to create agile organizations that will thrive in a volatile and uncertain world. This study however has limited integration of this survival to business competitive advantage. This study also aims at bringing clarity in differentiation of operational agility from strategic agility whose focus is sustaining enhanced and reconfigured value by increasing market share, adopting new business models and introduction of new products through innovation, creativity, speed and flexibility in order to increase returns and profits to stakeholders compared to competitors in the same market space.

A number of studies have been done on agility strategies employed in supply chain in the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, similar domain which CCBA-K products fall. Most of them trying to find out on their linkage to competitive advantage of the organization. Gichuki (2017) concluded that agile supply chain management strategy is important in FMCG industry as it influences the firm's competitiveness. Kariithi (2016), also had similar conclusion despite the contextual differences and variations in their study designs. This is however different from this study which does not focus on relationship as the two but considers them insightful since supply chain is an important department in the operations of CCBA-K. Manufacturing strategies for agile manufacturing identified include lean production, time based production, socio-technical demand chain management. Agile manufacturing just like the operations of CCBA-K can only adopt the methods and techniques since they are originally for other industries such as automobile and electronic industries.

Muema (2019), in her study on influence of strategic agility to competitive advantage of private hospitals in Nairobi adopted a descriptive research design and a census approach to collect its data. The study established that most private hospitals adopted efficiency improvement as a total quality management agility strategy which has a great influence to their competitive advantage. This study further established that flexibility and customer service has a significant influence on how customers make their choices which consequently influences the hospitals competitiveness. This researcher suggests that future research should be done to expand the scope of her study and or replicate it to other industries other than private hospitals in Nairobi, a gap that this study seeks to address. All

the studies tend to converge in agreeing to the four strategies which are innovation, operational flexibility/dexterity, total quality management and resource fluidity as agility strategies that organizations seeking to remain competitive must embrace in the dynamic business environment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was adopted to operationalize this study and achieve its objectives. It contains the design of the research, data collection methods and data analysis so as to facilitate achievement of the objectives of this study.

3.2 Research Design

Case study was used as the research design with CCBA-K as the unit of study. A case study focuses on an in-depth investigation of phenomenon, individual or an institution (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This design was considered appropriate for this research since it offers an opportunity to have a complete observation with an emphasis in depth rather than in breadth analysis. This case study approach upon analysis give valuable insight(s) to visualize patterns and causes for behavior that is critical in informing conclusion about the industry.

3.3 Data Collection

Data for this study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources. A set of questions aligned to the study objectives were administered to the country management team of CCBA-K through an interview. These are the top leadership of CCBA-K who influence the strategic decisions of this organization and include managing director, finance director, manufacturing director, safety, quality and health director, logistics director, sales and marketing director and public affairs and communications director.

A combination of personal interviews and online interviews were used to collect the data. This study sought to collect sufficient data to understand agility strategies employed by CCBA-K and how those strategies aid in sustaining its competitive advantage. Yin (2009) notes case studies have a more theoretical leaning rather than statistical, and as such usually brings close interaction with practitioners during the research process.

3.4 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to assess and analyze the data collected. Content analysis is a systematic research method used for analysis and making inferences from qualitative form of information (Hawkins, 2013). Although this method often analyzes written words, it is a quantitative method whose results are numerical. The counting does remove much of the subjectivity from summaries and simplifies the detection of trends.

Esch and Esch (2013), emphasizes that this analysis technique is vital when making objective inferences and systematic identification of special characteristics of information from their sources such as advertisements, brochures, magazines, photographs, newspapers, websites, television commercials, video tapes or any other medium that can be turned into text.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data findings on the agility strategies employed by Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya and their competitive advantage. This chapter provides the findings of the research. A discussion of the findings is also presented at the last section of this chapter.

4.2 Agility Strategies and Competitive Advantage

In order to establish whether the agility strategies employed by CCBA-K have a contribution to sustaining competitive advantage, the researcher sought to establish the link between the agility strategies and the organization's competitive advantage. To achieve on the objectives of this study the following agility strategies were examined innovation, operational dexterity, resource fluidity and strategic quality management. The respondents were asked specific questions around the strategies to establish linkage with competitive advantage with an eye on sustainability.

4.2.1 Innovation Strategy

The respondents in this strategy affirmed that innovation has been a great contributor to how adaptive the organization has been. All the respondents described different levels of innovation across the various departments in the organization as a major contributor to the overall organization's competitiveness. The following were specific findings on innovation as a strategy.

4.2.1.1 Product innovation

Product innovation takes different forms at CCBA-K such as introduction of new products into the market, enhancing of quality and improvement of their products performance. CCBA-K introduced energy drinks into the market after seeing an opportunity that resulted from market scanning and responded to the market demand. At the onset, energy drinks were singularly procured from monster energy and locally sold through a collaborative arrangement. Currently due to demand, there is a portfolio of energy drinks that are locally produced by CCBA-K, example Power play, Predator. This has enhanced entrenchment into the energy business thus increased market share.

The organization in its diversification strategies, has partnered with other players in the industry from which it has had arrangements to increase on its beverage portfolios. Dormans coffee has been subcontracted to manufacture Barista coffee which are sold as a Coca-Cola product in the hot beverage portfolio. Other third party agreements with vendors to self-manage own warehouses at the vendor locations has enabled improve on governance which has also caused reduction in losses. This innovations as opined by most of the respondents have been critical to the sustained competitive advantage through increased market share and growth.

4.2.1.2 Innovative Product Packaging

Product package is an important aspect of the product. The package serves as an important tool for marketing the product, it is also instrumental to relaying the product information to the consumer and creates lasting impressions and appeals to the customer on what the product is. It is on these background that CCBA generally reinvents its products packaging

occasionally to ensure rejuvenation of some of its products as necessary. CCBA-K has since changed packaging designs for some of its products, for example Dasani 500ml bottle was redesigned so as to remain unique in the market, prompted by competitor's imitation on the previous one. This informed the change in marketing strategies of the Dasani and consumer information to ensure buy in.

Introduction of multipacks by repackaging different brands into one particularly in the juice portfolio, 2 Liters, 1.25L. This primarily looks into increasing affordability whilst promoting market penetration of the juices and carbonated soft drinks in the pack sizes involved. Here, different variants of juices are mixed and packed as a case and sold. This mixing of different product brands which are sold as one increases the overall brand uptake, where there is increased consumer choices. Provision of increased choices and variety bundled together has been a marketing strategy that has significantly improved on sales. CCBA-K is currently the only one in the market delivering to their distributors and key accounts in such packages making.

4.2.1.3 System and Information Technology Strategy

Introduction of cameras in truck cabins technology in CCBA-K trucks which has significantly improved monitoring of safety which has had a trickle effect on efficiencies, informed repair cycles. Informed strategies in incident management tracking. Improved fleet metrics and KPI tracking, example, truck turn-around time, influenced strategies deployed on visibility and tracking customer deliveries thereby curtailing potential waste sources and informs continuous improvement. Improved order fulfillment lead time by

employing of the macmobiles to the sales field teams to place orders that have improved customer service and reduced on order fulfilment errors.

The entire organization has embraced ICT as part of its DNA, use of statistical tool controls to monitor quality of production in manufacturing, appreciation of Robotics by embedding artificial intelligence in its machines computing systems. A stronger ERP system in SAP that is used in the entire organization. This has provided a robust integration through the entire value chain that has significantly reduced order fulfillment plans, accurate forecasts, objective utilizations and increased efficiencies that has an overall effect on the ultimate organization's competitiveness.

Technological improvements in CCBA-K's laboratory capability has significantly reduced the lead time for producing analytical results which has significantly improved on decision making due to reduction in elongated period of waiting. For example, samples such as power play concentrates and the new formulations were being flown abroad for analysis, an exercise that would really slow down decision making since the earliest this result would be got is a week.

4.2.1.4 Execution Strategies

The organization is continuously scanning for better ways of executing and implementing on some of its strategies. The organization in a bid to increase market share, it's flexibly agreed to supplement the complex distribution network by creation of direct sales team that does home delivery of products for example bulk products such as 18.9litres Keringet

water, CSD through a robust distribution system especially during this period of pandemic when product up take was low. Introduction of TUK TUKs to support secondary distribution this has been instrumental especially during this pandemic of COVID-19, this innovative initiative has enabled more outreach by improving the delivery system.

The organization has also adopted an execution model that integrates the various functions to each other through a robust linkage to its information technology platforms. Objectives are well communicated and functional teams aligned to expectations. Team meetings and reporting is done to track performance and monitor deviations. Management reviews is done on the performance and it is during this exercise that targets are set on key performance indicators and cascaded downwards up to the frontline staff for execution. Execution strategies are planned and documented in policies, daily plans, standard operating procedures and work instructions. Implementation is then cascaded at various levels for example at management level, service level agreements, committees, sub-committees, labor union and workers representatives etc.

4.2.1.5 Sustainability Strategies

Recycling of PET bottles to drive sustainability. CCBA has subscribed to global initiative of world without waste, where it drives on reducing plastic wastes through recycling of its PET packaging materials. Reduction in use of plastics by reduction of plastic density in its packages. This is achieved through stakeholder engagement and alignment to the initiative of world without waste. These engagements have for example involved stakeholders such as Kenya association of manufacturers, PETCO, FKE as partners to CCBA-K in the

initiatives implementation. The organization also has a plant that specifically manufactures and distributes PET containers to East and Central Africa. Continuous market scanning is happening through market insight analysis and robust market forecasting by the planning, sales and marketing departments to inform strategies to adopt and which ones to drop especially on consumption scanning patterns and provision of discounts etc.

There has been product innovation across different stock/shelf keeping unit (SKU) ranges and packs, introduction of new products to meet emerging consumer needs. This is basically responsive to market scanning and identification of opportunities to remain competitive. These strategies have had a significant contribution to sustaining competitiveness despite the existing competition.

In all these initiatives, it is clear that innovation is encouraged and celebrated. This has played out to contribute to the sustainability of CCBA competitive advantage by driving affordability through small packs, differentiation to meet diverse consumption moments, enhancement of their CSD, juices and waters to support healthy living trends and numerical distribution to ensure availability whenever, wherever.

4.2.2 Speed and flexibility Strategy

The company has moved with speed to modernize and embed technology in its machines that have a resultant increase in production capacity this has resulted low cost of production due to improved efficiencies and effectiveness. Commissioning of hot fill juice plant has also improved on product (Juices) availability. Juices were previously bought from Coca-Cola Juices Kenya that is since defunct. This has reduced customers reporting out of stocks

in the market, led to increased customer response hit rate due to in full delivery within shorter timelines compared to previous longer purchase lead times from the suppliers.

Distribution of products is organized by zoning and market segmentation with distributors and sales representatives spread throughout the respective areas, this is also supported by a robust fleet portfolio. Seamless integration of system processes to reduce delays example SAP, infinity statistical control tool, macmobile has also played out at increasing the order fulfillment rate by ensuring orders are captured and fed into the system within a short period of time.

The interviewees expressed their confidence in consistency of outputs as a driver of sustainability and competitiveness of the organization in the industry. The organization has cascaded relevant KPIs that supports the organizational speed and responsiveness measures to every department/manager/supervisor/employee. This focuses effort at every level of contribution in ensuring that the outputs are sustained. The study also established from the findings that CCBA-K thinks global but acts local. Marketing strategies, for example, are formulated at group level but must be interpreted and executed in the local context.

The organization leverages on its economies of scale to optimize on its supply chain. Group sourcing ensures CCBA-K get the best pricing of the key inputs. Adoption of Supply Chain Ways, a world class approach in work practices, management and way of doing business has significantly improved the way meetings are conducted and inculcated a world class approach on how business is done. This has a significant role in sustaining good practices

and always ensuring the business remains competitive, this not only assures CCBA-K competitiveness in the local market but also in the global front.

The organization has an expansive means of communication networks through emails, phones and social platforms, visibility on business through which both horizontal and vertical communication flows to enable fastidious execution. Respondents also cited ease of flow of training within different plants especially the online platform at this time of COVID 19, what also stood out from the interview was the cross-functional deployment of staff and engagements within the plants under CCBA-K.

In the spirit of speed and strategic engagements, CCBA-K has service level agreements with Kenya airways offering flights, Safaricom offering communication network through caller user group, Bollore and Acceller on handling some logistics functions on their behalf and other leading service providers in the industry in an enhanced business to business partnerships that assures CCBA-K of premium services. This ensures that there are no delays for example in deliveries, repairs and maintenance. Everything done around responsiveness must support the strategy of defending market share leadership in the beverages segment. The CCBA 5 year strategic plan has emphasized on speed and agility in its game plan for winning in the beverage industry across Africa as an integral part for being competitive.

4.2.3 Strategic Quality Management

All the respondents interviewed confirmed that the organization indeed has a quality management system that aligns to the strategic objectives of CCBA-K. The organization has embraced a number of quality management systems that it has sustained through regular certification through regular audits. Management commitment is clearly articulated in the respective quality management specific policies. These are well communicated through memos, signage strategically positioned in the organization. These include Food safety policy, Quality management policy, Environmental management policy, fire policy. This has created awareness top down and ensures faster decision making. Speed to market is guaranteed, customer needs are well defined and customer feedback is evaluated in a structured manner. Continual improvement is a permanent objective at almost every level at the organization with the view of ensuring there is efficiency which in the long run optimizes profitability.

A well-managed processes and controls that are well documented in blueprints ensure consistent product quality outputs. Clear logistics procedures ensure customers have access to products consistently. There is also employee engagements, through consistent involvement during process improvements and reviews.

Through the routine audits and licensing which are normally done and evidenced by the certifications issued, example, ISO series such as quality management system, environmental management system, food safety managements system, food safety system certification, occupation health and safety among others are source of confidence to both the employees, consumers and shareholders that the business is on the right trajectory.

Employees are trained on this quality practices and certified, this confidence is key to sustaining competitiveness. Through the robust quality management system, the organization has been able to have an organized risk assessment and mitigation strategies, increased consumer engagement and feedback mechanism such as consumer interaction center, product integrity protection mechanisms that have helped the organization a competitive advantage in the industry.

4.2.4 Resource Fluidity Strategy

All the respondents were affirmative that the organization flexibly move resources across the business on need basis. The ease of moving resources across the business has been a competitive strategy in some sort. There has been deployment of employees across plants in the CCBA-K family. There has been merging of certain functions such as finance and human resourcing who are centrally placed at the headquarters in Nairobi. Decisions on which resource is to be moved is done by the top leadership team based on factual data from the relevant business sections and as such has a bearing to the entire business strategy. For example, a particular product produced by one of the plants for the entire business is a strategic decision that relies on capacity requirements and capabilities, logistical and other supply chain requirements, capital expenditure requirements and utilization pools to address the most vital organizational need that supports market leadership.

Respondents agree that CCBA-K is a learning organization and resource mobility is a major source of competitive advantage. Information is readily available through an expansive communication channel across the entire organization. People are free to shift roles horizontally to increase cross-functional knowledge gains and knowledge transfer.

The learning and development platform as structured in the organization enables staff to map their career paths and work towards them. This is achieved through a competency acquisition plan (CAP) that is owned by the employee. Trainings and workshops are conducted at various level both online and offline to close gaps to build CAP and this initiative has been a critical tool that has enhanced growth of human resource pool. This has increased role uptake internally in a succession planning strategy.

This resource fluidity has seen increased capacity and eased shifting of resources, for example, production of bottled water at the juice plant when demand for juices fall, airlifting of spare parts from any of the bottling companies within the country where it is needed than waiting for supplier support which ordinarily takes a number of days. These responses among others within the business is a better response to minimize idle capacity and optimize on need basis. The communication loop has significantly promoted this ease of resource flow by fastening communication through emails, social platforms and online meetings to work groups across the entire business. These strategies interweave and each contributes to the overall organization performance that ultimately feeds into competitiveness.

4.3 Discussion of Results

The objectives of this study was to establish the agility strategies employed by CCBA-K and determine whether these strategies contribute to sustainability of the organization's competitive advantage in the beverage industry. From the study, it was found out that the organization's competitiveness is affected by a number of interrelated factors which are both internal and external.

The study established that CCBA-K have put in place four major agility strategies namely; innovation, speed and flexibility, resource fluidity and strategic quality management in order to sustain its competitive advantage. Innovation is happening at different levels which has an overall positive contribution to CCBA-K's competitiveness. These innovations range from product innovation, product package innovation, and information system and communication technology related innovation, innovation related to execution. Resource fluidity, Speed and flexibility in the organization's operations was also found to be an instrumental strategy that has greatly been applied to ensuring CCBA-K remains competitive in the beverage industry. The study established that a structured strategic quality management system is also key and instrumental in addressing targeted quality assurance approach to ensure there is sustained satisfied customer service as expressed by (Mwenda, 2018) and Skinner (2009).

These findings are in agreement with the theories upon which this study is hinged. They show that CCBA-K has been flexible and easily adaptable to changes in the environment. The agility strategies employed as deduced from the respondents would be hard and expensive for rivals in the beverage industry to duplicate. These strategies put CCBA-K at a better position to explore penetration of new markets, cement on its market position which provide strong barriers to entry for other firms as postulated by dynamic capability theory. Muema (2019) and Long (2012) posits that operational dexterity is indispensable where agility is involved. They further explain that operational dexterity have direct financial impact on returns from associated business strategies that are aligned to the

requirements their consumers and other stakeholders. The ease with which resources are deployed at CCB-K has a great effect on competitive advantage just as exemplified by postulations of resource base theory and dynamic capability theory.

A comparison of studies on the subject was done where their findings and gaps was explored. The findings of this study agrees to a greater extent with that of Muema (2019), which sought to examine the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of private hospitals in Nairobi county. The findings established that strategic agility put forth by private hospitals are in resonance with the findings of this study. Some of the agility strategies employed by CCBA-K are aimed at ensuring product diversification, technological, aggressive marketing and faster and efficient customer service. In both studies there is linkage of these strategies to the organization's competitiveness in the industry however, unlike the other, this study further provides specific ways on what CCBA-K does to respond to the changes in its operating environment.

Muema's study agrees to the principal foundation of this study that strategic agility is critical if an organization has to have a competitive advantage in the market. This study however, focused only on the agility strategies adopted by private hospitals, the findings and conclusions of this study that strategic agility has a positive impact on organization's competitiveness.

Al-Romeedy (2019) while studying strategic agility as a competitive advantage in the airlines, a case of Egypt Air concludes that agility strategies are important tools for

organizations to achieve competitive advantage in a dynamic environment, overcome crises and regain its balance in the global labor market. Premising these strategies as driven by the same factors highlighted by this research which are nature of competition, organizational related factors and complexities and environmental factors, the research aimed at studying the impact of innovation, service quality, delivery reliability, process flexibility and cost leadership. This study concluded that strategic agility greatly affects the competitive advantage of Egypt airline a position that the findings of this study exemplifies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, conclusion and recommendations as informed by the findings and interpretations of the research. It also highlights the limitations identified during the research and challenges of the study. The study further provides suggestions for further research on the area and closes the chapter by providing implications for policy and practice that can emanate from the findings of the research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The objective of this study was to establish the agility strategies employed by Coca-Cola Beverages Africa-Kenya and their contribution to sustaining CCBA-K's competitive advantage in the Kenyan beverages industry. The study finds out that innovative strategies such as product innovations has resulted in dynamic and expanded product portfolios, package innovations, continuous improvement in information system technology, execution strategies and sustainability initiatives that have instrumentally ensured that CCBA-K remains competitive in the beverage industry and that its consumers are continuously refreshed.

It was clear that the organization has strategies that fosters executing with speed and flexibly adjusts to the changes in their operating environment. These strategies as established plays a major role in the organization's competitive advantage in the industry. Emphasis is made on faster responses and flexible approaches through comprehensive

change management approaches to enable them tap the gains associated with emerging technologies, system integration and shorter lead times due to improved efficiencies.

The study also established that a robust strategic quality management adopted by CCBA-K is a competitive advantage upon which the organization leverages on in the industry. Subscription to both local and international regulations and compliance was picked to be implemented from the study. These embedded in continuous improvement through continuous reviews, audits and trainings is a key factor to not only improving competitiveness but also sustaining it. The study further finds out that the adoption of resource fluidity components such as flexibility within the business system and a centralized control over key resources by CCBA-K is very essential in ensuring competitiveness. These strategies all sum up the revelation that CCBA-K is an agile and highly adaptable organization that also seeks to ensure it remains competitive in the industry.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that agility strategies are vital in ensuring sustainability because they give the organization the ability to be flexible and nimbleness to respond to changes in its operating environment as exemplified by the case of CCBA-K .The organization has the responsibility of identifying and making decisions on which of these agility strategies it will employ, for the case of CCBA-K, the study established that the agility strategies revolve around four major thematic areas namely; innovation, speed and flexibility, strategic quality management and resource fluidity which the organization employed and was critical to sustenance of its competitive advantage. The study reveals that the type of

strategies adopted by any organization depends on the objective and goals that are targeted by that organization. This is evidently inferred from the study that the environmental changes around the organization have a great influence to the types and nature of strategies employed and as such, top management have the responsibility to guide the organization in making the right choices when deciding which agility strategies to employ.

The study concludes that an organization that appreciates the need to be innovative, adjusts to the changes in the business environment faster and flexibly. Innovation has been established to be a key driver to ensure sustainability in competitiveness. Speed and flexibility ensures that an organization is always fast to adjust to changes and appropriate decision making, which is a key determinant to remain competitive or sustain it in the industry. Business system flexibility and organizational control over key resources has a direct influence on competitive advantage, this is in tandem with the postulations of resource based view. The dynamism of the customers has also been seen to influence strategies that will particularly focus on the customer with a strategic lens that keeps on quality on check and well managed. The study also observes that these agility strategies should help the organization achieve its overall goal and therefore critical to employ those that will be relevant and realization of this goal.

5.4 Recommendations

This study recommends that the agility strategies implemented by the organization be adequately documented to enable review on how they addressed the strategic needs of the organization in the highly competitive industry. These shall be key data sources and reference points in auditing and reviewing the implementation of overall organization strategy and game plan. This shall not only be key for tracking but also learnings.

The study also recommends that managers should embrace and accommodate innovative ideas from team members and provide enabling environment to spur actualization where they are feasible. These should be focused on improving efficiencies and aligned to the continuously changing business environment. Leadership should incorporate quality strategies during the strategy formulation and implementation as opposed to leaving it to quality department. A holistic approach ensures that the entire organization will appreciate it as a competitive advantage. Finally the study recommends that organizations should keenly guard and protect their key resources even as they strive to fluidly deploy them.

5.5 Implication for Policy and Practice

This study will present valuable learnings that can positively impact policy and practice. The study provides a platform for continuation of the discussions around agility strategies that will be key in bridging the gap between research and practice. This study presents an interactive practical approach to how agility strategies are employed in practice. Policy formulators in the manufacturing environment, government and its agencies, investors and

regulators will find this handy in shaping the thought process as an addition to the references on how agility strategies have been employed with CCBA-K as a benchmark.

The findings of this research also add to the existing knowledge with more insights on the integration in practice to enhance the strategic management in the development of the strategies in Kenya with regard to matters relating to types and nature of agility strategies to employ and their implementation forthwith with the view of establishing competitive advantage and its sustenance.

As anticipated, the recommendations on integrative approach to practice during implementation will be key to organizations, since emphasis is made on having a total organization involvement backed by top leadership commitment rather than a departmental driven. The recommendation of documenting gains and challenges for learning and improvement is also necessary as an input in the strategy implementation review process. The theoretical underpinnings relating to these agility strategies should be linked to the actual realizable facts of practice. This will help in linking existing knowledge to practice.

Policy makers should be cognizant of the limitations of the current agility strategies in relation to competitive advantage and their implementation. This is important as it should inform their contribution to the decision making during policy formulation and be key in advising organizations and government and its agencies in having them aligned for implementation.

5.6 Limitation of the Study

The researcher encountered many challenges while conducting the research. The onset of COVID-19 pandemic struck and posed a great challenge especially in the data collection bit. Being that interviews was the primary form of data collection, the researcher had to resort to conducting the interviews online which were predominantly marred with technological and connectivity hitches, these challenges despite not having effect on the findings, they delayed the data collection exercise that made the researcher fall out of plan and reduced one on one interactions for the interviews done through online calls. The interview schedule was halted little by unavailability of some interviewees due to the changes in their working schedule

Considering that the proposed respondents were all senior leadership of the organization whose schedules are generally very busy, the researcher found it difficult to get the interviews done in time. Some respondents were on leave and as such the researcher had to wait, which significantly threw the researcher off the time planned for data collection.

Some respondents were reluctant in giving some information about the organization, perhaps out their view that the information was confidential. The researcher however, reassured the respondents that information obtained from them would be used for the purposes of the study only.

5.6 Suggestion for further studies

This study suggests that further studies to be carried out in other manufacturing industries other than the beverage industry and service sectors around agility strategies and competitive advantage. Research on other strategies that are not related to agility and their contribution to competitive advantage can also be explored in CCBA-K, other manufacturing companies in Kenya and the service sector. Such studies may be carried out using various others measure. Further studies on this topic can also be carried out to find out the contribution of each of the agility strategies to competitive advantage or have the study done by focusing on different variables not tackled in this study.

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APPENDIX

Appendix I: Interview guide

This interview is to collect data for purely academic purposes. The study seeks to find out the AGILITY STRATEGIES AND COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES OF COCA-COLA BEVERAGES AFRICA-KENYA. All information will be treated with strict confidence.

AGILITY STRATEGIES and COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

INNOVATION

1. What are some of the innovations in your company for the last five years?
2. In what ways has innovation played to your company adopting different strategies?
3. How have these strategies contributed to your competitive advantage in the beverage industry.

SPEED & FLEXIBILITY

1. In what ways has the organization employed/designed speed and flexibility in its operations?
2. As a company, do you carefully consider how best to take advantage of global efficiencies while addressing local needs?
3. In what ways has speed and flexibility impacted on your strategies and competitive advantage?

STRATEGIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT (SQM) (is a comprehensive and structured approach to organizational management)

1. Do you have a Quality Management System in your institution?
2. How does quality management affect the competitive advantage of your company?
3. In what ways has quality management practices improved the competitive advantage of your company?

RESOURCE FLUIDITY (this means being able to flexibly move resources from one place to another as needed)

- 1 How does resource fluidity affect the competitive advantage of your company?
- 2 Can resources be quickly moved in a fluid and flexible way across/around the organization in response to need?
- 3 Is there mobility of people and knowledge in the organization?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION