

**STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL
DYNAMISM OF BRANDING OF VISION MEDIA LIMITED
(KENYA)**

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DECLARATION

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

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

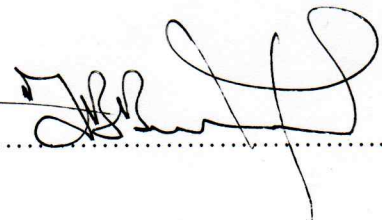
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my Mother, the late Milka Waithira Kaniu, my greatest cheerleader who taxed herself dearly for my intellectual development and growth and encouraged me to begin this journey. Incidentally she met her demise while I was on course and did not live to see the dream come true. Her prayers, zeal for education and wisdom were a guiding light, I will forever be grateful.

My father Peter Kaniu, husband Francis and my little daughter and son, Cheriese and Jeremy for your perseverance as I put long hours and stayed away from family in order to complete this project.

Thank you for your endless love, sacrifices, prayers, support, advice, motivation and encouragement during moments of despair, your enthusiasm kept me going.

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To the almighty God for making all things possible to the very end.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GDP	:	Gross Domestic product
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
NMS	:	Nairobi Metropolitan Services
RBV	:	Resource based View
VAT	:	Value Added tax

ABSTRACT

The study had sought to establish the strategic responses adopted by Vision Media Limited, concerning the dynamic external environment in Kenya. The research was under pinned by resource based view theory, open systems theory and chaos theory. The research design adopted was case study research design. The case selected for the study was Vision Media Limited that is branding firm in Kenya. The unit of data analysis is the top management that is involved in strategy crafting and implementation. The study collected the needed data using interview schedule. The managers selected involved in an interview based on already prepared interview schedule. Short notes were taken during the interview process. The data collected was transcribed and analysed using content analysis. The process involved categorisation of the data into various themes of interest. The themes were based on study objective including the external environmental changes, the strategic responses to external environmental changes and challenges in creating and implementing strategic responses. The data was presented in the form of the thematic areas identified and related to empirical literature to identify point of intersection and differences with empirical literature. Regarding environmental dynamism, the study established that technological changes have led to some products becoming obsolete. Competitors have been employing price wars by cutting on cost of services and products to wrestle customers away. Various regulations including taxation, licenses and permits have increased cost of doing business. Inflation has seen prices of products rise making them out of reach of most consumers in the recent past. Change in the Nairobi county governments has seen new regulations and some old licences cancelled. Regarding response to various environmental dynamism. The study revealed that Vision Media Limited has employed cost cutting, outsourcing some operations to its competitors, offering differentiated products, providing promotional items, sourcing of key supplies from lower prices providers. Regarding challenges associated implementing strategic responses; the study revealed that the strategy of entering into partnership with various suppliers has faced challenges as some international suppliers have since set up stores within Nairobi where other branding firms can also access the said materials. Further, the strategy of outsourcing some operations to its competitors has seen some competitors wrestling away some clients. The study also revealed that responses to change in technology like outsourcing some printing work and leasing some equipment has exposed the firm to unreliability and dependability. Finally, the study revealed that countering government regulation was not possible for an individual business and the collective action through private sector alliance has not born much fruits. The recommends that management of vision media limited to have accurate external environmental scanning to have adequate understanding of the change in external forces before responding through strategies. Further, the study suggest to Vision Media limited to reconsider its outsourcing strategy by only outsourcing non critical tasks so that the firm can concentrate on critical tasks to minimise exposure to risk of unreliable services from outside firms. The study also recommend to Vision Media limited to consider focus strategy where the business targets a specific segment of the market than trying to satisfy all customers under the corporate segmentation.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the global business arena is highly changing hence the need for firms to have quick responses to be able to survive and thrive. Firms are called upon to constantly and continuously study their environment with goal of forecasting and identification of opportunities and threats. Pollanen et al. (2017) noted that firms must respond to environmental changes in a timely manner given that environmental dynamism may render firms strategies obsolete. The business firms must re configure internal processes to reflect the realities existing in the business environment (Aosa, 1998). The firms are required to restructure internal processes including organizational culture, organizational structure and strategic resources (Wijethilake et al., (2017).

The research was under pinned by resource based view theory, open systems theory and chaos theory. The resource-based-view theory presupposes that resources are heterogeneously distributed among firms and immobile (Barney, 1991). Resource distribution provides a sustained competitive advantage. The open systems theory explains that firms are affected by specific or general environmental factors (Virapongse et al., 2016). The general environment is made up of political/legal, economic environment, cultural values, and education quality that determine the level of influence by technology. Finally, Chaos theory holds that industries are in constant state of evolution coupled with complex relations among players and systems in the industry (Wilding, 1998).

The area of strategic responses to environmental dynamism is very critical for survival of a firm. External environmental dynamism influences organizations in the branding industry in Kenya. Such external environmental changes may include competition, government policy, technological advancement, economic variables and socio cultural factors. The firms in corporate branding sector have therefore been forced to adjust to these changes by designing valuable strategies responses or face being kicked out of the market, as customers demand what is latest in the market. The area of study on the association between strategic responses and environmental dynamism in corporate branding firms has scanty literature with most studies being based on firms in other industries.

Vision media limited is a leading firm in the corporate branding industry in Kenya offering various products to their clients. However, the firm is currently operating a highly dynamic business environment hence the need for strategies to effectively respond to the changes in the external environment. The institution ought to formulate strategies to cover products, services, operations and support managerial and leadership processes. The challenges in the external environment that are likely to affect vision media limited may include competition, technological advancement, government regulation, globalization and the demand for efficient services. Vision media limited need to be constantly aware and cognitive of the changes in the dynamic operating environment and to respond appropriately and strategically to these changes.

1.1.1 Strategic Responses

Strategic responses are ways by which organizations deals with environmental dynamism in meeting customer's needs. Strategic responses are necessary for an organization by ensuring their long terms existence as well as their ability to adapt to new operating business environment (Argyres et al., 2019). Strategic responses enables business firms to create pathways for ensuring they occupy a strong portion in market among their competitors. The responses by corporate firms are aimed at delivery of value to their clients at the least possible cost. Pollanen et al., (2017) noted that strategic responses are critical to corporate organizations to be able to operate in a new business environment after shift in conditions.

Hill (2016) argued that no organization could hope to stay afloat in a market environment if it does not coin adequate strategic responses to the environmental changes. Strategic responses call for firms to alter internal conditions and reformulate new strategies in line with changes in the external environment. Pearce (2007) noted that business organization have to rework their strategies and retool internal processes in the light of new operating business environment. Strategic responses affect several areas of operations and, thus call for executive decisions and significant amount of resources, are futuristic and have an effect on the survival of the business organization a midst stiff competition and other environmental changes.

Kabui and Awino (2016) argued that firms respond to environmental dynamism in a variety of ways. For instance, some diversify or divest, others improve products while other firms focus on improving operational efficiency. Firms adopt different strategic responses from time to time but this study discussed expansion, product and technology innovation, mergers and acquisitions, strategic alliance and cost and differentiation strategies (Prajogo, 2016). The kind of strategic response adopted by a firm depends on the operating environment, internal processes of the organization and the desired results by the firm. Strategic responses can take forms including retrenchment, downsizing, divesting and investing, outsourcing, margin improvement, new product development, diversification and specialization (Argyres et al., 2019).

1.1.2 External Environmental Dynamism

According to Chan et al. (2016) external environment are all variables that are not within the control of the management and they affect organizational actions, choice of direction, organizational culture among other internal configurations. External environmental changes, also referred to as external environmental dynamism, are the sources of threats and opportunities. Managers are required to scan external environment to be able take advantage of opportunities presented and to survive environmental threats. The environmental scanning should be followed closely by strategic responses in a proactive manner through reformulation of suitable strategies. Firms that fail to reorganise internal process and resources with regards to external environmental changes may not survive in the long term (Pollanen et al., 2017).

Wang et al. (2019) noted that business environment is a complex web of variables and factors that affect strategies adopted by firms in the process of serving their customers in a profitable manner. External environmental dynamism is characterised by the complexity and frequency of the change where complexity is the depth of the change while frequency is the speed of environmental changes (Njoroge et al., 2016). The success of the business is determined by its ability to respond to environmental changes faster than the change itself. The organization should be proactive to identify possible changes in the external environment before the change happens to be able to respond effectively (Pearce & Robinson, 1997).

Opwolo (2018) noted that each environmental change presents unique challenge to each firm that is different from other firms. Hence, there is need to environmental scanning and strategy formulation to be tailored to the unique circumstances of the business. External environmental changes may be fundamental or temporary. Fundamental changes have long-term implication for the firms hence the business has to respond to them while temporary changes have minimal effect and may be ignored. The environmental scanning must be continuous given the constant external environmental dynamism (Okeyo et al., 2016).

1.1.3 Strategic Responses and External Environmental Dynamism

Njoroge et al. (2016) noted that strategic responses were critical in enabling companies to adapt to environmental dynamism. Strategic responses were important for firms that sought to react to environmental changes. Collins (2014) found that manufacturing firms that had adopted strategic responses were performing relatively better compared to their counterparts that did not implement strategic responses. Trahms et al. (2013) further revealed that cloth making firms that implemented strategic responses were better placed to survive environmental threats compared to firms that were not reactive to environmental changes. Argyres et al. (2019) was neutral in that in that they revealed that strategic responses might not lead to customer satisfaction.

According to Muthoka and Oduor (2014) an organization is able to manage its environment by being proactive rather than reactive. Moreover, an organization is not able to predict external environmental dynamism however, some organization are able to adjust to changes in the environment better and faster as compared to other firms. Firms can respond to environmental dynamism by ensuring that their response matches the complexity and speeds of the environmental challenges (Collins, 2014). Organizations are needed to respond to environmental dynamisms through instituting the right response. Strategic responses enable firms to adapt to increased complexity and dynamism in the business environment. Strategic response involves activities such as new venture development, long term planning, budgeting and business policy (Pearce & Robinson, 1997).

1.1.4 Corporate Branding of Firms

Corporate branding implies the process of applying firm name to firm products such that the combination of company products and name becomes company brand name. Different products supplied by one firms can be marketed using the same company brand name. Corporate branding enables the customers of a firm to identify and differentiate its products from other companies. Better branding by a firm enables the firm to occupy favourable position in the mind of customers. Corporate branding activities includes vehicle branding, labelling, window branding, rollup banners printing, stickers, business card printing, calendar printing (Khan & Ede, 2009).

In the contemporary corporate environment, corporate branding is strategic tool that firms are adopting to create competitive edge over competing firms. Abimbola et al. (2012) noted that in the last two decades, the concept of corporate branding has taken precedence in strategic marketing with concepts such as corporate branding, corporate identity, corporate reputation and corporate image being actively researched in the empirical literature. Balmer et al. (2001) revealed that due to a shift from marketing functional characteristics of products to emotional characteristics, firms are focusing more on corporate branding to gain an edge over competitors.

The aim of corporate branding is to establish and position the firm favourably in the mind of customers in comparison to competing firm's brands. Khan and Ede (2009) noted that a strong brand is critical in sourcing of unique resources to an organization. The corporate brand is therefore a unique intangible resource that can be harnessed by the organization to achieve competitive advantage. The growth in corporate branding has roots in globalization, market fragmentation, imitation of product characteristics, and the perception of economic advantages of branding emanating from communication economies (Khan & Ede, 2009).

1.1.5 Corporate Branding in Kenya.

Kenya's corporate branding industry is thriving, generating twice as much revenue as in Nigeria. Kenya's corporate branding market was worth \$120 million in 2018, compared to \$65 million in Nigeria. Currently the corporate branding in Kenya is slowly moving towards digital corporate branding. The growing integration of the global market place has seen the emergence of increased competition among other environmental challenges (Shihachi, 2012).

Kenyan corporate branding firms are faced with the challenges in the areas of expansion into neighbouring markets, competitiveness especially for global client accounts among other environmental challenges. In the last six months, Kenya's corporate branding industry has attracted both local and international players (Nyambane & Ezekiel, 2014). There are a number of firms in the corporate branding industry offering various branding services.

The major corporate branding firms in Kenya includes; Absolute Corporate Solutions, Vision Media Limited, Brand Extreme, The Branding Company, Brand Mania, Moran Creatives, Key Stone Group, Magic Colours, Click Technologies, Design Hub Consult, Krayone, Brand World, Grid Branding, Blue Flamingo Digital Africa, Ignite Branding Limited, Sketchers Design (clutch.com, 2020). The firms offer services of corporate identity, corporate reputation and corporate image building. Corporate branding has assumed a critical role for improving brand performance among firms.

1.1.6 Vision Media Limited

Vision Media limited is one of the largest media group focusing on different advertisement networks and corporate branding in Kenya. Their professional advertising services cover advertisement network, digital marketing, premium gifts and many more. Vision Media limited has a mission of offering high quality service to their clients and professional team with different skills and full of passion. Creativity and quality are main components to make their brand and corporate image outstanding and famous amidst stiff competition. Vision Media has collaborated with stakeholders and clients in executing brand content (Vision Media Limited, 2020).

Even with various competitive products, that it offers, the firm is currently operating a highly dynamic business environment hence the need for adoption of strategic response to be able to adapt to external environmental dynamism. The institution ought to formulate strategies to cover products, services, operations and support managerial and leadership processes. Any good strategic response shows the firm's mission and its business both at present and planned interchanges between the firm and its environment. The challenges in the external environment that are likely to affect vision media limited may include competition, technological advancement, government regulation, globalization and the demand for efficient services (Vision Media Limited, 2020).

1.2 Research Problem

Strategic responses are very critical to the long-term survival of an organization. Organizations must continuously scan the business external environment with the aim of identifying changes they have taken place and strategize on how to adapt to the changes (Evusah, 2013). Firms have to be aggressive in the formulation of appropriate strategies that can enable them to adapt to the external environmental dynamisms. Firms must monitor the external environmental changes and then restructure internal processes in order to come up with new strategies that can enable them take advantage of opportunities presented by external environmental dynamism to ensure long term survival (Tang & Li, 2018).

Corporate branding firms globally and specifically in Kenya are facing a highly changing external environment that requires the firms to respond in a specific way to be able to survive. The external environment where the firms are operating is dynamic with various changes including government policies, political environment and stiff competition among others. The branding firms operating in such dynamic business environment needs to come up with ways of adapting to the environmental changes. Strategic responses are a key avenue for businesses in corporate branding industry to adapt to dynamic external environment that is threatening their long-term survival. Vision Media Limited in particular has been facing an external environment that is highly volatile and in constant state of change (Vision Media Limited, 2020).

Globally, Sholla and Nazari (2018) examined the external environmental factors that influence the strategic management of the Albanian commercial banks. The study adopted survey design covering all commercial banks in Albania. The impacts of technology and social cultural environments on organizational strategies were significant. Popa et al. (2017) studied the influence of technological and natural environmental factors on the performance. The findings revealed that natural environment, technology have a significant influence firm performance. Chan et al. (2016) evaluated moderation effect of external environmental changes on the association between firm performance and green production innovation. The study adopted descriptive design and OLS for data analysis. The research revealed that environmental dynamism moderated the association between performance and green product innovation.

Locally in Kenya, Mbithi et al. (2017) evaluated the moderating effect of external macro environment on the association between strategic choices and firm performance. The study adopted causation research design and regression technique for data analysis. The study revealed that macro environment has a significant impact on the relationship between firm performance and strategic choices implemented by the firm. Wangui and Eliud (2018) examined the causal effect link between performance and strategic responses of companies processing fertilizers in Kenya. The research used survey design to collect and analyse data. The study showed that cost leadership strategy, focus strategy and differentiation strategy had a major impact on performance of the concerned firms. Nyokabi (2018) examined strategic responses implemented by General Insurance companies in Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive research. Analysis showed that variation in underwriting profitability was explained by the variations in claim strategies, product development, strategic partnership and relationship management.

The studies already done have revealed a number of knowledge gaps. First, most of the studies have been done globally. Second, most studies have tended to relate strategic responses to organizational competitiveness or organizational performance. Thirdly, studies relating strategic responses to external environmental dynamism locally have been carried out in other firms with scanty literature at Vision Media Limited. The study sought answer to the research question: what strategic responses have been adopted by Vision Media Limited to adapt to external environment dynamics?

1.3 Research Objectives

The study sought to establish the strategic responses adopted by Vision Media Limited, concerning the dynamic external environment in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings of this study were valuable for practice, policy and theory. For practice, the managers in the branding industry and Vision media Limited in particular found the study important for decision making regarding adaptation to environmental changes. The results from this study was vital, as it explains the different strategies adopted by branding firm to improve adaptation to environmental dynamism and the extent to which these strategies have been effective.

Regarding policy, the study was also useful to the government for policy formulation. The Report of this study acts as insight for formulation of policy especially at the competition authority of Kenya in matters regarding environmental dynamism among firms in branding sector in Kenya.

Finally, about theory, the research is a valuable document for academicians and researchers in the area of strategy formulation and strategic planning. The study was useful in suggesting areas for further research as well as acting as literature review for further studies. Future scholars in the area of strategic management finds this study useful in establishing the role of strategic responses in adapting firm internal processes to environmental changes to ensure strategic fit of the organization.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature view has been organised covering the theoretical foundation, strategic responses, environmental dynamics and empirical review and gaps. The purpose of literature review is to identify gaps literature that would be filled in the study. The chapter examines three theories relevant for the study. The theories are open system approach theory; Resource based view theory and Chaos theory. The open systems approach theory holds that the organization is an open system that receives input from the environment that is further processed and given out as output. The external environmental thus affects the business as it determines the availability of input to the business and market for finished business products.

The Resource based view theory on the other hand explains that an organization possesses both tangible and intangible resources. The ability of the business to react of the environmental changes through formulation of strategies depends on availability of unique, scarce and valuable resources. The Chaos theory explains that the environmental is changing frequently and in a way that cannot be predicted easily hence presenting disruptions and chaos in the operating environment of the business. The chapter also examines the meaning of strategic responses. Agyapong et al. (2019) described strategic responses as conscious and deliberate actions that lead to formalization and implementation of various plans aimed at actualizing firm objectives.

Finally, the chapter examines the conceptual association between strategic responses and external environmental dynamism. Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) explained that due to changes in the external environment, a business has to create strategies enable it response to the changes in the external environment. Strategic responses are the change in a firm's strategic behaviours in transforming internal processes and responding to external environmental changes that presents threats and opportunities. Successful firms are those that reconfigure their internal processes and formulate strategies that enable them to adapt to a new external environment (Thompson & Lee, 2004).

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

The research was underpinned by three theories including open system approach theory; Resource based view theory and Chaos theory. The theories provides a base upon which the variables in the current study are related.

2.2.1 Open Systems Approach Theory

The system theory has roots in sciences having originated from fields of economics, biology, and engineering. The theory elucidates on principles and laws that are universally acceptable with regards to various systems (Virapongse et al., 2016). Open system views internal processes and operations in the light of external environment dynamism. The open system is based on the assumption that the organization cannot survive in the long run if it ignores external environmental forces including government regulations, technology, legal environment among other environmental forces (Lai & Huili Lin, 2017). Open system is superior to closed systems given that firms do not operate in isolation rather they are part of the bigger environment that is highly dynamic.

The open system approach is relevant for the study on the association between external environmental dynamism and strategic responses at Vision Media Limited. The theory explains that Vision Media Limited is not operation in isolation from the eternal environment hence must be conscious of environmental forces. The firm has to scan the external environment it is operating to be able to identify threats presented by changes in the environment. The firm ought to follow the environmental scanning with formulation of strategic responses that can enable them adapt to environmental dynamism.

2.2.2 Resource Based View

Resource Based View (RBV) was proposed by Penrose (1959) to analyse various resources in a firm that affect their competitive advantage. The theory holds that a firm is a conglomeration of resources both human and non-human that enable it to achieve its objectives. The theory classifies firm resources in to tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources are those resources that have physical form including fixed assets like land, building and machineries. Intangible resources on the other hand are the resources that do not have physical form usually referred to as Intellectual capital.

Resources based view theory is critical in the current study on the association between external environmental dynamism and strategic responses. The theory identifies qualities of resources needed by the organization to be able to formulate strategic responses necessary to handle environmental dynamism. The theory explains that firms can only achieve competitive advantage in the global business environment if it possesses resources that are of value, scarce, difficult to imitate, heterogeneous, and not easily substitutable. The firm can use such resources in implementing strategies formulated to respond to environmental dynamism.

2.2.3 Chaos Theory

Chaos theory has a major proponent in Wilding (1998). The theory was postulated to examine the evolution of industries and the complex nature of the relations among industry segments and actors. The theory holds that Industries are dynamic and complex having the attribute of unpredictability (Wilding, 1998). The conceptualization of industries as complex and unpredictable leads to what the theory referred to as chaos. The managers of firms ought to identify solution through innovation in the chaotic business environment and industries. The firm should identify the best alternative strategy that should be implemented given the resource capability of the firm to be able to respond to external environmental dynamism. The resultant product is a strategic for organization that has implemented the right strategies to external environmental forces.

Mbengue et al. (2018) noted that in the uncertain business environment that presents chaos, firms in the industry should implement strategies that can enable them to deal with environmental uncertainties. The firm should be able to respond to environmental forces through quicker responses to customer changing needs, adoption of new technologies, and acquisition of relevant knowledge by the staff among other responses. The Chaos theory is relevant in the study on the association between external environmental dynamism and strategic responses. The theory reveals that the external environment that vision media limited is operating is chaotic in terms of changes happening in the corporate branding industry with new technologies constantly being introduced.

2.3 Strategic Responses

Agyapong et al. (2019) described strategic responses as conscious and deliberate actions that lead to formalization and implementation of various plans aimed at actualizing firm objectives. Strategic responses can be analyzed at the strategic and operational level such that the overall strategy of the firm must be in line with operating internal environment for any strategy to succeed. Responses to competition may come in the form of expansion strategies which may be used by a firm to ground and position a firm competitively (Gregor, 2019).

Expansion may take the form of Intensive strategies such as market penetration, market development and product development (Chan et al., 2016). Expansion may happen at the firm level through upscaling operations or opening up more branches. Diversification strategy involves the firm entering into a new market with same products or new products in the same market or both new product and new market. The diversification strategy can be executed through expansion of firms activities or acquisition of other firms (Pan et al., 2018). Diversification is a growth strategy that seeks to improve a firm's profitability through expanded sales generated either in the new market or in the new product or both at the same time. Strategic alliance is another kind of strategic response that can be adopted by a firm in the dynamic business environment.

Strategic alliance in a contract between independent firms to work on a strategic product through shared resources and capabilities (Mohammad, 2019). Strategic alliance enables firms to work together on a given product losing their identities. Firms often form alliances based on key strengths of each firm. The firm can also use differentiation strategy in providing products and services that add more value to the customers more than those of the competitors (Zhuang et al., 2019). Here, the customer is made to perceive the premium value in the products and services offered. Differentiation makes the products unique and it is the uniqueness which makes the customer loyal to the firm through brand loyalty (Porter, 1980). The use of modern information technology in product/service modifications and delivery, use of unique design, marketing, sales and even distribution in a non-routine order creates differentiation (Charry et al., 2019).

2.4 External Environmental Dynamism

External environmental dynamism focuses on major shifts in technology, demand, supply, political pressures and other sweeping changes that organizations must respond to survive in the long run. Dynamic events such as political instability may occur virtually overnight leaving a business long-term survival in jeopardy. Environmental dynamism may be slower in its build up, but once a critical point has been reached, it can have serious impacts on how the organizations' survival. Environmental dynamism can affect an organization in both negative and positive ways. It can lead to uncertainty about the future health of the company as well as bring about possible new opportunities for the firm (Romme et al., 2010).

The external environmental of the business that is constantly changing includes the technological, economic, natural environment, political, social-cultural and legal forces. Pearce and Robinson (1997) noted that firms need to respond to the environmental forces to be able to achieve their goals. Pearce and Robinson (1997) further explained that political forces are the regulatory parameters associated with political regime in place. The political environment includes political stability, tax policies and trade regulations, among other factors. The economic forces are concerned with macro and micro economic variable affecting businesses. The economic environment may include GDP, interest rate, unemployment, business cycles, inflation among other economic factors (Prajogo, 2016)

Social factors include population demographics, changing lifestyle, wealth distribution, and culture changings education among other variables. Social factors affects customer satisfaction and needs (Wachira (2010). Technological forces include rate of technological advancement, inventions and innovations and rate at which technology becomes obsolete (Porter, 1980). Technological factors affect the efficiency of the processes that bring products into existence and the way the customer needs can be satisfied. The natural environment encompasses the natural environment that affect the availability of natural resources used as inputs in production and access to markets for products (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990).

2.5 Strategic Responses and External Environmental Dynamism

Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) noted that strategic responses are the change in a firm's strategic behavior in transforming internal processes and responding to external environmental changes that presents threats and opportunities. Successful firms are those that reconfigure their internal processes and formulate strategies that enable them to adapt to a new external environment. Strategic response that is effective demands that the organization should continuously monitor and scan the external environment to identify any changes that may present opportunities or threats (Thompson & Lee, 2004). Strategic response needs learning organizations that's take in information from the environment through environmental scanning (Hanass-Hancock et al., 2011).

Firms respond differently with differently strategies to same environmental change. Strategic responses demand a variety of tangible and intangible resources and strategic decisions being made by the firm. Firms must have adequate tangible and intangible resources to be able to implement strategies necessary to respond to external environmental dynamism to achieve strategic fitness (Aosa, 1998). The ability of firms to respond to environmental dynamism is dependent on the firm's resource capability and organization. The ability of the firm to gain competitive advantage and survive in the long-term period depends on the strategic fit between the firm's strategy and environmental dynamisms as well as between the internal processes and the strategies implemented (Pearce & Robinson, 1997).

Environmental scanning is critical for a firm to understand its environment so as to develop the right objectives and reformulate new objectives that can enable it respond adequately to environmental dynamism (Wang & Zha, 2017). There is always a two-way interaction between the business and the environment in that the business receives resources both human and non-human from the environment, transforms the resources into finished products and services that are in return delivered to the same environment where customers exist (Ansoff and McDonald (1990). The interaction between the firm and the environment is that of resource input from the environment and products output to the same environment (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990).

2.6 Empirical Studies and Research Gaps

Mukherji and Mukherji (2017) evaluated the causal effect relationship between uncertainty in the environment and performance via the mediating role of decision-making style, strategic business activities and strategic orientation. The research showed that Strategic orientation is affected by strategic business activities, decision-making style. Popa et al. (2017) studies the influence of technological and natural environmental factors on the performance. The findings revealed that natural environment, technology have a significant influence firm performance.

Chan et al. (2016) evaluated moderation effect of external environmental changes on the association between firm performance and green production innovation. The research revealed that environmental dynamism moderated the association between performance and green product innovation. Sholla and Nazari (2018) examined the external environmental factors that influence the strategic management of the Albanian commercial banks. The study adopted survey design covering all commercial banks in Albania. The impacts of technology and social cultural environments on organizational strategies were significant.

Owiso (2015) examined the link obtaining between strategic responses and dynamic business environment at Copy Cat limited. The research adopted both secondary and primary data for the purpose of analysis. The research established that strategic responses at the firm study included strategic partnership, new policy documents, strategic planning, product differentiation, market research, employment process that are rigorous, expansion into other East African countries, corporate social responsibility among other strategies.

Mbithi et al. (2017) evaluated the moderating effect of external macro environment on the association between strategic choices and firm performance. The study revealed that macro environment has a significant impact on the relationship between firm performance and strategic choices implemented by the firm. Muchiri et al. (2017) studied the strategic responses implemented by Oil Marketing Companies in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive design to collect and analysis the data. The research revealed that common strategic responses implemented by the firms included strategic mergers, product differentiation and strategic alliances.

Wangui and Eliud (2018) examined the causal effect link between performance and strategic responses of companies processing fertilizers in Kenya. The research used survey design to collect and analyze data. The study showed that cost leadership strategy, focus strategy and differentiation strategy had a major impact on performance of the concerned firms. Nyokabi (2018) examined strategic responses implemented by General Insurance companies in Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive research. Analysis showed that variation in underwriting profitability was explained by the variations in claim strategies, product development, strategic partnership and relationship management.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter outlines methods that were used to collect and analyse the data. The chapter covers the research design, data collection methods and data analysis. The research design adopted was case study research design. A case study is an in-depth examination of single case that possesses characteristics that can then be generalised to the wider population. The case selected for the study was Vision Media Limited that is branding firm hence the firm represented other branding firms in Kenya. The unit of data analysis the top management that is involved in strategy crafting and implementation. All the ten (10) strategic managers at vision media limited will form part of the respondents of the study.

The managers included the general manager business development, general manager finance and investment, General manager production and operations, general manager risk and audits, chief executive officer, General manager supply chain and logistics, general manager human resources, general manager creative design and innovations, chief legal officer, the general manager ICT and general manager external linkages and partnership. The study collected the needed data using interview schedule. The managers selected involved in an interview based on already prepared interview schedule. Before the actual interview, the researcher sought permission from the top management.

Short notes were taken during the interview process. The data collected was transcribed and analysed using content analysis. The process involved categorisation of the data into various themes if interest. The themes were based on study objective including the external environmental changes, the strategic responses to external environmental changes and challenges in creating and implementing strategic responses. The data was presented in the form of the thematic areas identified and related to empirical literature to identify point of intersection and differences with empirical literature.

3.2 Research Design

A Research design is a plan that shall clearly demonstrate how a researcher proposes to undertake the various activities of the study with the main purpose of satisfying the objectives of the research. Adams et al, (2007) looked at research design as a

blueprint used to fulfil research objective(s) as well as answering the research question(s) while in the same instance ensuring that the collected data is appropriate for solving the research problem. Vaus (2001) states that the main aim of the research design is to make sure the data collected shall guide a researcher to effectively answer the research question without any contradiction whereas Babbie (2015) defines research design as a comprehensive design which outlines ways in which data is collected and examined and the results to be outlined.

The adopted case study research design. The case study is an in depth examination of single case that may be a person, an animal, an event or a firm. Further, case study examines persons, decisions, events, periods, policies, projects and institutions holistically using one or a number of methods. The study was a case study of vision media limited where strategic responses adopted by the firm are examined in details. Additionally, the study evaluated the association between strategic responses and environmental dynamism at vision media limited. The study also evaluated the challenges faced in the implementation of strategic responses at vision media limited.

The study was based on qualitative study approach. Qualitative research is adopted to manage information collected through primary sources that cannot be analyzed using quantitative approaches. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) qualitative research method entails examination of particular and intricate social phenomena and access to the experiences of the study subject in a way that generates rich interpretative and descriptive information that gives meaning to the phenomena. The qualitative research approach was useful in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the information collected from strategic managers using the interview schedule.

3.3 Data Analysis

The study adopted interview guides to collect relevant data from the respondents. Interview schedule are oral presentation of questions to respondents to collect primary data. The interview schedule enables the researcher to ask questions orally. The interview schedule was administered among the 10 senior managers at vision media limited. The interview schedule was composed of open-ended questions. Interview schedule is presented orally with the researcher having the flexibility to alter the questions to improve their validity.

The study made use of content analysis to analyze the qualitative data collected from the respondents based on interview schedule. Creswell (2003) defined content analysis as a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristic of messages and using the same approach to relate to trends that defines content. The method was most appropriate technique for analyzing the qualitative data collected during interviews process. The content analysis enabled the grouping of the data into major themes.

The content analysis was undertaken in three data analysis steps. Step one involved documentation of all the issues as were recorded during the interview sessions. Step two involved clustering of all the issues under specific thematic areas. Step three involved development of meanings and conclusions from the thematic areas in relation to the key study objectives. Issues emerging from the interviews were clustered into thematic areas upon which interpretation and conclusions were drawn.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the data analysis and discussion. The study had sought to establish the strategic responses adopted by Vision Media Limited, concerning the dynamic external environment in Kenya. Needed Data was collected from 9 respondents who participated in the interview session. The 9 respondents out of the targeted 10 imply a response rate of 90%. The response rate was high enough for further analysis. Data collected was analysed based on content analysis where major themes were identified and discussed.

4.2 External Environmental Dynamism

The study sought to establish the external environmental changes that Vision Media Limited is facing in their operation in the business environment. The respondents were queried about how Vision Media Limited has been affected by changes in the corporate branding industry. The respondents were of the general opinion that corporate branding industry has experienced varied changes. The respondents noted that the digital brands have left many processes obsolete with change from traditional way of Branding to the Digital processes.

The respondents were also asked about the extent technological force has affected their firm's operations. The respondents revealed that technological changes in the environment have led to some goods becoming obsolete and some processes overtaken by development of new processes. The respondents mentioned the example of earlier computer models being replaced by new and faster computers. Better and new methods of printing have emerged that have since replaced older methods of printing posters. For instance, the respondents mentioned that initially, they were printing using stencil printing until lithos printing came about.

The respondents also mentioned that there is a great shift from print media to online information sharing and online media, this as a result has given rise to obsolete items and products. The impact of competition was also examined where respondents were asked how change in the intensity of competition has affected the operation of Vision Media limited. The respondents stated that when Vision Media Limited was started

back in 2010, there were few competitors, however, since then competition has set in with new entrants posing a challenge to the business.

The competitors have been employing wars by cutting on cost of services and products to wrestle customers from Vision Media Limited. Additionally, the competitors have been employing aggressive marketing and advertising to gain more customers. For instance, in the printing business, small and home-based printing businesses have emerged along the streets of Nairobi thereby posing stiff competition to Vision Media limited.

The study also sought to examine the regulations that have emerged and affecting operations of Vision Media Limited. The respondents were queried about laws and regulations that have inhibited the operations of Vision Media Limited. The respondents mentioned various regulations that have been impacting on Vision Media limited including taxation, licenses and permits. The respondents mentioned the corporate tax that has been set at 30% of the earning of the company by the government. The respondents also mentioned the Value Added Tax (VAT) that was set at 16%. The VAT has made most the services and products out of reach to most customers given that the tax is shifted to customers inform of higher prices. The respondents also mentioned trading license that they must get every financial year. The trading licence is very high within Nairobi City County compared to other counties in Kenya. Other cost include Fire Licences that must also be paid by the business. The ensuing taxes and licenses have increased the cost of doing business significantly thus eating into the profits of Vision Media Limited.

The study also evaluated the effect the economic environment in Kenya and how it has affected Vision Media limited. The respondents were of the general opinion that economic environment has complicated the process of doing business. Economic variables that the business faces includes inflation that has seen prices of products rise making them out of reach of most consumers in the recent past. The responds mentioned that prices of various materials they use for offering their services have been rising. The high prices implies that the prices of products that Vision Media limited offers also has to rise as the prices are shifted to the customers. The respondents specifically mentioned that Vision Media Limited operates on the market rates basically limiting their prices since they also have to maintain competitive rates.

The study also evaluated how change from one government to another has affected Vision Media Limited. The study therefore asked the respondents whether change from one government to the other both at the county and national government has affected the operations of Vision Media Limited. The respondents were of the general opinion that new government regulations on business operation. The respondents held that the change in the Nairobi county governments has affected their operations with new governments coming up with new regulations concerning licencing. The respondents mentioned the change in county government where some duties of the Nairobi county government were transferred Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS). The change in the structure of governance meant that some business licensees were cancelled especially those issued improperly. The respondents also mentioned that operating at County level requires the business to seek new licences to be allowed to operate, Further; respondents reported that every county has a unique way of operations that end up wasting business time. The respondents mentioned that their operations in Kajiado and Machakos County have to be licensed even after getting Nairobi county license.

4.3 Strategic Responses to Environmental Dynamism

The study sought to establish how Vision Media limited has managed to respond to various environmental dynamism. The study therefore examined how Vision Media has been able to respond to competition in the business environment. The respondents were thus queried on the kind of responses Vision Media has adopted to survive the competitive environment. The respondents were of the general opinion that Vision Media Limited has employed cost cutting through partnership with suppliers. The respondents specifically mentioned that they have partnership with various supplier of Ink in Dubai that has enabled the business to get ink at lower prices than local pieces with suppliers within Nairobi. This has enabled the firm to offer it products at lower prices than do most of its competitors. The business has also outsourced some operations to its competitors who have excess capacity thereby eliminating competition in the process. The respondents also reported that Vision Media Limited differentiated its products like supplying Heat Press special papers, Ink for eco-solvent Printers and Value added solutions on UV Products. The respondents also mentioned that Vision Media Limited has been providing promotional items aimed at promoting its products and counteract competition.

The research also evaluated the responses that Vision Media has instituted to changes in technology. In this regard, the study asked the respondents how Vision Media Limited has been able to respond to changes in technology. The respondents mentioned that one of the critical strategy that has been employed by the business to avoid high cost associated with obsolete computer equipment and printer has been through outsourcing some of the printing work. The firm has been focusing on product designs and marketing with most of the operations involving actual printing being outsourced. Very many obsolete printing machines that the firm no longer uses occasioned this. Further, Vision Media Limited has been acquiring critical printers and equipment on lease basis for short-term basis to avoid the cost of obsolescence.

The study also evaluated how Vision Media limited has been able to respond to economic factors that have been affecting the business. The respondents were queried on how Vision media limited has been able to make its product affordable to customers even in the tough economic times. The respondents mentioned that the business has been able to remain competitive by charging competitive rates occasioned by cost cutting strategies. The respondents majorly mentioned that sourcing of key supplies including Ink and papers from Dubai and China has enabled the business to enjoy lower prices that has enabled the business to offer their products at lower prices than can be offered by majority of their competitors. The business has also adopted the strategy of eliminating intermediaries in their operations by directly dealing with customers to eliminate price increases associated with intermediaries in business operation. Respondents also mention that they have been providing trade and cash discounts to loyal customers to enable them survive tough economic times especially during the Covid-19 period.

The research also evaluated how the firms have been able to respond to changes in government regulations. The respondents were thus asked the kinds of responses that Vision Media Limited has adopted to survive changes in government regulation and laws. The respondents were of the general opinion that government regulations such as taxes and licensing are beyond the control of a single business. However, the firm mentioned that it is a member private sector association that has been pushing the County government of Nairobi and national government to review some of the

licensees and taxes. However, their efforts have not been successful yet with high tax rate still in the way of Vision Media Limited.

The research also evaluated how Vision Media Limited has been able to survive the changes experienced by the change in government during the elections. The respondents also reported that the business has no control over government regulations especially those occasioned by change in government. The respondents however mentioned that the business has focused much on following government regulations to minimise conflict with new governments. The business follows due process in law regarding various regulations like licensing, procurement, employees' regulations among other regulations. This has enabled the business to avoid unwarranted fines and costs associated with breach of such regulations.

4.4. Challenges of Implementing Strategic Responses

The study also evaluated the challenges associated implementing strategic responses as a reaction to environmental dynamism. The respondents were queried on challenges Vision Media Limited has faced when responding to competition. The respondents mentioned that the strategy of entering into partnership with various supplier of Ink in Dubai and China has of late faced challenges. Some of the suppliers in Dubai and China have since set up stores within Nairobi where other branding firms can also access the said materials hence the strategy usefulness is running out very fast. Further, the strategy of outsourcing some operations to its competitors has seen some competitors wrestling away some clients from Vision media limited in the process.

The study also evaluated the challenges associated with responding to economic changes like inflation that have been affecting the ability of Vision Media Limited to offer products at affordable prices to customers. The respondents were of the general opinion that the strategy of cost cutting through entering into partnership with major suppliers based in Dubai and China is currently threatened given that some of their supplier has opened local stores points in Nairobi. Competing firms can also access the same products at almost same prices that Vision Media Limited has been enjoying.

The respondents were queried on challenges Vision Media Limited has faced while responding to change in technology. The respondents were of the general opinion that

responses to technology like outsourcing some printing work and leasing some equipment has exposed the firm to unreliability and dependability. The respondents mentioned that in certain cases, some firms they had outsourced had disappointed them by not delivering on clients projects as had been agreed leading to loss of some customers and the firm incurring additional expenses in seeking alternative service providers to satisfy clients. The firm has also become dependent on the firms it outsources some projects. The acquisition of various equipment on lease has been expensive in the long run since the acquired machines and equipment forever belongs to the provider but the firm has to incur maintenance expenses. The respondents also mentioned that technology keeps changing each day and keeping up with change in technology cannot be achieved without incurring major resources.

The study also examined the challenges the firm has faced while responding to change in government regulation and laws. The respondents were of the general opinion that countering government regulation was not possible for an individual business. The respondents further mentioned that their collective action through private sector alliance has not born much fruits regarding high taxations the business are facing like Corporate Tax, VAT and other businesses licensees. The respondents also mentioned that countering change in government regulation due to change in government was not possible for individual businesses Like Vision Media Limited.

4.5 Discussion

The study had sought to establish the external environmental changes that Vision Media Limited is facing in their operation in the business environment. The study revealed that technological changes have led to some goods becoming obsolete. Competitors have been employing price wars by cutting on cost of services and products to wrestle customers from Vision Media Limited. Various regulations that have been affecting Vision Media limited including taxation, licenses and permits. The study also mentioned economic variables like inflation that has seen prices of products rise making them out of reach of most consumers in the recent past. Change in the Nairobi county governments has affected firms operations with new governments coming up with new regulations concerning licencing. The change in the structure of governance meant that some business licensees were cancelled especially those issued improperly. The findings are in congruence with empirical literature.

Sholla and Nazari (2018) on the examination of the external environmental factors that influence the strategic management of the Albanian commercial banks noted that impacts of technology on organizational strategies were significant. Popa et al. (2017) also revealed that natural environment, technology have a significant influence firm performance.

The study sought to establish how Vision Media limited has managed to respond to various environmental dynamism. The study revealed that to counteract competition, Vision Media Limited has employed cost cutting, outsourcing some operations to its competitors who have excess capacity, offering differentiated products and providing promotional items aimed at promoting its products and counteract competition. Regarding change in technology, the firm has been outsourcing some of the printing work and acquiring critical printers and equipment on lease basis for short-term basis to avoid the cost of obsolescence. The firm has also responded to tough economic conditions through sourcing of key supplies from Dubai and China to enjoy lower prices that has enabled the business to offer their products at lower prices than can be offered by majority of their competitors. The finding is in agreement with Owiso (2015) that established that strategic responses Copy Cat included strategic partnership, product differentiation among other strategic responses. Muchiri et al. (2017) revealed that common strategic responses implemented by the firms included strategic mergers, product differentiation and strategic alliances.

The study also evaluated the challenges associated with implementing strategic responses as a reaction to environmental dynamism. The study revealed that the strategy of entering into partnership with various suppliers has of late faced challenges as some international suppliers have since set up stores within Nairobi where other branding firms can also access the said materials. Further, the strategy of outsourcing some operations to its competitors has seen some competitors wrestling away some clients from Vision media limited in the process. The study also revealed that responses to change in technology like outsourcing some printing work and leasing some equipment has exposed the firm to unreliability and dependability. The acquisition of various equipment on lease has been expensive in the long run since the acquired machines and equipment forever belongs to the provider but the firm has to incur maintenance expenses.

Finally, the study revealed that countering government regulation was not possible for an individual business and the collective action through private sector alliance has not born much fruits. The findings is in agreement with Mbengue et al. (2018) noted that in the uncertain business environment that presents chaos in terms of changes happening in the external environment that may be beyond the discretion of the manager.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, recommendation and areas for further studies.

5.2 Summary

The study had sought to establish the external environmental changes that Vision Media Limited is facing in their operation in the business environment. The study revealed that technological changes have led to some products becoming obsolete. Competitors have been employing price wars by cutting on cost of services and products to wrestle customers away. Various regulations including taxation, licenses and permits have increased cost of doing business. Inflation that has seen prices of products rise making them out of reach of most consumers in the recent past. Change in the Nairobi county governments has seen new regulations and some old licences cancelled.

The study had also sought to establish how Vision Media limited has managed to respond to various environmental dynamism. The study revealed that to counteract competition, Vision Media Limited has employed cost cutting, outsourcing some operations to its competitors who have excess capacity, offering differentiated products and providing promotional items aimed at promoting its products and counteract competition. Regarding change in technology, the firm has been outsourcing some of the printing work and acquiring critical printers and equipment on lease basis. The firm has also responded to tough economic conditions through sourcing of key supplies from lower prices providers that has enabled the business to offer their products at lower prices than can be offered by majority of their competitors.

The study also evaluated the challenges associated with implementing strategic responses as a reaction to environmental dynamism. The study revealed that the strategy of entering into partnership with various suppliers has faced challenges as some international suppliers have since set up stores within Nairobi where other branding firms can also access the said materials. Further, the strategy of outsourcing

some operations to its competitors has seen some competitors wrestling away some clients. The study also revealed that responses to change in technology like outsourcing some printing work and leasing some equipment has exposed the firm to unreliability and dependability. Finally, the study revealed that countering government regulation was not possible for an individual business and the collective action through private sector alliance has not born much fruits.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that external environmental dynamisms have been affecting the operation of Vision Media Limited in a major way. Technological changes have seen some goods and equipment becoming obsolete. The competitors have been wrestling customers from Vision Media Limited through aggressive marketing. Change in taxes and licenses have increased the cost of doing business significantly thus eating into the profits of Vision Media Limited. Inflation that has seen prices of products rise making them out of reach of most consumers, moreover the firm has limits they cannot exceed with their prices since they also have to maintain competitive rates. The change in the Nairobi county governments has affected their operations with new governments coming up with new regulations concerning licencing and taxation.

The study also concluded that Vision Media limited has managed to respond to various environmental dynamism by implementing a number of strategies. The strategic partnership with low cost suppliers has enabled the business to get lower prices that translate to firm offering products at lower prices than do most of its competitors. The outsourcing of some operations to competitors has seen Vision media Limited concentrate on product design and marketing. Further, acquisition of critical printers and equipment on lease basis has enabled the firm to avoid the cost of obsolescence. Providing trade and cash discounts to loyal customers to enabled clients to survive tough economic times by enjoying reduced prices.

The study also concluded that implementation of strategic responses is faced with a number of challenges. The strategy of entering into partnership with various suppliers may fail especially when the given supplier gets better terms somewhere. The strategy of outsourcing operations to competitors is not always successful especially when such firms can get direct access to such customer. Further, outsourcing exposes the firm to unreliability and over dependence. The strategy of leasing key equipment and

machines may not be successful as they are expensive in the long run since the acquired machines and equipment forever belongs to the provider but the firm has to incur maintenance expenses. Finally, the firm is limited in responding to change in government regulation and laws as individual business; however, businesses acting as a group may have a chance in challenging some regulations.

5.4 Recommendations and Implications of the Study

The study recommends to management of vision media limited to have accurate external environmental scanning in order to have adequate understanding of the change in external forces before responding through strategies. The business must closely monitor changes and trends in technology, competition, government regulations and government regimes to have adequate understanding on their impacts on the business. The firm can use SWOT analysis to enable it capture environmental dynamisms.

Further, the study suggest to Vision Media limited to reconsider its outsourcing strategy by only outsourcing non critical tasks so that the firm can concentrate on critical tasks to minimise exposure to risk of unreliable services from outside firms. The study also recommend to Vision Media limited to consider focus strategy where the business targets a specific segment of the market than trying to satisfy all customers under the corporate segmentation. The business can focus on key customers groups like events management firms.

The firm should also critically evaluate equipment-leasing contract to identify loopholes that translate to additional costs to them. For instance, the firm should consider having the leased equipment to be maintained by the lessor to eliminate cost of repairs and maintenance. The firm can also consider having option of purchase of critical equipment in the lease contract at favourable prices taking into consideration the risk of obsolescence and normal depreciation of the equipment.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to Vision Media limited and the findings are more relevant for decision making in the firm. Other Corporate branding firms should apply the findings with caution as external environmental dynamism affects different businesses with varying intensity and therefore strategic responses differ depending on intensity

of impact. The study was also limited to qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Qualitative methods cannot capture quantitative aspects of effect of environmental dynamism on a business. The study also faced the challenge of some respondents not giving specific information on how the firm has been responding to environmental dynamism with some respondents preferring to give general nonspecific information for fear that their strategies might leak out to their competitors. Some respondents complained the question asked were many and tedious and waste of time sitting with the researcher answering questions with a lot of probing as compared to other methods like questionnaires.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

The current study was a case study of Vision Media limited one of the leading corporate branding firm in Nairobi metropolitan. Case studies may not allow generalization across various firms. The study therefore recommends that future studies can be carried out in all corporate branding firms in Nairobi to allow for generalization and industry wide application of the findings. This would help in improving the quality of decisions in the corporate branding industry based on empirical results done across firms.

Further, the current study had adopted qualitative approach of data collection and analysis that concentrated using interview schedule to collect needed information. Future studies can adopt mixed methodology where both qualitative and quantitative information is collected to ensure all aspects of environmental dynamism and responses to environmental dynamism are captured. Such studies can use data collection instruments such as interview schedule, structured questionnaires, focus group discussion among other tools for the purpose of collecting data that captures all aspects of environmental dynamism and strategic responses to the same.

The current study examined the external environmental dynamism, strategic responses to environmental dynamism and challenges of implementing strategic responses. The study thus suggests to future researchers to go beyond external dynamism and also examine changes in internal factors that are within the managerial discretion and how the firms reacts to them. The studies can also examine effect of strategic responses to environmental dynamism on firm competitiveness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

This interview guide is designed to collect data that will guide Vision Media Limited on strategic response to changes in the external environmental dynamism. The information provided will be treated with confidence and only be used for academic purpose.

SECTION A: EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL DYNAMISM

1. How has your firm been affected by changes in the corporate branding industry?
2. What are the challenges in the external environment that affect the operations of the organisation?
3. What do you consider as the most important external forces of change facing your firm? Give reasons.
4. To what extent has technological force affected your firm's operations?
5. How has change in the intensity of competition affected your operations? Explain how
6. Are there laws and regulations that have inhibited your operations? If so, please state the reasons.
7. The economic environment in Kenya has seen prices of products making them out of reach of most consumers that in the recent past. How has this affected the operations of your firm?
8. Has change from one government to other both at the county and national government affected your operations? Explain the changes you faced

SECTION B: STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO ENVIRONMENTAL DYNAMISM

9. Which responses has your firm adopted to survive the competitive environment? Were the strategies fruitful? Indicate why.
10. How has your firm been able to respond to changes in technology? were the strategies successful?
11. How has your firm been able to make its product affordable to customers even in the tough economic times?
12. Which responses has your firm adopted to survive changes if government regulation and laws. Were the responses successful?

13. How did your firm survive the changes experienced by the change in government during the elections? Explain these responses for survival.
14. Has the firm been able to expand its market share by moving into new markets (local or global) or by introducing new products?
15. Has the firm entered into any strategic alliances with suppliers either locally or internationally to make products affordable and enhance service provision?
16. Has the firm introduced any unique products in the markets for the last three years?

SECTION C: CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIC RESPONSES

17. Which challenges have you experienced as a firm when responding to competition? Explain your challenges? Explain these challenges.
18. What costs have you been incurring that have been affecting your ability to offer products at affordable prices to customers?
19. What challenges has your firm expressed while responding to change in technology? Explain these challenges.
20. What challenges has your firm faced while responding to change in government regulation and laws? Explain the challenges.
21. What other challenges has your firm experienced while responding to changes in the external business environment?

*****Thank you for your time*****

Appendix II: Branding Firms in Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS)

1. Absolute Corporate Solutions
2. Vision Media Limited
3. Brand Extreme
4. The Branding Company
5. Brand Mania
6. Moran Creatives
7. Key Stone Group
8. Magic Colours
9. Click Technologies
10. Design Hub Consult
11. Krayone
12. Brand World
13. Grid Branding
14. Blue Flamingo Digital Africa
15. Ignite Branding Limited
16. Sketchers Design

Source (clutch.com, 2020).

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by Hottensiah Mweru Kaniu

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DYNAMISM OF BRANDING OF VISION MEDIA LIMITED (KENYA)**

HOTTENSIAH MWERU KANIU

**3
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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF
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