

**COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL TURBULENCE: THE  
CASE OF HORTICULTURAL FIRMS IN KENYA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

**BY**

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### DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for assessment or academic award to any other university or institution of higher learning.

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## ABSTRACT

The external environment's dynamism and predictability govern how organizations modify their competitive tactics, affecting future success. The competitive skills of an organization influence the competitive strategies chosen since organizations must adapt their plans to the environment's characteristics. The purpose of the study was to assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence on the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic. The study was guided by Porter's Five Forces Model, Industrial Organizations Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory and was anchored on a cross-sectional survey design coupled with descriptive approach. Quantitative data was gathered from department heads, senior management, and middle management of 38 firms listed as large horticultural exporters operating in Kenya. Data was descriptively analyzed in terms of frequencies and percentages. The study found that the type of organizational leadership affects horticultural firm's competitiveness during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to accomplish amazing results while also developing their own leadership potential. Through competitive strategies, improvements in transformational-leadership-based capabilities and leveraging on technology results in market positioning advantages during drastic turbulence environmental such as COVID-19. The study also found that Kenyan horticultural firms employ a variety of response techniques to the tumultuous economic environment, including market and product development, vertical integration, research and development, and price volatility. The study recommends that the executives and management of horticultural enterprises in Kenya should adopt a more transformational style of leadership and technical enhancements, to assist on overall strategic planning process during turbulent times. There should also be optimal resource allocation which ensures that best resource use are implemented in business during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

A pandemic, the most recent of which was coronavirus 19 popularly known as COVID-19, has triggered an unparalleled degree of both economic and social turmoil throughout the planet. According to projections from the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, the pandemic will lessen global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and global trade by a minimum of 5 percent and 12 percent, respectively by 2022 (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2020; World Trade Organization (WTO), 2020), making it the greatest severe health crisis as well as economic catastrophe since World War II (Barichello, 2020; Kassa, 2020; Baldwin and Tomiura, 2020).

Global lockdown policies were implemented in a determination to slow the virus from spreading to other regions across the globe. These measures restricted the mobility of people and goods, resulting in a reduction in trade undertakings at both local and global scales. One of the consequences of these restrictions strategies has been a disruption in the supply chain that led to a harmful supply shock (Baldwin and Tomiura, 2020). Global commerce flows have been hampered by measures such as border closures and international travel restrictions, which have increased trade expenses while delaying or completely barring border clearance (Banga et al., 2020; Maliszewska, Mattoo and Mensbrugge, 2020).

The implementation of movement restrictions rules has resulted in the introduction of demand-side shudders that have differed across various product classifications. Since the outbreak of the catastrophe, there has been an escalating cases of hoarding the some of the critical commodities such as food and medical supplies and this has heightened the demand for the said commodities (Kassa, 2020; Mold and Mveyange, 2020). The catastrophic pandemic and associated movement restrictions have also resulted in closures of businesses and a contraction of economic undertakings, resulting in widespread redundancy and joblessness and a consequent reduction in demand for global commodities, especially durable items (Djiofack, Dudu and Zeufack, 2020). Finally, pandemics and turbulence times result in instability in the financial sectors, which are critical to the proper operation of worldwide trade and commerce (Banga et al., 2020). The purpose of the current study was to assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence: the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic.

### **1.1.1 Competitive Strategies**

Competitive strategy can be best described as the purposeful choice from diverse sets of actions that form the foundation of competitive advantage in order to give a unique combination of value to customers (Porter, 1996). It can also be described as an action framework that is designed to help a corporation achieve a competitive gain over its competitors for a duration of time. The competitive strategy, in line with Porter (1996), is about uniqueness in the sector, which implies purposefully selecting a different collection of doings to create a distinct blend of value. Dess et al (2006) also explain that a competitive approaches are advantages obtained over competitors by presenting to clients goods and services with higher value, but at a lower prices or provision of additional benefits and services that validate same, or perhaps higher, prices than the competition, because competitors will get it a bit more hectic to eliminate a competitive advantage when the advantage is long-lasting.

According to Barney (2011), competitive advantage may be classified into either comparative advantage or differential advantage. For comparative advantage, it is the type of advantage that is more advantageous than a differential advantage. Competitive advantage, alias cost advantage is the capacity of a firm to generate goods at the lowest possible cost when compared to competitors, which allows them to sell their products at lower prices than their competitors, resulting in higher sales margins than their competitors. When a company generate goods that are distinct from the ones produced by its competitors and are more value than those of the competitors, the company is said to have a differential advantage. Product pricing, venture in manufacturing and supply facilities, along with contractual procedures with clients and development costs, all contribute to a competitive advantage for a company that implements competitive tactics. Competitive strategies enable businesses to establish a competitive position in the industry, develop methods to combat competitive pressures, or sway competitive forces in their favor.

Strategic planning, according to Scholes and Whittington (2005), is defined as a firm's long-term route and scope, which allows the business to accomplish competitive benefit in a constantly changing business climate by configuring its resources and capabilities in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders. According to Scholes and Wittington (2005), every scale of strategy has three components namely corporate-level approach, which look into the overall scope of a business firm and value addition to the various departments in the firm;



business-level approach, which centers around various businesses defined by the corporate approach and how they compete in the particular markets; and functional-level approach, which associates with the diverse functional areas within an organization. It is well-suited to the industry and competitive environment, and it reflects the company's awareness of the most promising market potential.

Managers must decide whether the company should place itself as a modest cost producer or whether it should offer products and services that are distinct from the competition and allow the company to go for higher prices-or a mixture of the two (Porter, 1985). He or she makes certain that the firm's competitive advantage is maintained by investing the resources needed to assure the expansion of vital strategic approaches that will result in optimal and lasting progression and performance (Lin et al., 2014). When a corporation has a competitive advantage over its competitors in acquiring clients and fighting against competitive pressures and forces, it is said to have a competitive advantage (Thompson and Strickland, 2002). Similarly, Porter (2004) outlines three methodologies to competitive strategy, the first of which is determined to be the general lowest cost producer, i.e. low modest leadership approach, the second of which is attempting to distinguish one's product from that of its competitors, i.e. differentiation tactic, and the third of which is concentrating on a particular portion of the market, i.e. focus or niche approach.

Organizational competitiveness is perhaps the most extensively utilized dependent variable in organizational research, despite the fact that it is still ambiguous and poorly defined in many instances (Plessis, 2007). As stated in the Balanced Score Card, financial measures have received the majority of the attention in the performance literature; however, some scholars have proposed a broader performance construct of 'business performance' that incorporates non-financial measures such as market share, customer satisfaction, and new product introductions, among other things.

### **1.1.2 Environmental Turbulence**

The business world is always changing due to environmental factors. Globalization, information technology, and regulatory changes all contribute to environmental volatility (Khourh, et al., 2020). The term "turbulence environment" refers to the degree of instability, variability, and predictability represented in the environment's innovations and complicated fluctuations (Miner, Bassof, and Moorman, 2001).

As a result, organizations must be cautious of all those unexpected developments, as they can detract from an organization's value if ignored. This suggests that a turbulent environment can result in increased organizational reactivity, learning, innovation, and competitive advantage (Bodlaj, and Cater, 2019). The company's strategy must be sound in order to succeed in this unusual setting. Technology turbulence and market turbulence are two significant types of turbulent environments that affect modern business operations. A turbulent environment has a significant impact on businesses, as there is significant pressure on businesses during periods of environmental instability due to the introduction of innovative tactics and new product development in a highly competitive market (Arnaut, and Esposito, 2018).

The entire workforce becomes involved in identifying appropriate answers, which disrupts the work environment as well. As a result of such an unstable atmosphere, dread and anxiety are generated. As a result of their fear and anxiety, some professionals take incorrect steps rather than finding the correct solution, escalating the problem and making it more difficult to resolve. Currently, the horticultural industry worldwide is experiencing numerous turbulences in the market climate. To withstand such turbulences, horticultural firms' management must learn to regulate their emotions rationally and improvise strategically. As a result, this research assists horticultural firms' management in shifting their thinking framework from static to effective in order to make sound business judgments in an uncertain business environment. Additionally, entrepreneurs approach stormy events differently, regulating their emotions rather than sticking to their goals.

### **1.1.3 COVID-19 Global Pandemic**

COVID-19, according to United Nations Economic Commissions for Africa (UNECA) (2020) is a unique disease caused by the corona virus, which is related to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). While the initial cases were not as severe as those reported in China, different countries experienced varying degrees of severance depending on the resident's immunity and the state's health care infrastructure. The disease has developed into a serious threat to the lives of the majority of people worldwide. It is caught through contact with infected respiratory secretions, contact with sick individuals, or interaction with infected things. Since March 2020, the virus has been considered a public health emergency of international significance, harming people's way of life and commercial operations worldwide. With the epidemic affecting the majority of nations, including Kenya, the

outcomes of the attempt to contain the virus have had a substantial impact on the country's economic operations (Ozili, 2020). With the majority of Kenyan horticultural enterprises having their markets affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding virus patterns, facts, and risks is critical for any firm that wishes to succeed (Odhiambo, 2020). Firms must understand how they might reclaim their operational momentum in the presence of the COVID-19. With social distancing at the heart of the epidemic, businesses were forced to devise new methods of offering their products while maintaining the social distance, with online commercial transactions being preferred (Zhang, Hu, and Ji, 2020).

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have become a major focus of global attention, with multiple studies being launched using two key methodologies for evaluating COVID-19. As the majority of African nations have suffered as a result of virus control efforts, the current study intended to analyse the competitive strategies of enterprises in the horticultural industry in Kenya in the face of severe environmental turbulence caused by the covid-19 global pandemic.

#### **1.1.4 Horticulture Industry in Kenya**

The horticulture trade in Kenya is one of the most important economic drivers in the country, contributing almost \$0.8 billion in revenue to the country each year, giving employment for over 500,000 persons, and affecting the livelihoods of more than two million people. Over 45 nations in Eastern Europe, Australia, and the Far East are expected to benefit from Kenya's horticultural exports, which the country anticipates increasing. If these objectives are met, the country will leapfrog to second place, behind only the Netherlands, and surpass South America and other flower exporters across the world in the process. In addition, it has been recognized as a significant economic contributor, and as a result, it was highlighted in Kenya's Vision 2030 (National Development Plan). According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, strategies to encourage modernization and delivers a promising operating business environment for Kenya's horticulture exporting enterprises are currently being worked on by the government (KHC, 2018).

Kenya's horticultural export industry has shown commendable growth in both volume and value since 1988, with 10,944 tons exported in 1989 matched with 86,481 tons exported in 2006, the country also exported 120,222 tons in 2010, 137,621 tons exported in 2014, 135,660 tons exported in 2018, and 160, 970 tons exported in 2019. Approximately USD 823 million was earned by the horticulture industry in 2019, according to the Horticultural Crop

Directorate (HCD).

Despite the fact that the horticultural industry appears to be lucrative, it is subject to the same challenges as any other business, some of which include unpredictable global pandemics such as COVID-19, which recently affected all sectors of the global economy, and in the context of horticultural trade, following the lockdown policies put forward by most countries, the industry has been adversely affected, prompting horticultural firms to device methods of coping with the turbulent market. As a result, the current study tries to assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence: the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The external environment's dynamism and predictability govern how organizations modify their competitive tactics, affecting future success (Machuki, 2011). The competitive skills of an organization influence the competitive strategies chosen since organizations must adapt their plans to the environment's characteristics. Successful competitive tactics lead to enhanced performance and the potential to outperform competitors (Porter, 2004). Globally, the horticultural business has grown rapidly in recent decades, characterized by high levels of inventiveness and innovation. As a result, the bulk of producers are located around the equator, while the majority of consumers are in North America and Europe. Colombia, the Netherlands, Israel, Kenya, and Ecuador have long been leaders in horticulture product production and exportation (World Bank, 2016).

A competitive framework and strategic management are indispensable to safeguard that feasible choices are based on common features that assure prosperity among industry participants. Despite Kenya's success in generating and trading fresh produce internationally, other African and global competitors have increased competitiveness, which could lead to export market erosion if not well handled. COVID-19 also had a severe impact on the business, especially following the establishment of a lockout and unfavorable travel recommendations, putting Kenyan horticultural enterprises in a precarious position in terms of output and export. In light of these issues, a realistic business competitive strategy is required. A competitive strategy helps a business adjust to changes in the environment and perform better. According to Ansoff (2017) scrambling for the market has forced many organizations to rethink their tactics and approaches in order to achieve their goals and sustain a competitive benefit. Many African countries, particularly Ethiopia, have increased

their efforts to compete aggressively in the horticulture industry after realizing they share Kenya's ecological circumstances and may gain from exporting horticultural products.

Several studies have compared competing methods in various situations. For example, Akingbade (2015) examined how competitive strategies used by Nigerian telecommunications corporations affect their performance. An exploratory cross-sectional survey found that enterprises were cognizant of the changing business environment and took their time discovering the most effective techniques to stay competitive. Moreover, Leslie et al. (2013) focused on the role of performance assessment in the association between competitive tactics and firm's progress and performance in Thailand. The mail-in vote included 101 publicly traded corporations. The competitive approaches adopted had an encouraging impact on firm success, progress and performance. Further, Ortega et al. (2011) studied how mixture of competitive plans impact on the organizational success, focusing on the mixture of pure strategies and the "stuck-in-the-middle". An exploratory research of 164 Spanish organizations demonstrated that most used hybrid strategies, which were linked to improved organizational performance. Based on the findings of these investigations, organizations in diverse industries develop unique competitive strategies.

Locally, Kurendi (2013) used a descriptive cross-sectional survey to study the elements that inspire strategic execution among flower firms in Naivasha, and found that while firms had recorded their goals, achieving them was difficult due to aspects such as management commitment, present legal expectations, and budget limits. Miako and Machuki (2014) also looked at Adrian Company Limited's uncover implementation challenges and found that of the many challenges preventing proper execution of competitive highlighted, the most notable being a lack of money. Despite these few researches done locally and globally, none of the studies have examined how the worldwide drastic environmental turbulence influences competitive strategies, notably among Kenyan horticulture firms. This research therefore seek to explore competitive strategies and environmental turbulence: the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic, by responding to the research question of how does drastic environmental turbulence influence competitive strategies of horticultural firms in Kenya?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence on the case of horticultural

firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic.

#### **1.4 Value of the Study**

The findings of the research provide information to a wide range of stakeholders in the horticultural horticulture business, and it seeks competitive ways to improve performance that can be used by fruit, vegetable, and flower exporters in foreign markets to increase their profits. It provides guidance to the companies in this business on how they may maintain their position in the market despite increasing competition from adjacent countries as well as when there is a global pandemic outbreak. This study provides insight into how global pandemics can influence the competitive policies executed by Kenya horticultural exporting firms in order to improve performance, as well as how to deal with these factors that may be inhibiting strategies in the horticultural export industry, as well as possible alternative measures and recommendations for the industry.

The findings of the study provide information to members of regulatory organizations and policymakers on the methods employed by enterprises in the horticultural industry, as well as the level of competitiveness in the industry. This assists them in gaining more information about the sector and developing a proper regulatory framework that is necessary to control the industry. It also aids them in their attempts to cope with the dynamics that exist in their working environment, which is beneficial.

Researchers will also benefit from this study since it will provide them with a better understanding of the horticulture export sector, which will contribute to the current literature on the horticultural industry and lay the groundwork for future research. The findings contribute to a more complete theoretical understanding of the concepts of firm resources and competitive advantage, which is a valuable contribution.

Due to the fact that it elaborates on how competitive strategies are related with the performance as well as the resources and capabilities of horticulture exporters, it adds more value to the RBV theory, which covers both firm resources and capabilities. As part of this research, information on the external environment of the businesses is provided, such as competitive strategies implemented by various horticulture exporters and how worldwide pandemics affect their operations. This research also contributes to the field of competitive strategies.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews available information on global pandemics and corporate strategies. It was organized around several themes, including theoretical approaches, the impact of drastic environmental turbulence on competitive strategies of horticultural firms in Kenya, empirical studies undertaken in various situations, and knowledge gaps. As a starting point, it examines the theoretical framework on which this research is founded in order to highlight the multiple factors related to the themes under investigation. The chapter next provides an empirical literature on the study goal before exposing the research gaps to be filled by the present study.

### **2.2 Theoretical Literature Reviews**

There really are various theories that explain how organizations' competitive strategies affect their overall success. The current study is based on a variety of theories to clarify certain concepts in relation to the study's environment. Among the theories presented are Porter's Five Forces Model, Industrial Organizations Theory, and Dynamic Capabilities Theory. However, these theories differ in terms of their perspective on how organizations' competitive strategies affect their overall success and how drastic environmental turbulence on competitive strategies.

#### **2.2.1 Porter's Five Forces Model -**

Porter (2008) defines competition as fierce rivalry, threat of entry, threat of substitutes, supplier power, and buyer power. He believes that understanding a sector's competition is critical to developing a strategy. Important strategic activities can successfully link generic strategies to organizational performance. Porter claims that if the forces are extreme, no organization makes a profit, but if the pressures are benign, most organizations do. The five forces composition varies by industry, therefore a company needs a unique strategy for each industry, like horticulture.

Low cost, differentiation, emphasis, and combination are Porter's (1998) generic approaches. These are generally viewed as universal strategy types. Porter (1985) states that a corporation's primary interest is industry competition. His claim that low cost and distinction are distinct endpoints of a continuum that are not related has sparked much theoretical debate

and practical research. The lack of conceptual building blocks supporting his value system hypothesis may have fueled this debate. Scholars recently proposed suggestions that low cost and distinction may be true separate aspects that should be vigorously sought concurrently (Fournier, 2008).

Miller and Dess (2010) found that the generic strategy framework may be improved by viewing cost, distinctiveness, and emphasis as three dimensions of strategic positioning rather than three distinct strategies. Others experts have agreed that exploring multiple sources of competitive advantage is both realistic and desirable (White, 2008). Thus, the 10 research studies in strategic management that Porter cites do not directly support his initial claim. Porter's model is vital for assessing the strength and relevance of each of a market's primary competitive pressures. Kitoto (2005, 2005) states that a firm's awareness of the five factors will help it choose one of the generic strategies that will allow it to compete profitably in an industry.

After a global turbulence like COVID-19, horticulture enterprises can only design and pick successful strategies after thoroughly recognizing the competitive pressures, assessing the virtual strength of each pressure, and knowing the complete competitive structure of the sector. Using Porter's value chain technique, a company's desirability may be assessed. Armed with information of the intensity and potency of competitive pressures, horticultural firms can make choices that improve their own competitive position. To remain competitive, horticultural enterprises must adapt their strategies to the worldwide epidemic's shifting market conditions (COVID-19). The successful strategy can have a substantial impact on the organization's competitive forces. The purpose is to diminish rival forces' ability to compete. Contrary to popular belief, several organizations have achieved superior economic performance by concurrently pursuing cost and distinction (Bresnahan and Reiss, 2010).

### **2.2.2 Industrial Organization Theory**

It is also feasible to define organizational effectiveness in terms of its environment by employing the Industrial Organization (IO) theory, which was developed and popularized by Bain in 1956. The industrial theory explains how well a company's operations fit with the environment in which it operates. This concept is crucial in determining the effectiveness of an organization in a range of situations (De Jong & Shepherd, 2007). The theory also explains that organizations must conduct scans concentrating on both internal and external environmental forces, in order to be aware of the opportunities and threats that the



organization faces in order to be successful. Scans should be focused on both internal and external environmental forces. The firm's internal capabilities must be aligned with the strengths and weaknesses that have been uncovered in order to handle the dangers that are present in the surrounding environment if this is to take place successfully.

It is possible for a company to obtain a competitive advantage by responding swiftly to market and industry dynamics. Developing effective and efficient competitive strategies is essential for firms that wish to effectively respond to changes in their operational environment and so acquire a long-term competitive advantage in the marketplace. It is also important that these strategies are matched with organizational structures and carrying forces in the operating surroundings (Carlton and Perloff, 2005). Besides highlighting the dynamics inherent in the external environment, Industrial Organization Theory has emphasized the components of the external environment that are also important to businesses, as well as the dimensions of business (Andrews, 1971). The idea claims that firms can be competitive when they execute strategies that both utilize and adapt to existing opportunities in the external environment, as demonstrated by the case of Google.

### **2.2.3 Dynamic Capabilities Theory**

Teece (1989) established the dynamic capabilities hypothesis, which was further refined by Pisano and Shuen (1997) in "Dynamic Capabilities and Strategy Management." "Dynamic capability" refers to a firm's ability to formulate and adjust available resources in response to changing environmental circumstances (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997). Those that have achieved international success have done so by quickly adapting to market changes, expanding product innovation, and deploying external and internal resources (Teece, et. al., 1997). According to Helfat et al., "dynamism" refers to the ability to renew skills and adapt to a changing business environment (2007). A corporation's competence, or skill set, plays an important role in its competitive strategy.

The company can better react to changing conditions by integrating and rearranging its talents and capabilities. This thesis presents three aspects that shed light on the concept of a company's competitive advantage. The three factors are procedures, positions, and pathways, which describe the firm's strategic direction. According to DC theory, corporate procedures, different asset circumstances, and the firm's current and future directions determine the firm's competitiveness (Teece et al., 1997). Bowman and Véronique (2009) suggest that position can be categorized into two broad categories: external and internal. Internal assets comprise

institutional and reputational assets owned by the company, whereas external assets are owned by third parties. A company's current position is determined by its borders and market assets.

### **2.3 Environmental Turbulence and Response Competitive Strategies of Firms**

The worldwide environmental turbulence in form of health crisis began in 2020, affecting organizations in many industries. Despite some organizations' resiliency or even finding a new operational niche, the bulk of horticulture companies have found themselves in "new normal" operating difficulties. The pandemic's detrimental effects have been reported in many areas of life, including economic, political, social, and psychological (Bretas, and Alon, 2020). The largest impact has been on human health and health in general. To decrease the risk of COVID-19 transmission, many countries have halted business operations and imposed social distancing measures. This has resulted in lockdowns, reduced consumption, community closures, and business closures (Bretas, and Alon, 2020). In the words of many economists, this pandemic is a "black swan" event, described as "a sudden, unexpected event of enormous magnitude and severe impacts that dramatically changes the political and economic climate" (Ratten, 2020). Global disruption is a term used by technology experts to describe an opportunity or threat to competitive tactics, as well as an opportunity for new technology to support corporate processes (Reeves, Haanes and Sinha, 2015).

The business environment is unpredictable and malleable (Akpan, Soopramanien, and Kwak, 2020), necessitating a change strategy, with whole organization renewal as an option. Due to travel limitations and ill travel advisories given by some international markets, horticulture enterprises should establish competitive strategies to overcome the pandemic's impact. Market share has been struck hard in this business. A three-dimensional technique based on a shared knowledge of elements that influence how organizations cope with survival issues would be interesting to examine. First, the horticulture industry and its sectors affect the exposure of horticultural businesses since these businesses are concentrated in sectors directly affected by COVID-19 reactive activities. They are typically barred from traveling and keeping up with the global market, which is understandable (Amankwah-Amoah, Khan and Wood, 2020). So it made natural to focus on how horticultural businesses deal with a pandemic, especially in the exporting sector, which has been hit hard by most countries' lockdowns.

## **2.4 Empirical Studies and Research Gaps**

Several studies on competitive approaches have been undertaken in a variety of sectors, industries, and nations. Gregory, Tomicic Furjan and Tomicic-Pupek (2021) conducted an international investigation on how SMEs working in Croatia's service industries have been coping with the disruptions created by the COVID-19 outbreak and published their findings. Using this research, we hope to get insight into which transformation drivers they have prioritized and which technologies they have chosen as a means of responding to the disruptive forces in their industry. SMEs are next investigated in terms of their impact on the redefining of sustainable business models in SMEs, which is done in accordance with the findings. Using a developed research framework with three dimensions and 30 sub concepts, the data from the review was evaluated and interpreted. It is evident from the findings that drivers and technologies are distributed throughout service sectors. This collection of resources is grouped into a Business Model Canvas and may be of interest to both academics and practitioners. When it comes to a SME's decision on whether to follow incumbents, become a challenger, or reinvent themselves based on their own transformation motivations and willingness to apply digital technologies, the extremely unpredictable environment allows for only a few feasible strategic approaches.

Peng, Huo, and Meng (2020) conducted a survey in Guangdong Province, China, to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on businesses. The study sample consisted of 524 businesses located in 15 cities around Guangdong Province. The study selected these companies from a list released by the government, taking into account the industrial characteristics of Guangdong province as well as the size of the company. The questionnaire was prepared on the basis of earlier investigations conducted by the United Nations Development Programme. It was divided into four categories and contained a total of 17 questions. The CEOs of the companies were contacted by phone or WeChat, and they were requested to participate in a self-administered questionnaire survey conducted through an online survey platform. The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data. Firms in the province of Guangdong have suffered significant difficulties as a result of the pandemic. There has been a major reduction in their production and operating activities, and they are exposed to significant dangers. It is vital to put in place rules that would significantly reduce production costs for businesses, so assisting them in surviving this difficult moment and gradually returning to normal operations.

Taylor and Francis (2010) conducted a study on the tactics utilized in cross-border financial transactions. The information was obtained from 60 of the world's largest banks. According to the findings of the study, most of the banks investigated focussed their efforts on regions with whom they shared cultural or economic connections. The data demonstrated that the vast majority of the banks were multinational rather than global in nature. Mariotto and Verdier (2015) carried out a study in Paris that explored how competitive tactics impacted competition in ICT banking industries. They found that the current strategic structure for financial establishments should be enhanced by ensuring that policymakers are capable of striking a balance between competitiveness and stability in the banking sector.

Achieng (2013) carried out a study in Kenya that concentrated on the competitive techniques utilized by banks in a bid to uphold their market share. The outcomes of the study were published in the journal *Business and Economics*. The findings of the study revealed that the success of agency banking was dependent on customer service provided, the efficiency of the technology in place and knowledge possessed by the agents on product.

Koske (2003) also carried out a descriptive study approach at TELKOM Kenya Ltd, which focused on the implementation of the company's strategy. The findings revealed that, despite the fact that the institution had developed a strategy, putting it into action posed a significant difficulty, resulting in inadequate acceptance or failure to implement and monitor the strategy effectively.

A study undertaken by Miako and Machuki focused on determining the practices and obstacles associated with strategy execution at Adrian Corporation Limited. The findings revealed that the execution of strategy at the Adrian organization followed a methodical approach, which ensured that the plan was successfully implemented. A number of difficulties were also identified, the most significant of which was a lack of necessary resources.

It is clear from the studies mentioned above that none of them focused on determining whether or not there was a relationship between the global pandemic and the competitive strategies of firms in the horticultural industry in Kenya, because their emphasis was on competitive approaches in diverse contexts. This study aims to close this gap by undertaking an investigation into how worldwide pandemics such as COVID-19 influence competitive strategies chosen by horticultural exporters in Kenya, as well as the relationship between these competitive strategies and performance.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section explains how to accurately identify competitive strategies used by horticulture exporting firms in Kenya during environmental turbulence times such as the COVID-19 outbreak. It also shows the study's research design, data gathering, and analysis methods. The tools and processes a research team employs to acquire and analyse data from the study population are crucial in ensuring that the data collected is useful in answering the research question. This chapter underlines the importance of this study component and details the research methodology.

#### 3.2 Research Design

Burns and Grove (2003) describe research design as a study guide that helps in maximizing control over elements that may compromise the validity of outcomes. The design also describes how, when and where the data was collected and the nature of analysis done (Parahoo, 1997). Therefore, research design helps in responding to research questions and proving or disproving the study's assumption. The approach for this study is a cross-sectional survey design coupled with descriptive approach. This design is chosen for its versatility and cost-effectiveness. Jorde (2008) further states that the objective of a cross sectional approach is to determine the frequency of specified features in a population established over time hence making this research design appropriate for this study. In addition, descriptive design, was also adopted for the study because it helps in evaluating other elements that may help answer the study question. According to Saunders et al. (2003), descriptive studies collect data about phenomena being studied in terms of variables or circumstances. It focuses on assessing the existing condition of circumstances, allowing for the determination of the problem's current position.

#### 3.3 Population of the Study

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defines a population is as the entire team, group, or item in the subject of study that is being evaluated and has traits in common. It is also the whole collection of respondents who fulfill the study's specified requirements or criteria (i.e., the entire sample of respondents). Due to the small size of the study's population, this study

focused on horticulture exporting enterprises in Nairobi. There are 38 firms listed as large horticultural exporters operating in Kenya, and the target personnel are in senior management positions in these companies. Horticultural exporters was the primary focus of the current research because their working environment is very dynamic and competitive, as was demonstrated by the findings. Because of this, it is critical to comprehend the numerous competitive approaches employed by each organization, which allows them to improve their overall success.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Primary data was used in this study because it is the most reliable type. The information was gathered through the use of self-administered questionnaires. Respondents had the chance to reply to questions and offer relevant information as requested by using the questionnaire as a data collection instrument. It is particularly well suited for gathering structured information from a large number of people in a short duration of time. This allowed the study to collect data in the shortest amount of time possible. The semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who work for horticulture exporting companies in Kenya. Department heads, senior management, and middle management was among those who responded to study questions. The instrument was selected depending on the sort of data that was collected as well as the likelihood that the replies was exact and relevant to the study.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

After data collection, the next step was to conduct an analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), data analysis aids in the evaluation of available information in order to find the factors that explain a certain occurrence. Because the researcher intends to obtain data that is quantitative in character, the questionnaires generated quantitative data, and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data acquired. Following the collection of the data, it was cleansed to remove any erroneous, incomplete, or irrelevant information. This improved the overall quality of the product by correcting errors and omissions. Following that, the obtained data was transformed into coded data in order to aid categorization. The frequency distribution, percentages, mean, and standard deviation was used in the analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides study findings that are obtained from the data analysis and interpretation. The intent of the study was to assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence on the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic and was anchored on the following research questions; what are the competitive advantages used in business practices by horticultural firms?, how are horticultural firms use their competitive advantage to respond to drastic turbulent environment such as covid-19?, how is horticultural firms ensuring its competitive advantage is sustainable?

#### 4.2 Response Rate

The target population comprised of 38 personnel in senior management firms listed as large horticultural exporters operating in Kenya. Table 4.1 indicates that of the 38 questionnaires administered, 36 gave their responses hence translating to a return rate of 94.7%. This concurs with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who also postulates that statistically significant response rate for analysis should be at least 50%.

#### 4.3 Demographic Information

Respondents were probed on their gender, age, level of education attained and years of experience working in the horticultural firm. Table 4.1 shows the response.

**Table 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	21	58.3
	Female	15	41.7
Age	20-30 years	10	27.8
	31-40 years	17	47.2
	41-50 years	7	19.4
	Above 50 years	2	5.6
Education Background	Certificate	6	16.7
	Diploma	10	27.8
	Degree/Masters	20	55.6
Years of Experience working in the Flower firm	Less than 5 years	8	22.2
	5-10 years	21	58.3
	Above 10 years	7	19.4

Majority of the respondents at 21(58.3%) were male, while 15(41.7%) were female. This shows that most of the employees in horticultural firms were males. It was also found that based on age, majority of the respondents at 17(47.2%) were between 31-40 years, 10(27.8%) were between 20-30 years, while 7(19.4%) were between 41-50 years. Only 2(5.6%) were above 50 years. This shows that most of the employees in horticultural firms were between 31-40 years. Further, majority of the respondents had a Degree/Masters academic qualifications that is 20 (55.6%), 10 (27.8%) had a diploma while 6(16.7%) had a certificate. According to this survey, most employees in horticultural firms have attained Degree/Masters levels of education. This study also found that majority of the employees in horticultural firms had been working there for the past 5-10 years 21 (58.3%), while 8 (22.2%) had been working there for less than 5 years and 7 (19.4%) had been working there for more than 10 years. This study shows that very few employees go past the 10 year mark at horticultural firms.

#### **4.4 Competitive Advantages Used in Business Practices**

Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement relating to Competitive Advantage used in Business Practices of horticultural firms in Kenya, On a rate of five points scale: (1) Highly Disagree, (2) Disagree (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Highly Agree; indicate the degree of your agreement and disagreement of the competitive advantages in business practices:



**Table 4.2 Competitive Advantages Used in Business Practices**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>StDev</b>
Coming up with competitive advantage is considered a crucial success factor for a small, new and developing business ventures	17 47.2%	10 27.8%	4 11.1%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	4.03	0.78
When service or product provide greater customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy	17 47.2%	6 16.7%	8 22.2%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	3.92	0.85
The brand and image of a company will determine the price of the services or products produced	18 50.0%	6 16.7%	7 19.4%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	3.97	0.88
Firm resources can only serve as a source of competitive advantage when they are considered valuable	17 47.2%	8 22.2%	6 16.7%	2 5.6%	3 8.3%	3.94	0.82
Resources are considered valuable to a firm when they make the firm to execute strategies that increase its efficiencies	15 41.7%	14 38.9%	4 11.1%	1 2.8%	2 5.6%	4.08	0.69
To achieve competitive advantage, a firm's resources should be scarce among a firm's existing competitions	13 36.1%	12 33.3%	8 22.2%	2 5.6%	1 2.8%	3.94	0.76
Type of organizational leadership also determines organizational competitiveness	14 38.9%	10 27.8%	6 16.7%	2 5.6%	4 11.1%	3.78	0.79
Transformational leaders stimulate and inspire their subjects to attain extraordinary results and grow their own leadership aptitude	19 52.8%	9 25.0%	5 13.9%	2 5.6%	1 2.8%	4.19	0.66
Progressive transformational leadership-place the firm in positional advantages through competitive approaches	18 50.0%	7 19.4%	6 16.7%	4 11.1%	1 2.8%	4.03	0.69
Transformational management subscribes to social values thus inspires people to cooperate and work towards attaining the competitiveness of an organization	17 47.2%	11 30.6%	4 11.1%	2 5.6%	2 5.6%	4.08	0.68
The level of technology deployed in an organization impacts the overall strategic planning process	20 55.6%	11 30.6%	3 8.3%	1 2.8%	1 2.8%	4.33	0.65
Appropriate resource allocation is a crucial issue in providing efficient application of resources in business execution	23 63.9%	8 22.2%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	0 0.0%	4.44	0.64
Organizational culture help bring effectiveness and competitive advantage to organizations	22 61.1%	11 30.6%	2 5.6%	1 2.8%	0 0.0%	4.50	0.64
Culture is considered to be an important determinant of innovation	19 52.8%	8 22.2%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	4 11.1%	4.00	0.70
Cultural perspective might be useful for understanding innovation process in organizations	17 47.2%	10 27.8%	4 11.1%	3 8.3%	2 5.6%	4.03	0.69

The study found that majority of the respondents at 17(47.2%) highly agreed with the statement that developing competitive advantage is considered a critical success factor for a small, new and emerging business venture, 10(27.8%) agreed, while 4(11.1%) remained neutral on the statement. Only 8.3% disagreed with the statement, while 5.6% strongly disagreed or disputed the statement. From the findings, a weighted mean of 4.03 (SD=0.78) shows that most of the respondents confirmed that coming up with competitive advantage is a critical success factor for a small, new and emerging business ventures. It was also found that 17(47.2%) of the respondents strongly supported the statement that when service or product provide greater customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy, 6(16.7%) just agreed with the statement while 8(22.2%) remained neutral. Cumulatively, only a total of 5(13.9%) disagreed with the statement. This shows that with a weighted mean of 3.92, (SD=0.85) most of the respondents approved the statement that when service or product provide greater customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy.

The study also found that 18(50.0%) of the respondents highly agreed with the statement that the brand and image of a horticultural company will determine the price of the services or products produced, 6(16.7%) agreed, while 7(19.4%) were undecided on the statement. On the other hand, 3(8.3%) disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. A mean of 3.97 (SD=0.88) shows that most of the respondents confirmed the statement that the brand and image of a horticultural company will influence the price of the services or products of the business organization. Findings from this study also reveal that majority of the respondents 17 (47.2%) strongly agree that firm resources can only be a source of competitive advantage when they are valuable, 8 (22.2%) agreed with this statement as well while, 6 (16.7%) remained neutral on the same. Only 2 (5.6%) disagreed while 3 (8.3%) strongly disagreed with this statement. Weighted mean of 3.94 (SD=0.82) indicates that most of the respondents strongly believe that the firm resources stand a fair chance in the horticultural market competition if they are found to deliver value to consumers.

A majority of respondents in this survey that is 15 (41.7%) strongly agree that resources are valuable when they enable a horticultural firm to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness, 14 (38.9%) agreed with this statements as well while 4 (11.1%) remained neutral on the matter. Further 1 (2.8%) respondent disagreed with the statement while 2 (5.6%) strongly disagreed. The weighted mean of 4.08 (SD=0.69) indicates that most

of the respondents are in agreement that resources are valuable when they enable a firm to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness. This survey also wanted to find out how horticultural firms could achieve competitive advantage among its current and potential competition, 13 (36.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that to achieve competitive advantage, a firm's resources should be rare among its current and potential competition, 12 (33.3%) agree while 8 (22.2%) remained neutral. 2 (5.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement while only 1 (2.8%) strongly disagreed. A weighted mean of 3.94 (SD=0.76) shows that the majority of respondents believe that for the firm to achieve competitive advantage, its resources must be rare among its current and potential competition.

Organizational leadership was also linked to the competitiveness of the firm in this study and it was found that the majority of respondents 14 (38.9%) strongly agree that the nature of leadership in a company determines its competitiveness, 10 (27.8%) agree while 6 (16.7%) remained neutral. In addition to this 2 (5.6%) disagree with this statement while 4 (11.1%) strongly disagree. The weighted mean of 3.78 (SD=0.79) shows that most of the respondents agree that the type of leadership exercised over a horticultural organization plays a crucial role in establishing its competitiveness in the market. The type of leaders at the helm of an horticultural organization was also a factor being considered in this survey. Most respondents, 19 (52.8%) strongly concurred that transformational leadership or management stimulate and motivate its subjects to achieve extraordinary outcomes even during difficult times, 9 (25.0%) agreed while 5 (13.9%) remained neutral. On the same statement, 2 (5.6%) disagreed while 1 (2.8%) strongly disagreed. A weighted mean of 4.19 (SD=0.66) shows that the popular opinion held by the respondents is that transformational leadership or management stimulate and motivate its subjects to achieve extraordinary outcomes even during difficult times

Still on leadership, this survey has found that a majority of respondents 18 (50.0%) strongly agreed that improvements in transformational leadership aptitudes should lead to market place positional advantages through competitive strategies, 7 (19.4%) of the respondents agree while 6 (16.7%) remained neutral. A few of the respondents 4 (11.1%) disagreed with this notion while 1 (2.8%) strongly disagreed. The resulting weighted mean of 4.03 (SD=0.69) confirms the majority of respondents concur with this notion. The notion that transformational leadership appeals to social values thus encouraging people to collaborate

and work towards achieving competitiveness in an horticultural organization was also incorporated in this study, majority of the respondents 17 (47.2%) strongly agreed to this notion, 11 (30.6%) agreed while 4 (11.1%) remained neutral. It was also found that 2 (5.6%) disagreed while another 2 (5.6%) strongly disagreed with the same notion. A weighted mean of 4.08 (SD=0.68) confirms that a majority of the respondents are in agreement that people are encouraged to collaborate and work towards achieving competitiveness in an horticultural organization while working under transformational leaders.

Another hypothesis that was tested was whether the technology deployed in a horticultural organization influence its general strategic planning process. The results show that majority 20 (55.6%) of respondents strongly agree to this, 11 (30.6%) agree while 3 (8.3%) remain neutral. Further, 1 (2.8%) disagree while another 1 (2.8%) strongly disagree. A weighted mean of 4.33 (SD=0.65) confirms that a majority of the respondents are in agreement concerning the impact of the type of technology deployed in an horticultural organization in the strategic planning process. Proper resource allocation was also looked into as a factor affecting the horticultural business process execution and from the survey majority of the respondents 23 (63.9%) strongly agreed that proper resource allocation is a key issue in providing efficient usage of resources in business process execution, 8 (22.2%) agreed while 3 (8.3%) remained neutral. The remaining 2 (5.6%) disagreed with this notion. A weighted mean of 4.44 (SD=0.64) reveals that a majority of the respondents believe that proper resource allocation is an important aspect in the horticultural business execution. Organizational culture as an aspect under investigation yielded the following results, 22 (61.1%) of the respondents strongly agree that organizational structure helps to bring effectiveness and competitive advantage to horticultural organizations, 11 (30.6%) agree while 2 (5.6%) remained neutral. The remaining 1 (2.8%) disagreed with this notion. A weighted mean of 4.50 (SD=0.64) shows that a large percentage of respondents affirm the importance of organizational structure in bringing effectiveness and competitive advantage to horticultural organizations.

The notion that culture is considered to be an important determinant of innovation in horticultural organizations was tested in this survey and 19 (52.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 8 (22.2%) agreed while 3 (8.3%) remained neutral. On the other hand 2 (5.6%) disagreed while 4 (11.1) strongly disagreed with this notion. A weighted mean of 4.00 (SD=0.70) shows that most of the respondents agree on the importance of organizational

culture as a catalyst of innovation. The cultural perspective was also used to understand the innovation process in horticultural organizations. The survey conducted revealed that 17 (47.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this notion, 10 (27.8%) agreed while 4 (11.1%) remained neutral. 3 (8.3%) disagreed while 2 (5.6%) strongly disagreed. A weighted mean of 4.03 (SD=0.69) indicates that a majority of the respondents agree on the importance of organizational culture in understanding the innovation process.

#### 4.5 Using Competitive Advantage to Respond to Drastic Turbulent Environment

Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement relating to competitive advantages used for responding to drastic turbulent environment of horticultural firms in Kenya, using a three points rating scale: (1) Low, (2) Moderate and (3) High. Table 4.3 shows the response

**Table 4.3 Using Competitive Advantage to Respond to Drastic Turbulent Environment horticultural firms in Kenya**

	Low	Moderate	High	Mean	StDev
Market and product development	2 5.6%	6 16.7%	28 77.8%	2.89	0.67
Organizational positioning	1 2.8%	4 11.1%	31 86.1%	2.94	0.66
Differentiation	1 2.8%	5 13.9%	30 83.3%	2.94	0.66
Focus strategy	2 5.6%	5 13.9%	29 80.6%	2.89	0.67
Vertical integration	3 8.3%	12 33.3%	21 58.3%	2.83	0.68
Horizontal integration	2 5.6%	10 27.8%	24 66.7%	2.89	0.67
Cost reduction through downsizing	7 19.4%	5 13.9%	24 66.7%	2.61	0.74
Collaborative strategy in terms of strategic alliances	2 5.6%	3 8.3%	31 86.1%	2.89	0.67
Collaborative strategy in terms of mergers and acquisitions	1 2.8%	7 19.4%	28 77.8%	2.94	0.66
Collaborative strategy in terms of licensing	4 11.1%	14 38.9%	18 50.0%	2.78	0.70
Price fluctuations	1 2.8%	10 27.8%	25 69.4%	2.94	0.66
Advertising	1 2.8%	5 13.9%	30 83.3%	2.94	0.66
Distribution channel	3 8.3%	11 30.6%	22 61.1%	2.83	0.65
Research and development (R&D)	4 11.1%	8 22.2%	24 66.7%	2.78	0.70
Employee training	2 5.6%	5 13.9%	29 80.6%	2.89	0.67

According to the study findings, majority of the respondents at 28(77.8%) indicated that market and product development as a competitive advantage highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in their horticultural organization, 6(16.7%) indicated moderate response, while only 2(5.6%) indicated least or low response. This shows that market and product development highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67).

The study findings also show that 31 (86.1%) of the respondents indicated that organizational positioning as a competitive advantage highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in their horticultural organization, 4 (11.1%) gave a moderate response while 1 (2.8%) gave a low response. This shows that organizational positioning highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66). The survey on the response of differentiation as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 30 (83.3%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 5 (13.9%) felt there was a moderate response while 1 (2.8%) recorded a low response. This shows that differentiation highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66).

The survey on focus strategy as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 29 (80.6%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, while 5 (13.9%) felt there was a moderate response while 2(5.6%) sighted a low response. As a result (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67) shows that focus strategy highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya. Findings on vertical integration as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 21 (58.3%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 12 (33.3%) felt there was a moderate response while 3 (8.3%) sighted a low response. These findings show that vertical integration highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.83; SD=0.68).

Findings on horizontal integration as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 24 (66.7%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 10 (27.8%) felt there was a moderate response while 2 (5.6%) sighted a low response. These findings show that horizontal integration highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67). The study on cost reduction through downsizing and its response to drastic turbulent environment shows that 24 (66.7%) respondents felt it highly

responded to drastic turbulent environment, 5 (13.9%) felt there was a moderate response while 7 (19.4%) sighted a low response. These findings show that cost reduction through downsizing highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.61; SD=0.74).

Collaborative strategy in terms of mergers and acquisitions elicited the following responses from the respondents 28 (77.8%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 7 (19.4%) felt there was a moderate response while 1 (2.8%) sighted a low response. These findings show that collaborative strategy in terms of mergers and acquisitions highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66).

Collaborative strategy in terms of licensing elicited the following responses from the respondents 18 (50.0%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 14 (38.9%) felt there was a moderate response while 4 (11.1%) sighted a low response. These findings show that collaborative strategy in terms licensing highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.78; SD=0.70).

Findings on price fluctuations as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 25 (69.4%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 10 (27.8%) felt there was a moderate response while 1 (2.8%) sighted a low response. These findings show that price fluctuations highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66). The survey on advertising as a competitive advantage to drastic turbulent environment shows that 30 (83.3%) respondents felt it highly responded to drastic turbulent environment, 5 (13.9%) felt there was a moderate response while 1 (2.8%) sighted a low response. These findings show that advertising highly responds to drastic turbulent environment (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66).

According to the study findings, majority of the respondents at 22(61.1%) indicated that distribution channel as a competitive advantage highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in their organization, 11(30.6%) indicated moderate response, while only 3(8.3%) indicated least or low response. This shows that distribution channel highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.83; SD=0.65). The study findings on research and development show that majority of the respondents at 24(66.7%) indicated that research and development as a competitive advantage highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in their horticultural organization, 8 (22.2%) indicated moderate response, while only 4(11.1%) indicated least or low response. This shows that research and development highly responds to drastic turbulent environment

in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.78; SD=0.70). The study findings on employee training show that majority of the respondents at 29(80.6%) indicated that employee training as a competitive advantage highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in their horticultural organization, 5 (13.9%) indicated moderate response, while only 2(5.6%) indicated least or low response. This shows that employee training highly responds to drastic turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67).

#### **4.6 Ensuring Competitive Advantages are Sustainable**

Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement relating to competitive advantages sustainability during drastic turbulent environment of horticultural firms in Kenya, using a five points rating scale. Where; (1) Highly Disagree, (2) Disagree (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Highly Agree. Results were as shown in Table 4.4



**Table 4.4 Ensuring Sustainability of Competitive Advantages by horticultural firms in Kenya**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>StDev</b>
Strategic diagnosis is an organized method of establishing measures and strategies that have to be implemented to guarantee firm's success in its future performance	21 58.3%	8 22.2%	4 11.1%	2 5.6%	1 2.8%	<b>4.28</b>	<b>0.62</b>
Strategic analysis denotes how to diagnose the imminent environmental drawbacks which will be faced by the horticultural firms	19 52.8%	9 25.0%	7 19.4%	0 0.0%	1 2.8%	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.64</b>
Strategic diagnosis reveals clearly whether a business firm requires to modify its strategic culture to be guarantee of success in future	22 61.1%	7 19.4%	6 16.7%	1 2.8%	0 0.0%	<b>4.39</b>	<b>0.69</b>
Strategic diagnosis depicts how to establish the firm's strategic reactions that will guarantee future success of the firm	17 47.2%	6 16.7%	9 25.0%	3 8.3%	1 2.8%	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.67</b>
A firm's performance prospects is optimal when the firm's capacity matches the aggressiveness of its strategy	19 52.8%	8 22.2%	7 19.4%	0 0.0%	2 5.6%	<b>4.17</b>	<b>0.63</b>
A business's performance potential is optimal when the constituents of the firm's capacity compliments one another	26 72.2%	5 13.9%	4 11.1%	1 2.8%	0 0.0%	<b>4.56</b>	<b>0.68</b>
As environmental turbulence escalates, strategic issues similarly come up more often that affect the manner in which a firm formulate and execute its strategy	21 58.3	7 19.4	5 13.9%	2 5.6%	1 2.8%	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.60</b>
The extent of turbulence will show the nature of response strategy a firm must implement to survive	23 63.9%	5 13.9%	4 11.1%	2 5.6%	2 5.6%	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.60</b>
Strategic-issue-processing methods assist the management to recognize issues and strategize suitable actions that considers high priorities	18 50.0%	9 25.0%	7 19.4%	0 0.0%	2 5.6%	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.69</b>
The balanced scorecard of an organization is a management control system that permits business firms to make clear their strategies, convert them into action and give quantitative feedback	20 55.6%	6 16.7%	6 16.7%	2 5.6%	2 5.6%	<b>4.11</b>	<b>0.69</b>
External environment analysis includes scanning, monitoring, forecasting and assessing	22 61.1%	4 11.1%	7 19.4%	1 2.8%	2 5.6%	<b>4.19</b>	<b>0.64</b>

According to the study findings, majority of the respondents at 21(58.3%) strongly confirmed

the statement that strategic diagnosis is an organized method of establishing measures and strategies that have to be implemented to guarantee horticultural firm's success in its future performance, 8(22.2%) agreed with the statement, while 4(11.1%) remained neutral on the statement. On the contrary, only 2(5.6%) disagreed, while 1(2.8%) strongly disagreed. Overall, it is deduced that strategic diagnosis is an approach to determine the variations that have to be made to horticultural firm's strategy in order to assure the firm's success in its future environment (Mean 4.28; SD=0.62).

The study findings, majority of the respondents at 19(52.8%) strongly confirmed the statement that Strategic analysis denotes how to diagnose the imminent environmental drawbacks which will be faced by the horticultural firms, 9(25.0%) agreed with the statement, while 7(19.4%) remained neutral on the statement. On the contrary, none disagreed, while 1(2.8%) strongly disagreed. Overall, popular opinion shows that Strategic analysis denotes how to diagnose the imminent environmental drawbacks which will be faced by the horticultural firms (Mean 4.25; SD=0.64).

On the notion that strategic diagnosis identifies whether a horticultural firm requires to change its strategic culture to guarantee future success, the respondents gave the following results, 22(61.1%) highly agreed, 7(19.4%) agreed with the statement, while 6(16.7%) remained neutral on the statement. The remaining 1(2.8%) disagreed, while none strongly disagreed. Overall results show that majority of the respondents highly agree that strategic diagnosis pinpoints whether a horticultural firm requires to modify its strategic culture to be sure of future success (Mean 4.39; SD=0.69). The statement on strategic diagnosis depicts how to establish the firm's strategic reactions that will guarantee future success of the firm had the following response from the respondents, 17(47.2%) highly agreed, 6(16.7%) agreed with the statement, while 9(25.0%) remained neutral. The remaining 3(8.3%) disagreed, while 1(2.8%) strongly disagreed. In conclusion, majority of the respondents highly agreed that strategic analysis is an important element in determining horticultural firms' strategic response which will assure success (Mean 3.97; SD=0.67).

The notion that a business's performance potential is optimal when the constituents of the firm's capacity compliments one another was also tested and it yielded the following responses from the respondents, 19(52.8%) highly agreed, 8(22.2%) agreed with the statement, while 7(19.4%) remained neutral. None disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. Conclusions from this survey show that majority of the respondents strongly support this notion (Mean

4.17; SD=0.63). According to the study on the notion that a firm's performance potential is optimum when the components of the firm's capability must be supportive of one another, the respondents gave the following results, 26(72.2%) highly agreed, 5(13.9%) agreed with the statement, while 4(11.1%) remained neutral. The remaining 1(2.8%) disagreed, while none strongly disagreed. (Mean 4.56; SD=0.68) shows that the majority of respondents are in agreement that a firm's performance potential is optimal when the constituents of the firm's capacity must be supportive of one another. A study on the effect of environmental turbulence on the manner in which an organization come up with and execute strategy was also conducted and 21(58.3%) highly agreed with the statement that as environmental turbulence escalates, strategic issues similarly come up more often that affect the manner in which a firm formulate and execute its strategy, 7(19.4%) agreed with the statement, while 5(13.9%) remained neutral. The remaining 2(5.6%) disagreed, while 1(2.8%) strongly disagreed. In conclusion (Mean 4.25; SD=0.60) shows that majority of the respondents highly agree that as environmental turbulence escalates, strategic issues similarly come up more often that affect the manner in which a firm formulate and execute its strategy.

It was also found that the nature of strategic response a horticultural organization must adopt to survive is hinged on the extent of turbulence this statement was supported 23(63.9%) who highly agreed, 5(13.9%) agreed with the statement, while 4(11.1%) remained neutral. The remaining 2(5.6%) disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. From these results, a majority of the respondents agree that the extent of turbulence will show the nature of response strategy a firm must implement to survive (Mean 4.25; SD=0.60). The notion that Strategic-issue-processing approaches can assist horticultural managers to recognize issues and strategize suitable actions that take care of high priorities was also tested and it was found that 18(50.0%) highly agreed with the statement, 9(25.0%) agreed with the statement, while 7(19.4%) remained neutral. None disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. Results from this survey show that majority of the respondents highly agree that strategic-issue-processing techniques can help horticultural managers to identify issues and plan appropriate actions that address high priorities (Mean 4.14; SD=0.69).

The respondents understanding of the importance of the balanced scorecard approach on the company's ability to make clear their strategies, convert them into action and give feedback was also tested and this elicited the following opinions 20(55.6%) highly agreed, 6(16.7%) agreed with the statement, while 6(16.7%) remained neutral. 2(5.6%) disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. These results show that majority of the respondents believe that

balanced scorecard of an organization is a management control system that permits business firms to make clear their strategies, convert them into action and give quantitative feedback (Mean 4.11; SD=0.69). According to the study findings, majority of the respondents at 22(61.1%) strongly confirmed the statement that external environment analysis includes scanning, monitoring, forecasting and assessing, 4(11.1%) agreed with the statement, while 7(19.4%) remained neutral on the statement. On the contrary, only 1(2.8%) disagreed, while 2(5.6%) strongly disagreed. Overall, (Mean 4.19; SD=0.64) shows that's majority concur with the notion.

#### **4.7 Discussions of findings**

##### **4.7.1 Competitive Advantage in Business Practices**

Developing a competitive edge is crucial for small, new, and growing horticultural business ventures to succeed, and when a service or product provides greater customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy. Additionally, a company's brand and image will influence the pricing of the services or products supplied; additionally, business resources stand a chance in market competition to drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19 if they are found to add value to consumers. Organizational leadership was also examined in relation to the competitiveness of horticultural enterprises in this study, and it was discovered that the style of leadership exerted over a company has a significant impact on its market competitiveness to drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. The leadership style of an horticultural organization was also taken into account in this poll. According to the majority of respondents, transformational leaders are those that inspire and motivate subordinate to accomplish amazing results while also developing their own leadership potential.

In the majority of horticultural firms, transformational leadership was practiced, in which leaders encourage and inspire fellow employees to accomplish outstanding results while also developing their own leadership potential. Menguc et al. (2013) corroborate this study's findings. They defined transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers work together to raise one another's moral and motivational standards. Miller (2011) discovered that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership, which is primarily concerned with self-interest. Box and Miller (2011) bolster this argument by stating that transformational leaders assist their subordinates in learning and developing as individuals by encouraging and motivating them to employ a diverse variety of behavioural and decision-making capabilities.

According to the study report, resources are useful when they enable a horticultural business to apply initiatives that increase its efficiency and effectiveness to drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. This is accomplished through effective resource allocation. The researchers discovered that resource allocation is a critical factor in ensuring efficient resource use throughout business process execution. Perrot (2011) bolsters the study's conclusion by stating that business resources can only provide a competitive advantage if they are valuable. Dean (2011) believes that organizations' resources can provide competitive advantages if they are scarce, unique, and non-replaceable. According to the latter author, these characteristics become resources only when they are used to capitalize on opportunities or mitigate hazards in a firm's business environment. Organizational structure was also critical for enhancing firms' performance and competitive advantage, since it functions as a catalyst for innovation. Thus, organizational culture, according to the study, contributes to an organization's effectiveness and competitive advantage. Culture is widely regarded as a significant determinant of innovation. The study discovered that a cultural viewpoint may be beneficial for comprehending how horticultural firms innovate. Latshaw and Choi (2011) confirm that corporate culture grows and matures to recognize the fresh approach of the organization's personnel. This way, the organization develops new metrics for measuring and monitoring progress.

#### **4.7.2 Using Competitive Advantage to Respond to Drastic Turbulent Environment**

According to the study's findings, the most of respondents stated that market and product development in horticultural organizations in Kenya are very responsive to drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. This demonstrates that when horticultural enterprises produce and advertise their products effectively, they can compete in a highly volatile economy. This finding, which is consistent with Timmons and Speinelli (2014), also confirms that market development occurs when a firm markets its products in new areas, whereas product development occurs when a firm significantly modifies existing products or creates new but related products that can be marketed to existing customers via established channels. Zhang (2011) further claims that corporations pursue market/product development strategies in order to extend the life of existing items or to capitalize on a popular reputation or brand name.

Additionally, the study's findings indicate that organizational positioning and differentiation as a source of competitive advantage are extremely responsive to drastic environmental

turbulence such as COVID-19 in which horticultural firms operate. The survey on focus strategy as a competitive advantage in a turbulent environment reveals that focus strategy, as well as vertical integration as a competitive advantage, is highly responsive to a turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya. Indeed, Latshaw (2011) discovered that vertical integration occurs when a firm acquires firms that supply it with inputs such as raw materials or serve as clients for its outputs, such as completed product warehouses. Similarly, horizontal integration demonstrated a strong response to a very dynamic environment.

Additionally, the study of cost reduction by downsizing and its response to a severe turbulent environment demonstrates that cost reduction through downsizing is extremely responsive to drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. Collaborative mergers and acquisitions approach elicited, which was found to be extremely responsive to a tumultuous environment. Collaborative licensing model also demonstrated a strong response to Kenya's harsh volatile environment for horticultural firms. Similarly, the study discovered that price changes as a competitive advantage were also extremely responsive to the extreme volatility of the environment. Turkson (2012) also found that organizations can increase their chances of success by competing on pricing and delivering customers better value. For example, providing clients with greater value could be accomplished by enhanced levels of customer service, superior product expertise, or the development of strategic sites which can be supplemented through visiting the customer.

Additionally, advertising, distribution channels, and research and development were discovered to be very responsive to the harsh chaotic and drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. This is consistent with Hills and Jones' (2014) findings that improved research and development enables a business to attain more efficiency and a reduced cost structure. The authors discovered that by pioneering process advances, research and development can also assist a business in achieving a lower cost structure. A process innovation is an improvement to the way manufacturing processes run that results in increased efficiency.

#### **4.7.3 Ensuring Competitive Advantages are Sustainable**

According to the study's findings, strategic diagnosis is a process that identifies the changes that must be made to a firm's strategy in order to guarantee future success of the business. Additionally, strategic diagnosis demonstrates how to predict future environmental

difficulties that may confront horticultural firms especially during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19, as indicated by the majority of respondents. On the notion that strategic diagnosis determines whether a firm's strategic behaviour needs to be altered in order to ensure success in the future environment, the overall results indicate that the majority of respondents strongly agree that strategic diagnosis determines whether a firm's strategic behaviour needs to be altered to ensure future business success. Additionally, the strategic diagnosis demonstrates how to identify the firms' strategic reaction that will ensure success in the face of severe environmental turbulence. Strategic diagnosis examines whether a firm's strategic behaviour needs to alter in order to ensure success during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. It demonstrates how to establish the firm's successful strategic response. According to Ansoff and McDonnell (1990), strategic diagnostic is a customized process that identifies the nature of a firm's strategic dilemma. Answers to future environmental difficulties that the firm will face and how to decide the firm's strategic response that will ensure success. The study established that monitoring is the process of discovering environmental changes and trends through continual observations. Palese and Crane (2012) discovered that when businesses enter a phase of turbulence, monitoring and management of critical issues is critical to the company's survival.

Additionally, it was discovered that a firm's performance potential is maximized when the components of the firm's capabilities are mutually supporting during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. On how environmental turbulence influence the formulation and implementation of response strategy, most respondents strongly concurred that as environmental turbulence escalates, strategic issues that challenge how firms formulate and execute their strategies similarly surface more frequently. Palese and Crane (2012) discovered that when businesses enter a phase of turbulence, monitoring and management of critical issues is critical to the company's survival. Additionally, the study discovered that a firm's performance capacity is maximized when the firm's aggressive behaviour matches the volatility of its surroundings.

On the other hand, Gersick et al. (2009) demonstrate that the extent of turbulence dictates the nature and magnitude of reaction that a firm must use to stay afloat in business. Similarly, Sueyoshi and Goto (2011) explains that the main intent of external environmental assessment is to ascertain the significance and timing of the consequences of observed environmental variations and patterns. Moreover, the study discovered that issue based strategic processing

approaches helps the management in identifying issues and planning suitable responses to priority issues.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The chapter provides a summary of study findings with respect to study objectives or research questions. It goes further to highlight the study conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further researches.

#### 5.2 Summary of findings

##### 5.2.1 Competitive Advantages in Business Practices

According to the study, a weighted mean of 4.03 (SD=0.78) indicates that the majority of respondents confirmed that developing a competitive advantage is a vital success factor for small, new, and growing businesses. Additionally, it was shown that the majority of respondents agreed that when horticultural service or product provides better customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy (Mean of 3.92; SD=0.85).

The majority of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that horticultural company's brand and image will impact the pricing of its services or products (mean of 3.97; SD=0.88), indicating that a company's brand and image will influence the price of its services or products. Additionally, the weighted mean of 3.94 (SD=0.82) suggests that the majority of respondents are adamant that company resources have a fair shot in market competition if they are found to add value to consumers. Similarly, a majority of respondents agreed that resources are beneficial when they enable a horticultural business to apply methods that increase its efficiency and effectiveness (Mean of 4.08; SD=0.69). A weighted mean of 3.94 (SD=0.76) indicates that the majority of respondents feel that for a horticultural corporation to acquire competitive advantage among its existing and potential competitors, its resources must be scarce.

The study also examined the relationship between organizational leadership and horticultural firm competitiveness, and discovered that a weighted mean of 3.78 (SD=0.79) indicates that the majority of respondents agree that the type of leadership exercised over an horticultural organization is critical in determining its market competitiveness. The leadership style of an horticultural organization was also taken into account in this poll. The majority of respondents confirmed that transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to

accomplish amazing results while also developing their own leadership potential (Mean of 4.19; SD=0.66). Still on the subject of leadership, this poll discovered that a majority of respondents (Mean of 4.03; SD=0.69) agree that transformational leadership appeals to societal ideals, thereby inspiring employees to collaborate and work toward organizational competitiveness. Similarly, a weighted mean of 4.08 (SD=0.68) indicates that the majority of respondents feel that individuals are encouraged to collaborate and work toward organizational competitiveness when they engage with transformational leaders.

Additionally, the survey discovered that (Mean of 4.33; SD=0.65) demonstrates that the majority of respondents agree on the importance of the sort of technology implemented in an horticultural organization's strategic planning process. Proper resource allocation was also investigated as a factor affecting business process execution, and it was discovered that (Mean of 4.44; SD=0.64) proper resource allocation is a critical part of business execution. Organizational culture was also examined, and a weighted mean of 4.50 (SD=0.64) indicates that organizational structure is critical for horticultural firms' effectiveness and competitive advantage. Additionally, the assumption that culture is a significant determinant of innovation was examined in this survey, where a weighted mean of 4.00 (SD=0.70) indicates that the majority of respondents agree on the critical role of organizational culture as an innovation catalyst. Additionally, the cultural perspective was employed to comprehend the organizational innovation process.

### **5.2.2 Using Competitive Advantage to Respond to Drastic Turbulent Environment**

According to the survey findings, the majority of respondents confirmed that market and product development in horticultural firms in Kenya are very responsive to a chaotic environment (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67). Additionally, the study's findings indicate that organizational positioning as a competitive advantage in horticultural enterprises is highly responsive to a volatile environment (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66). On the response of differentiation as a competitive advantage to a severe turbulent environment (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66) demonstrates that it responded favourably to a severe turbulent environment in horticultural organizations in Kenya.

The survey on focus strategy as a competitive advantage in extreme turbulent environments (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67) reveals that focus strategy is highly responsive to extreme turbulent environments in horticultural organizations in Kenya, as is vertical integration as a competitive advantage (Mean 2.83; SD=0.68). Similarly, horizontal integration as a

competitive advantage in extreme turbulent environments (Mean 2.89; SD=0.67) demonstrates a strong response to extreme turbulent environments.

Cost reduction through downsizing and its response to a severe turbulent environment (Mean 2.61; SD=0.74) also demonstrates that cost reduction through downsizing is highly responsive to a severe turbulent environment. Collaborative mergers and acquisitions approach elicited (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66), which was proven to be highly responsive to a severe turbulent environment. Collaborative licensing method (Mean 2.78; SD=0.70) also demonstrated a strong response to Kenya's volatile climate for horticultural firms. Similarly, the study discovered that price fluctuations as a competitive advantage were highly responsive to the turbulent environment's extremes (Mean 2.94; SD=0.66). Additionally, advertising, distribution channels, and research and development were found to be very responsive to the drastic chaotic environment.

### **5.2.3 Ensuring Competitive Advantages are Sustainable**

According to the study's findings, strategic diagnosis is a process that identifies the changes that must be made to a firm's strategy in order to ensure success during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19 (Mean 4.28; SD=0.62). Additionally, strategic diagnosis demonstrates how to diagnose future environmental issues that horticultural enterprises may face, as indicated by the majority of respondents (Mean 4.25; SD=0.64). On the premise that strategic diagnostic assesses if a firm's strategic behavior has to be altered in order to ensure success in the future environment, the overall results indicate that the majority of respondents strongly agree (Mean 4.39; SD=0.69). Additionally, the strategic diagnosis demonstrates how to establish the enterprises' optimal strategy reaction in the face of severe environmental turbulence (Mean 3.97; SD=0.67).

The performance potential of horticultural firm was also determined to be optimal when the constituents of the firm's capabilities complement one another, as indicated by the respondents' responses (Mean 4.17; SD=0.63). A study on the effect of environmental turbulence on an organization's ability to formulate and implement strategy found that as environmental turbulence escalates, strategic issues that encounters a firm's ability to formulate and execute strategic response similarly become more prevalent (Mean 4.25; SD=0.60).

Another survey on the sort of response a horticultural organization must make to survive was undertaken, and the majority of respondents agreed that the nature and magnitude of strategic response that a business firm must adopt to survive is influenced greatly by the scale of turbulence (Mean 4.25; SD=0.60). Additionally, the study discovered that strategic issue processing strategies can assist managers in identifying concerns and planning suitable measures to handle critical issues (Mean 4.14; SD=0.69).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

In conclusion, nature of organizational leadership affects a horticultural firm's competitiveness during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers to accomplish amazing results while also developing their own leadership potential. Through competitive strategies, improvements in transformational-leadership-based capabilities result in market positioning advantages during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. The study concludes that the degree to which a business leverages technology has an effect on the overall strategic planning process. Additionally, the study suggests that proper resource allocation is critical for ensuring efficient resource use during business process execution. Organizational culture contributes to an organization's effectiveness and competitive advantage during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. A cultural lens may be beneficial for comprehending the innovation process in firms. The study concludes that marketing techniques contribute to a business's long-term competitiveness and performance.

The study concludes that Kenyan horticultural producers leverage competitive advantages to adapt to a volatile business climate and that these organizations employ a variety of response techniques to the tumultuous economic environment, including vertical integration, market research and product development and price variations or volatility. Market and product development significantly assist horticultural businesses in adapting to a volatile business climate during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. When there is intense rivalry in a market, for example, horticultural producers would establish a market or strategy to counter the competition. Research enables the horticultural companies to produce new goods and new methods of providing services to clients, hence increasing the company's competitive edge.

Additionally, scanning the business environment is critical for maintaining the sustainability of competitive advantages. Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) is critical in developing proper business procedures to minimize risks in accordance with the organization's risk profile and culture during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. Additionally, the study finds that strategic diagnosis is critical for determining whether a firm's strategic conduct has to be altered in order to ensure success in the future environment. Techniques for strategic issue processing can assist managers in identifying concerns and planning appropriate measures to handle high-priority issues. The study also concludes that when environmental volatility develops, strategic difficulties that threaten an organization's ability to formulate and implement strategy become more prevalent. Assessing the business environment is crucial because it enables firms' plans and management to understand the timing and significance of environmental changes and trends during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study suggests that the executives and management of horticultural enterprises in Kenya adopt a more transformational style of leadership. The study discovered that transformational leaders are critical in horticultural firms in Kenya during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19 because they inspire and motivate other employees to accomplish extraordinary results while also developing their own leadership potential. The study promotes transformational leadership because enhancements to transformational leadership-related competencies result in competitive advantage in the marketplace. Additionally, the study suggests technical enhancements, as the study discovered that the kind of technology adopted in a company affect its overall strategic planning process. According to the study, resources are valuable since they enable a business to apply tactics that increase its efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, the study proposes that optimal resource allocation be prioritized as a critical factor in ensuring optimum resource use during business process execution in drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. The study discovered that organizational culture contributes to an organization's performance and competitive advantage; thus, it suggests that horticultural enterprises incorporate cultural viewpoints in their operations, since they are a significant determinant of innovation.

The study discovered that market and product development are critical for seamer Africa to adapt to a volatile business climate. The report recommended that horticultural business

owners follow this technique since it will enable them to extend the life of their current product or capitalize on a popular reputation. The study also recommends that management adopt this strategy because it will assist horticultural firms in diversifying into new markets and new products through the exploration of existing competencies, the creation of truly new markets, and the development of new competencies to capitalize on new market opportunities during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. Additionally, the study suggests that a research and development plan be implemented properly. The study discovered that increased research and development efforts enable a horticultural firm's organization to operate more efficiently and with a lower cost structure. According to the report, the research and development function enables efficiency by creating items that are simple to create. According to the report, marketing strategy is a procedure that enables a firm to focus its limited resources on the most promising chances for revenue growth and sustained competitive advantage. Thus, the study advises that marketing strategies be implemented because they aid in product design, pricing, promotion, advertising, and distribution.

The study discovered that scanning and getting acquainted to business environment is critical for horticultural businesses in Kenya. The report advocates scanning your business environment since it enables early detection of business environment changes and trends. According to the study, strategic analysis pinpoints whether a firm's strategic behaviour needs to alter in order to ensure success in the future business climate during drastic environmental turbulence such as COVID-19. The study advises the use of a strategic diagnosis technique since it demonstrates how to decide the firm's optimal strategic response. The report advises horticultural businesses to strengthen their enterprise risk management concepts. According to the study, as environmental turbulence grows, strategic difficulties that threaten an organization's ability to formulate and implement strategy become more prevalent. As a result of the latter, organizational assessment is critical because it enables firms to determine the significance and timing of environmental variations and trends affecting their plans and management.

#### **5.4 Recommendation for Further Research**

The study aimed to assess competitive strategies and environmental turbulence on the case of horticultural firms in Kenya during covid-19 pandemic. As the external environment continues to be very turbulent and dynamic, there are several areas in which research can be conducted:

- i. The relationship between choice of strategy and the overall performance of the firm during drastic environmental turbulence
- ii. The effects of promotion and advertising on the company's profitability of the firm during drastic environmental turbulence

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**APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Section A: Demographic Information Tick according to your description**

**1. Gender:**

Female [ ] Male [ ]

**2. Age**

20 – 30 Years [ ] 31- 40 years [ ] 41-50 years [ ] 51-60 years [ ] Over 60 years [ ]

**3. Education background**

Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ] Masters [ ] Doctorate

Others (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**4. Year of experience in working with the flower firm**

Less than 5 years [ ] 5–10 years [ ] Above 10 years

Which department do you work in

Designation/title\_\_\_\_\_?

**Section B: Competitive Advantage in Business Practices**

On a rate of five points scale: **(1) Highly Disagree, (2) Disagree (3) Neutral, (4) Agree and (5) Highly Agree**; indicate the degree of your agreement and disagreement of the competitive advantages in business practices:

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Developing competitive advantage is considered a critical success factor for a small, new and emerging business venture					
2.	When service or product provide greater customer value, pricing at the high end is an effective market strategy					
3.	The brand and image of a company will determine the price of the services or products produced					
4.	Firm resources can only be a source of competitive advantage when they are valuable					
5.	Resources are valuable when they enable a firm to implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness					
6.	To achieve competitive advantage, a firm’s resources should be rare among a firm’s current and potential competition					
7.	Type of organizational leadership also determines organizational competitiveness					

12.	Transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and develop their own leadership capacity					
13.	Improvements in transformational-leadership-based competencies should lead to marketplace positional advantages through competitive strategies					
14.	Transformational leadership appeals to social values thus encourages people to collaborate and work towards achieving the competitiveness of an organization					
15.	The level of technology deployed in an organization impacts the overall strategic planning process					
16.	Proper resource allocation is a key issue in providing efficient usage of resources in business process execution					
17.	Organizational culture help bring effectiveness and competitive advantage to organizations					
18.	Culture is considered to be an important determinant of innovation					
19.	Cultural perspective might be useful for understanding innovation process in organizations					

**Section C: Using Competitive Advantage to Respond to Drastic Turbulent Environment**

On a scale of 3: **(1) Low, (2) Moderate and (3) High**; indicate level at which the competitive advantages respond to drastic turbulent environment in your organization

		Low	Moderate	High
1.	Market and product development			
2.	Organizational positioning			
3.	Differentiation			
4.	Focus strategy			
5.	Vertical integration			
6.	Horizontal integration			
7.	Cost reduction through downsizing			
8.	Collaborative strategy in terms of strategic alliances			
9.	Collaborative strategy in terms of mergers and acquisitions			
10.	Collaborative strategy in terms of licensing			
11.	Price fluctuations			
12.	Advertising			
13.	Distribution channel			
14.	Research and development (R&D)			
15.	Employee training			

**Section D: Ensuring Competitive Advantages are Sustainable**

A. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements by inserting a tick on the appropriate response. Use: (1) Highly Disagree, (2) Disagree (3) Neutral, (4 ) Agree and (5) Highly Agree

	<b>Statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1.	Strategic diagnosis is a systematic approach to determining the changes that have to be made to a firm’s strategy in order to assure the firm’s success in its future environment					
2.	Strategic diagnosis shows how to diagnose the future environmental challenges which will confront the firm					
3.	Strategic diagnosis identifies whether a firm needs to change its strategic behaviour to be sure of success in the future environment					
4.	Strategic diagnosis shows how to determine the firm’s strategic response which will assure success					
5.	A firm’s performance potential is optimum when the responsiveness of the firm’s capability matches the aggressiveness of its strategy					
6.	A firm’s performance potential is optimum when the components of the firm’s capability must be supportive of one another					
7.	As environmental turbulence increases, strategic issues emerge more frequently that challenge the way an organization formulate and implement strategy					
8.	The level of turbulence will determine the type of response an organization must make to survive Strategic-issue-processing techniques can help managers to identify issues and plan appropriate actions that address high priorities					
9.	The balanced scorecard is a management control system that enables companies to clarify their strategies, translate them into action and provide quantitative feedback					
10.	External environment analysis includes scanning, monitoring, forecasting and assessing					
11.	Strategic diagnosis is a systematic approach to determining the changes that have to be made to a firm’s strategy in order to assure the firm’s success in its future environment					
12.	Strategic diagnosis shows how to diagnose the future environmental challenges which will confront the firm					

**THANK YOU**