

**STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY SAFARICOM KENYA LIMITED TO  
ENHANCE SERVICE DELIVERY**

**BY**

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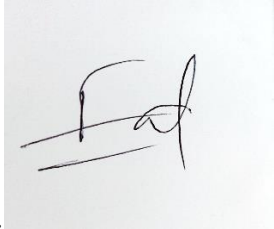
**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**2022**

**DECLARATION**

**Student Declaration**

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



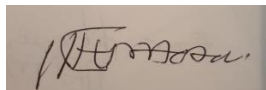
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**Supervisors' Declaration**

This research project has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisor



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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my family especially my mother (Dahaba Abdi) and my husband (Yussuf Hussein) for their constant encouragement and patience throughout my academic struggle and my sister (Ubah Abdi) for her financial support thus realizing my long term dreams

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## ABSTRACT

The multi-dimensional architecture of the communication industry and the ease with which telecom services can be duplicated has increased the complexity of the industry. This has escalated the efforts by telecommunication companies to dedicate more time and resources to effective service delivery. Businesses in the telecoms sector can only succeed and thrive if they consistently provide high-quality services to their customers. With so much competition, the telecom business demands that companies find ways to differentiate themselves via their strategies. The study thus sought to determine the strategies employed to ensure effective service delivery at Safaricom Limited. The study was anchored on two theories namely the stakeholder theory and the Porter's theory of competitive advantage. The study undertook both the empirical and theoretical review where the concept of strategies and service delivery was analysed. Data was collected from Safaricom Limited hence a case study design was used. Primary data was collected using interview guides. The respondents were managers from departments such as operations, marketing, sales, strategy, ICT and human resource departments. The findings revealed that Safaricom has employed various strategies such as the brand image, human resource and information technology to survive in the highly competitive sector and meet the needs of the customers accordingly. The results showed that the company has engaged in aggressive programs to promote the Safaricom brand such as extensive advertisement and offering personalized services to the customers. The results also showed that Safaricom has a clear and competitive process driven by the motive to hire qualified personnel and has been able to offer customized services to the customer through various applications and functions such as web hosting thus supporting the day to day activities of the customers. The results further revealed that the company faces various challenges in the implementation of strategies such as changing customer preferences, intensified competition, rapid technological changes and cyber-crime among others. The recommendations include the need for telecommunication companies to regularize their pricing in addition to the various CSR programs and extensive advertising, the need to develop a clear work-life balance schedule for the employees. The study further recommended the top management to constantly innovate and develop new technologies and engage in risk management measures such as forecasting and simulations to predict occurrences that may be a cause of potential havoc and put in place the control measures accordingly.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

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

Today's businesses face formidable challenges both internal and external when it comes to customer service and the delivery of services. Organizations are being forced to reconsider their service delivery techniques as a result of the ongoing shift in demographics as well as the high expectations of their customers. The strategies and methods that were successful in the past are now less effective and take a greater amount of effort to implement (Harrington & Akehurst, 2020). Businesses of all dimensions, in current times where service is what sets them apart, work tirelessly to strike the ideal balance between providing quality services and pricing competitively to make a profit. This balance is sometimes difficult to achieve. An entity witnessing improved service delivery as compared to its rivals is one that plans adequately as well as executes its competitive strategies accordingly (Jonsson & Devonish, 2019). The application of viable strategies significantly affects the service delivery of the firm (Wong & Kwan, 2021)

This research adopted the stakeholder theory in addition to Porter's theory of competitive advantage as its foundation. According to Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, an organization should prioritize its stakeholders in order to develop appropriate management strategies, and stakeholders should use a variety of approaches to the organization in order to assert their legal rights. From this theory, satisfied stakeholders define the level of services delivered by an organization. On the other hand, the Porters theory of competitive advantage argues that the level of rivalry and competitive advantage is different across industries as well as within the same industries. According to Porters (1980), the firm may gain a competitive edge in the market by functioning independently or in collaboration with



others in the industry (Thompson, Gamble & Strickland, 2007). The theory maintains that the strategy adopted by the company play a crucial role in securing a competitive edge in the market (Day, 1984).

Oligopoly is the market structure that applies to the telecommunications business, which means that only a small number of companies provide comparable services (Valaskova, 2019). There are two types of service providers in this industry: the incumbents, which are companies that have been providing services for a significant amount of time, like Safaricom in Kenya, and the new entrants, who are companies that have just recently entered the market, like Telecom. In essence, new entrants pose a threat to incumbents by providing services at cheaper prices than the incumbents, despite the fact that the incumbents benefit from wider network coverage. As a result of these characteristics, telecommunications businesses are required to be on the lookout for efficient methods all the time in order to increase their market share and provide distinctive services and goods (Chouhan, Sridhar & Rao, 2021). Transformations in service delivery has been witnessed across the world in the telecommunications sector as companies seek to implement customer-centric service ideas and strategies (Abdul-Rahaman, 2014). Emerging in the field of telecommunications all throughout the globe are patterns of service delivery that are similar to many countries. In addition to embracing technology as a new platform for service delivery, the most successful companies in this field also use it as an enabler to make their services more accessible, scalable, and integrated for their clientele. In other words, technology is helping these organizations become more customer-centric. These actions are taken to guarantee that organizations can adapt their resources to meet the

demands of their target markets and satisfy their stakeholder constituencies (Jeptepkeny, 2021).

### **1.1.1 Concept of Strategy**

An organization's strategy should take into account its short-term objective as well as its long-term goals. Additionally, the company's image before its stakeholders, especially in contrast to its primary competitor, is crucial. Strategic thinking is concerned with getting an advantage over the competitors, ideally one that can be sustained over time as opposed to short-term fixes (Faulkner & Johnson, 1992). In order to address the demands of its stakeholders, an organization's strategy may be characterized as its long-term direction and scope that is tailored to its markets, customers, and clients. A strategy is a set of guiding principles for making decisions that an organization uses to direct its actions (Ansoff & McDonnell, 2020).

As stated by Brorström (2020), a company's strategy is crucial to its success. A company's ability to thrive may be directly tied to the effort put into formulating a coherent business plan. Instilling a feeling of shared responsibility in workers may be achieved via the establishment of a well-planned company strategy that unifies the whole firm in pursuit of the same objectives (Kumar et al, 2021). Strategic choices in organizational structure are defined and guided by strategy.

Therefore, by aggressively seeking new skills and information, the organization braces itself for the unknown future state, and this increases the likelihood that the company will be successful. Any business may increase its ability to offer services, achieve long-term success and attain strategic fit by adopting and implementing this idea. This concept ensures that any organization can accomplish these goals. Because of the way the market

is structured today, companies are required to implement strategic thinking into their day-to-day operations, especially their planning processes, in order to competition effectively (Moktadir et al, 2020).

### **1.1.2 Concept of Service Delivery**

The act of delivering services to clients what is meant by the term "service delivery" (Cambridge University Press, 2017). The services should be easily reachable, readily available, reasonably priced, and accommodating. According to Stenzel & Stenzel (2003), "service delivery" refers to the degree to which a business demonstrates excellence in its operations. Therefore, managers need to consider this concept in order to guarantee that the activities that are conducted provide meaningful value for the consumers. Service delivery enhances compliance, brings about an increase in responsibility, and helps realize revenue objectives that have already been established or are yet to be attained (Omolara, Ayodeji & Taiwo, 2021).

People get a more favorable impression of an organization when they receive service that is of a high quality and affordable. The products and services provided to customers by an organization should meet and exceed their expectations. An organization's first priority should be to ensure that its customers are happy. According to Kalava (2016), the level of effectiveness and efficiency with which services are provided is directly proportional to an organization's level of success. Customers of a company will be dissatisfied if the company provides poor services since it is certain that they would be unhappy. It is the responsibility of an organization to guarantee that the services it provides are of a high standard. If a company consistently delivers services to its customers to their satisfaction, such customers are more likely to remain loyal to the company. Delivering high-caliber service is one way

to keep existing clients happy and coming back. It is possible for a company to maintain these consumers while simultaneously enhancing its overall performance (Njagi & Kombo, 2014).

As a result of shifting consumer expectations, businesses are finding themselves under growing pressure to redesign their function, sharpen their focus on the needs of their clients, and develop integrated models for the provision of services. In order for these models to provide the expected advantages, they need to be built on more effectively and efficiently catering to the requirements of their target audiences. This entails placing the requirements of the client at the forefront of each and every decision, from the formulation and design of the strategy through its actual implementation. Delivering high-quality services in today's highly competitive market and times when the emphasis is on the client is crucial and is one of the most critical factors in determining a company's level of success in the current business environment (Okoe et al., 2013).

### **1.1.3 Overview of Telecommunications industry in Kenya**

There has been rapid development in the Kenyan telecoms business in the recent past (Otero, Kibet & Ndungu, 2015). In the last 15 years, the Communications Authority of Kenya has issued licenses to a total of four mobile carriers, including Safaricom, Airtel, and Essar (Yu), all of which are global operators, in addition to a number of internet service providers, such as Wananchi and Jamii Telkom. In March of 2021, Kenya became the second African nation, after South Africa, to begin testing the capabilities of 5G.

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CA), which was originally known as the Communications Commission of Kenya, is the body in charge of policing Kenya's telecommunications sector (CCK). The advancements made in information and

communications technology (ICT), both in terms of infrastructure and software, are driving a fast transformation in the telecommunications business (Mudogi, 2019). In recent years, mobile money services have become more popular due to the digitization of commercial procedures. By the end of 2021 there were 34.7 million people who were actively enrolled to use mobile money, an increase of 4.7% over the previous year. Also, the number of agents increased from 275,907 during the previous quarter to a total of 283,357 during the most recent quarter ([www.ca.go.ke](http://www.ca.go.ke)). These factors contribute to the cutthroat rivalry that exists between the many companies in the sector. Safaricom Kenya Limited is the most important participant in the market, since the business provides services to 68% of the whole market.

Voice and data communication are mostly accomplished via the use of mobile phones. Even if there are smartphones available at reasonable prices, a significant portion of the population is still unable to buy handsets that are capable of 3G or 4G connectivity and instead uses devices that only support 2G. Getting your hands on Internet services has become simpler, and there's a growing demand for digital services and cashless payments in business transactions. Prices for both voice and data are dropping as a consequence of the shift from voice to data. The mobile business continues to be dominated by Safaricom, which has a stranglehold on the mobile subscription, mobile broadband, and mobile money markets (Agoro, 2015).

The number of active mobile subscriptions (SIM cards) reached 64.4 million as of the 30th of June 2021, which represented an increase from the previous figure of 62.0 million, which had been reported on the 31st of March 2021. This corresponded to mobile (SIM) penetration of 132.2 percent, reflecting a gain of 1.5 percent when compared to the year

before ([www.ca.go.ke](http://www.ca.go.ke)). During the time period under consideration, there was an increase of 2.4 million mobile subscriptions that were acquired after their first purchase. The significant increase can be attributed to a promotion that was run by Safaricom from the 12th of March until the 9th of June 2021 and was called "Welcome to Safaricom 4G." Targeting users who were looking to subscribe to the operator's network for the first time, this campaign offered 2GB monthly data packages in exchange for the purchase of a 4G SIM card and a 4G phone ([www.ca.go.ke](http://www.ca.go.ke)). Improvements in wireless technology have been a major factor in the rise of mobile telephony by facilitating the easier and cheaper rollout of mobile networks (Qiang, Rossotto& Kimura, 2021).

#### **1.1.4 Overview of Safaricom Kenya Limited**

Safaricom Limited, a Kenyan mobile network operator, is undisputedly the most successful of its kind in the country. It started off as a branch of Telecom Kenya and became a separate entity in 1997. U.K.-based Vodafone group Plc acquired 40% of the company and management control in May of 2000. Currently, there are 42 million users connected to the company's network, with close to 29 million making use of the M-PESA service. The firm has developed solutions such as the Safaricom App, the M-PESA Super App, and the Hakikisha app, all of which provide clients with a greater degree of control over the manner in which they make use of the network. In the history of the telecommunications industry, Safaricom was the first operator to provide real-time reimbursements for call dropouts. Since the introduction of the Safaricom Guarantee service in May 2016, the percentage of unfinished calls on the network has decreased to less than 0.14 percent of the total calls. More significantly, this action has provided the firm with a picture of the clients that has

never been seen before, which aids the company in ensuring that the services it provides are optimized for the market and continue to be relevant to it.

Over 1800 employees work for Safaricom, the majority of them are based in Nairobi but also in other locations like as Mombasa, Nakuru, Meru, Kisumu, and Eldoret where the company runs retail shops. At the moment, it has dealerships all across the country to guarantee that clients in every part of the country may purchase its goods and make use of its services (Kwambai, 2019). The goal of Safaricom Limited is to become the most successful business in Africa. To reach this objective, the company focuses premium on customer satisfaction and maintaining market relevance and competitiveness in its service delivery. This will ensure that customers can contact the company and have their questions addressed even if they want to use the most cutting-edge and time-saving forms of communication. Safaricom has been in Kenya for almost 8 years, so they have a good understanding of the industry and are aiming to apply best practices based on Vodafone's extensive worldwide expertise. These best practices are based on Safaricom's and Vodafone's respective knowledge of the local market. Integral to the operation of the company are the maintenance of the highest standards of service delivery as well as environmental, social, and ethical conduct (Gakiria, 2019).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

The multi-dimensional architecture of the communication industry and the ease with which telecom services can be duplicated has increased the complexity of the industry. This has escalated the efforts by telecommunication companies to dedicate more time and resources to effective service delivery (Ogena, 2013). Businesses in the telecoms sector can only succeed and thrive if they consistently provide high-quality services to their customers.

With so much competition, the telecom business demands that companies find ways to differentiate themselves via their strategies. This may be accomplished by providing very high-quality service to the customer (Poku, Ansah, & Lamptey,2014).

As a result of the intensifying competition that businesses are experiencing in the modern era, the most successful businesses will be those that are able to deliver exactly what the customers want by continuously monitoring their environments and providing the highest possible value to their clientele. As a result of the ongoing shifts in the operational environment, an even more noticeable shift in the business landscape is change in customer preferences and cost of production. As a direct consequence of this, companies now confront a higher level of competition and report lower earnings or even losses. This is probably attributable to poor performance in providing service to customers (Abdalla, 2021). In this day of changing consumer expectations, businesses are being driven to devise strategies that will allow them to meet those expectations by providing outstanding service to their clientele.

Service delivery in the telecommunications sector in Kenya has been deteriorating, and this has been made worse by a rising inflation and by government policies that have left Kenya's telecommunications sector destabilized. In the telecommunications industry, where the consumers evaluate the firm based on the quality of the services they get, service delivery is an extremely important factor. Businesses must be adequately prepared to enhance the standard of service provided by competitors in the sector. In the recent past, Safaricom's service quality has steadily declined (Magembe & Njuguna, 2019). This has been reflected in a surge in consumer complaints in recent years, particularly on the internet channels provided by the organization where contemporary customers voice their issues. There is



concern that if such a scenario is not handled, the performance of the company may continue to decline.

Research has been carried out both locally and globally on service delivery. Rasethuntsa (2021) carried out a study on service delivery in the Lesotho Tourist Attraction Sector; nevertheless, the research did not place any emphasis on the telecommunication sector. Mazikana (2019), on the other hand, conducted research on the methods to improve service delivery at Banket Hospital, while Joshi (2018) evaluated the effects of customer service strategies on the retention of customers at Investrust Bank Plc, in Zambia. Research conducted in Kenya has focused on customer service strategies and bank performance in Eldoret town (William, 2017) and on improving service delivery in counties (Makanyeza, Kwandayi, and Ikobe, 2019). Other studies have looked at the factors affecting the provision of quality customer care services in the telecommunications sector (Wanga, 2018) and in the telecommunications sector (Wanga, 2018). Eldoret, Kenya was the site of three separate research projects examining the relationship between customer service techniques and bank performance.

From the foregoing, it is evident that studies to explore the nexus between strategies and service delivery has been conducted in different contexts. However, the researcher is not conversant with any study that has attempted to explore the strategies adopted by telecommunication companies to enhance service delivery in Kenya. It was therefore the aim of the study to address this gap in knowledge by analyzing the strategies and posing the research question; What are the strategies employed by Safaricom Kenya Limited to enhance service delivery?

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The study sought to;

- i. Establish the strategies employed by Safaricom Kenya Limited to enhance service delivery
- ii. Challenges influencing the adoption of different strategies at Safaricom Kenya Limited

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

The findings of this study will be valuable to the management of Safaricom Limited. The study will provide the strategies employed by Safaricom Kenya Limited to enhance service delivery. This will create an understanding which will enable the management to formulate practical strategies that would enhance service delivery within the organization. The study will also give recommendations which the management can adopt to enhance service delivery within Safaricom.

It is possible that the results of this research can be useful to government officials, who can use them as a reference as they seek to craft regulations that will provide the groundwork for better service delivery at Safaricom. This research will inform policymakers about tactics that improve service delivery.

This finding of this study will provide the literature in the area of strategy and service delivery. The literature will be valuable for the academicians and researchers. In addition to enhancing future research on the subject, the study will serve as a useful resource for academics. The study will also display gaps in literature which researchers can exploit. Therefore, comparable studies on strategy and service delivery might use this study as a starting point for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter sought to review the literature relating to this study. The literature review highlighted both the theoretical and empirical literature. The chapter also indicated the strategies that enhance service delivery among organizations.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

The study was anchored on two theories namely the stakeholder theory and the Porters theory of competitive advantage.

#### **2.2.1 Stakeholder Theory**

Richard E. Freeman is the one who first proposed the stakeholder concept in the year 1984. It is hard to distinguish the kind of relationship an organization has with the people, groups, and other organizations who have a voice in its governance (Jones & Wicks, 1999). The stakeholder perspective on strategy incorporates not only the resource-based viewpoint and the market-based perspective, but also the socio-political level. The normative theory of stakeholder is an extension of the stakeholder theory. The goal of the stakeholder theory is to first identify which groups inside an organization should be considered stakeholders (the normative theory of stakeholder identification) and then examine why managers give such groups such weight (the descriptive theory of stakeholder salience). This corpus of thinking tries to bring concepts derived from business into the realm of public administration. In this context, the stakeholder theory may be seen as a strategy that decision-makers use to analyze their surroundings in search of potential threats and opportunities.

An organization's attention on its stakeholders in order to suggest proper management strategies is one side of the stakeholder theory, while an individual stakeholder's approach to an organization in order to assert his or her rights is the other side. The behavior of an organization toward its stakeholders seems to be tied to one side of the coin, while how a stakeholder holds an organization responsible to him or herself appears to be related to the other side of the coin. Both sides of the coin are related to the same coin. It is quite evident that this kind of interaction involves two parties. The actual evaluation does not have any bearing on the selection of particular policy alternatives; rather, the bargaining power of the most prominent stakeholders does.

Organizations are distinguished by the presence of several stakeholders, some of whose interests may coincide with one another; nevertheless, in most cases, there is a conflict of interest between some groups of stakeholders (Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2011). When it comes to the process of strategic management, the concern for stakeholders is the single most significant component. This is because public agencies can only succeed if they meet the needs of their most important constituents. At the same time, fulfilling implies meeting these needs, which, within the individual stakeholder hierarchy, are seen as valued and determine the degree of services offered by a business. Given this ascertainment, it follows that these expectations may stand in opposition to the organization's economic aims, as is often the case (Bryson, 2014).

### **2.2.2 Porters Theory of Competitive Advantage**

The Porter's theory of competitive advantage was coined by Michael Porter in 1980. The theory argues that the level of rivalry and competitive advantage is different across industries as well as in the same industries. According to Porters (1980), the firm may gain

a competitive edge in the market by functioning independently or in collaboration with others in the industry (Thompson, Gamble & Strickland, 2007). Day (1984) further advanced the Porter's theory arguing that the strategy adopted by the company play a crucial role in securing a competitive edge in the market. Further, the theory argues that the failure of enterprises to adopt specific strategies may lead to severe misappropriation of funds and extensive losses (Muia, 2017). The strategies of the firm must be geared towards attaining the goals and objectives which was re-affirmed by Porter 1984 by proposing four broad types of strategies namely cost management, differentiation, distinctiveness and emphasis that may be employed by a firm in order to attain long-term sustainability (Porters, 1985).

Under the cost management strategy, a firm attempt to reduce the cost of production and become the industry leader with respect to this subject. Through the low-cost strategy, the firms position itself to favorable access to raw materials, achieving economies of scale, having a patented software and other factors (Porters, 2004). The focus approach entails targeting a small market or dealing with a specific service or product in a niche setup in a bid to attain a competitive edge (Papulova & Papulova, 2006). The differentiation approach relates to competing based on how a firm can do things differently from the competitors.

The firm must put in place appropriate measures to adequately respond to external opportunities and threats. This may be accomplished by harmonizing competition tactics with its own aims and ambitions. In the end, this leads to better competitive advantage thanks to value creation and market share loss. Customer loyalty and retention would be boosted by efforts to preserve market share.

### **2.3 Strategies and Service Delivery**

Karagiannopoulos (2005) suggested three strategies for namely brand image, human resource and information technology. The three strategies are a source of better service delivery by telecoms. Ataman and Ulengin (2003) break down brand image to include product name and its main attributes and functions. Having a strong brand enables telecommunication companies to differentiate its offering from competition and exert greater control over the competitors. The brand has to be part of the self and social identity of the consumer to attract greater loyalty (Han & Hyun, 2012). In summary, a stronger consumer brand image is bound to assist customers in transitioning from an implicit loyalty behavior towards service providers to an explicit loyalty behavior (Yeboah-Asiamah et al.,2016). Brand loyalty reduces further marketing efforts and cost. Statistics indicates that it is costlier to attract new customers than retain old ones (Rossenberg & Czepiel, 2008). The brand loyalty concept is very critical in the service sector especially for companies that provide services with little differentials such as the telecommunication sector (Santouridis & Trivellas, 2010)

Successful human resource management practices are correlated with improved firm performance, as stated by Wang and Shyu (2008). Because the telecommunications sector is getting increasingly complicated, a high degree of expertise is expected from all of the workers; hence, the majority of telcos achieve this through delivering education and awards to their staff (Olsen, 2008). Additional strategies deployed include increasing working hours and introducing workshops to enhance service for the disenfranchised customers (Lu and Chiang, 2003). The information technology strategy which may be used by service

firms to manage market complexity. IT is specifically useful in controlling threat to new entrants.

The use of information technology is one of the most important factors in improving the overall experience of the consumer. It is an essential component of any strategy plan and represents a significant edge over the competition. For example, it plays an important part in the marketing, distribution, integration, management control, and provision of goods and services (Venkatesh & Agarwal, 2006). The reconfiguration of value service value chains is another important area in which IT plays a significant role. In addition to this, it paves the way for the creation of novel distribution channels, which may be used to improve communication with customers. Companies that deal in telecommunications have made extensive use of it in order to provide clients with integrated services that make use of apps that run in real time (Guem et al., 2011). The interactions that take place between clients and the service providers serve as a precedent for advancements in information technology (IT) since they make standardization possible, which may result in a decrease in expenses for the service provider. Service providers that want to improve their performance are now required to consistently provide new services to their clients. This need reinforces the necessity to place a greater emphasis on the role that information technology plays in service provision (Chen et al., 2009).

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

Rasethunsa (2021) conducted a service provision study of the Lesotho tourism industry. For this study, qualitative research techniques where data was collected using interview guides. Findings suggest that natural beauty and cultural traditions both play a role in luring tourists to Lesotho. The empirical results also showed that visitors were unhappy with the

local attractions' service. Unprofessionalism, a lack of skills, insufficient promotion of tourism attractions, and poor administration of environmental sustainability are all issues that contribute to this unhappiness. One way that the quality of services was increased was by providing updated training for all personnel working at tourist sites, and another was by including community leaders in the policymaking process.

Mazikana (2019) conducted research on the methods that may be used to improve the quality of service delivery in public hospitals, using Banket hospital as a case study. The participants in this research all worked at Banket Hospital, and there were a total of one hundred of them. Using a random selection method, we selected 80 people to sample from the Banket hospital. This study made use of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The most important conclusion is that service performance in public hospitals is affected by a number of variables, including managerial intervention in administration and an insufficient alignment of budget with the expectations of the central government. The study employed a quantitative descriptive design to test the constructs which is different from the present study which will deploy qualitative data

Research by Joshi (2018) examined the effect of service strategies on customer loyalty at a regional bank. A case study of Investrust Bank PLC was conducted since it is Zambia's sole indigenous financial institution. The primary data was acquired from clients of the bank using a questionnaire of the likert type and scale that was derived from the ServQual dimensions of service quality for banks. The findings revealed that the strategies adopted include "digital channels of service delivery to remove physical banking, ATM network, innovation of new products, rapid service delivery, and efficiency in addressing customer



complaints." The retention rate of customers was the dependent variable studied, while the quality of service was the exogenous variable in the current study.

Research conducted by Wambua (2021) focused on strategic management methods and the delivery of services in Turkana County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The workers of the Turkana County administration were the focus of the study done on this demographic. The participants in this particular research consisted of 1,007 individuals who worked at the county head offices located in Lodwar town where 108 were sampled. According to the findings of this research, there is a favorable connection between the use of strategic management methods and the provision of services in Turkana County. The study presented a contextual gap as it was conducted in view of a public service context which varies from the current one which assumes a business context.

Makanyeza, Kwandayi, and Ikobe (2019) focused on the strategies that may be employed to enhance service delivery in county governments. One questionnaire was supposed to be filled out by staff, while the other was designed to be filled out by those receiving services. The questionnaires were easily made available to 150 service recipients, and a usable response from 100 of them was received. The findings revealed that most significant contributors to inadequate service delivery are interference from councillors and political manipulation, corruption, a lack of accountability and transparency, insufficient participation from citizens, a poor human resource policy, an inability to manage change, a shortage of employee capacity, inadequate planning, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design whereas the current one will be a case study.

William (2017) investigated the effectiveness of several customer service strategies used by Kenyan banks. His research included interviewing bank managers at a number of commercial banks in Eldoret Town, Kenya. This study utilized a descriptive survey methodology, and the population of interest was comprised of 146 commercial bank employees. The participants included retail and banking managers, corporate managers, information technology managers, branch managers, and customer experience managers. The study found a strong correlation between commercial banks' success and their approach to service delivery environments. A contextual gap arises in that the study focussed on the financial sector the current study is anchored on the telecommunication sector.

A study by Wanga (2018) examined the ways of delivering excellent service delivery in Kenya's telecommunication industry a case of Safaricom, Kenya. Within the framework of the approach, the researcher used a descriptive study design. 156 staff working for Safaricom were selected to participate in the study. In data collecting methods, questionnaires were employed to gather data. The study findings revealed that companies were found to be obligated to track and accommodate consumer preferences, but not necessarily to prioritize keeping up with technological developments or other pursuits that were not directly related to satisfying customers. It was shown that adopting suitable management styles is one of the steps a manager takes to raise worker productivity, which in turn may improve the quality of services provided to customers. The tactics used to obtain service delivery, which are the topic of the present research, were not the primary emphasis of the investigation; rather, the variables affecting the delivery of excellent customer service were the primary focus of the investigation.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter demonstrates the research approach that was used in this. It outlines the methodology of the study and the design to be employed. This is followed by the description of target population, data collection as well as data analysis.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design is the overarching plan employed by the study to analyse the components in a way that is easy to follow and comprehend for the people for whom the study was conducted (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Having a solid plan for your study is crucial if you want to get good results. As a result, every researcher who plans to engage in data collection and analysis should first develop an elaborate research design.

A qualitative approach was used for this investigation. The researcher made use of qualitative data in a case study, making the qualitative design appropriate. Siedlecki (2020) describes a research design as suitable for the study since it allowed the researcher to talk about how things stand with respect to the measures adopted by Safaricom to enhance service delivery. Additionally, the design made it possible for the researcher to explain the techniques in their natural state, unaltered in any way. A case study adopts one source of data, especially an organization. This study collected data from Safaricom Limited which makes the case study design relevant.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The study made use of primary sources of information. An interview guide was used to collect the data. There was no structure to the interview guide, and all questions were open-

ended. When managers were presented with open-ended questions, they were given the opportunity to explain the ideas without being constrained in any way, as is the case with closed-ended questions. The research questions served as the basis for the development of the interview questions. The questions gave qualitative data which created an understanding on the strategies adopted by Safaricom limited and how they influenced the service delivery within the organization. The questions were continuous with no subsections.

In order to acquire relevant data, this research interviewed 6 senior managers of Safaricom Limited. The interviewing shall be selected based on their understanding and role in formulating strategies geared towards enhancing service delivery at Safaricom. Among the target respondents are managers of different department such as operations, marketing, sales, strategy, ICT and human resource.

The researcher conducted the interviews in order to make certain that they are exhaustive and that all of the pertinent information is gleaned from the interviews themselves. In order to guarantee that the respondent is familiar with the topics that are going to be addressed, the researcher gave further insights on the topic and shed light on the subject that is now being talked. The interviewer conducted a face-to-face question and answer session with the respondents, and the replies were collected by recording or notes.

Before beginning the interviews, the researcher sought the necessary permission from the participants by having them sign a consent form, indicating that they were okay with the investigator recording the session. After then, each interview was transcribed, then

compared to the other tapes, and any required edits made to guarantee that the verbatim accuracy was maintained.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Interview data was double-checked for correctness and completeness before analysis. The information was subsequently analyzed using content analysis. The data was systematically and objectively examined identifying particular properties of findings and then utilizing those same attributes to relate to trends. Conclusions derived through this method are more reliable and precise. Content analysis is a non-empirical kind of qualitative data analysis in which researchers collect a large amount of data about the phenomenon under study and then use that data to draw conclusions about the nature of the phenomenon (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The researcher was given the opportunity to classify qualitative information in accordance with the ideas or themes via the use of content analysis (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). With the help of this method of data analysis, the researcher was able to classify the information in accordance with the approaches used by Safaricom for the purpose of improving service delivery. The analytical approach was appropriate for this research due to the qualitative character of the data collected.

Following the completion of the qualitative data analysis, the results were given in prose format. This took the form of discussions to exhibit the respondents' divergent views on the methods used by Safaricom to enhance service delivery.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This section presents the results of data collected with the aim of addressing the research objective which was to examine the strategies employed by Safaricom Limited to enhance service delivery. The qualitative data collected by use of interview guides was analyzed using content analysis and the respective interpretations drawn based on the findings. The results are classified and presented as per the various themes examined in the study.

### **4.1 Demographic Characteristics**

The study examined the demographic attributes of the respondents at Safaricom in order to get a glimpse of certain background characteristics of the participants and gauge their ability to respond and articulate the issues under investigation. For the study, fundamental components attribute of those interviewed such as the highest education level, position held in the company and duration worked for the organization were assessed. On the positions held, the respondents included the human resource manager, the head of strategy department, marketing manager the ICT manager, the operations manager and the sales manager.

The investigator asked the respondents to comment on their level of education so as to ascertain whether they had the requisite capacity to discuss issues relating to strategies and how they influence service delivery. The findings revealed that most of the respondents had acquired a minimum of undergraduate degrees which was a prerequisite for the managerial positions they held at Safaricom. In his response, the human resource manager when asked whether he had a degree responded “*yes, I have degree, I am actually currently*

*pursuing a master's degree in addition to other short courses, some which are already complete. As part of the organization's human resource policy, to occupy the office, I am a Certified Human Resource Professional (CHRP), an achievement which has made me to effectively execute my duties and obtain the recognition attached to the office"*

As on the duration worked in the organization, four out of the six managers interviewed had worked for Safaricom for more than five years while the other two joined the organization on direct recruitment to the positions. In his response, marketing manager said *"I joined the organization eight years ago as a technical sales assistant, then headed the digital media team before being elevated to the rank of marketing manager."* This shows that there is employee growth at Safaricom. The ICT manager, being among who joined two years was quoted saying *"been working for the company for the last two years, and secured the job via a competitive recruitment process, and I can attest that Safaricom is an equal employer and recruits the best talent"*

#### **4.2 Strategies Employed by Safaricom Kenya Limited to enhance service delivery**

The study sought to analyze the extent to which Safaricom has leveraged on the three strategies namely brand image, human resource and information technology to improve service delivery. Previous literature pointed out the three strategies as akin to better service delivery in the telecommunication sector hence the study sought to understand more about their application in Safaricom and if indeed they influence service delivery at the company. The findings were as presented in the section below

#### 4.2.1 Brand Image

The interviewees were asked to highlight and give their views on the different strategies leveraged by the company to build and maintain the Safaricom brand. The respondents revealed that the company's branding strategies include advertisement, promotion, sponsorships, safaricom slogans, customer service and corporate social responsibility programs. The respondents revealed that these programs and initiatives were developed by marketing heads in collaboration with various heads of departments.

The interviewees were requested to indicate how Safaricom slogans have been used to build and sustain the Safaricom brand. It was established that Safaricom has launched various slogans to promote the uptake of its products and services and promote Kenya's culture, diversity and heritage. When asked on how the company has used slogans to build the brand, the marketing manager said *"slogans, have undeniably pushed the Safaricom brand to higher levels given that most slogans are usually connoted in Swahili, which resonate better with our Kenyan people, #twaweza for instance assures the Kenya people that Safaricom is a homemade brand and is here to make them prosper and transform their lives through the application of technology"* The interviewees also reiterated on the repositioning of slogans for instance from the previous slogan such as # the better option to #Twaweza accommodated the transition to a digital space and facilitated exchange of information and knowledge which was crucial for enterprise resourcefulness and creativity.

On the use of advertisements to build the brand, the interviewees stated that in addition to the use of the mainstream media such as the television and radio to advertise and market



the various products, the company was in partnerships with other platforms such as google and YouTube, to advertise products and services through Pop-up-Ads. As part of his response, the sales manager said “*we align our advertisements to the preferences of the customer’ based on their product/ service usage patterns*” while the IT manager responded “*the company is employing digital market initiatives such as the application of analytics for targeted advertisements, deploying the use of generation point of sale across shops and the electronic queue management system*”.

It also emerged that the company is involved in various sponsorships aimed at building the Safaricom brand image. The strategy manager revealed that the company had spent over Ksh.2 billion to organize various sports events such as the Safaricom Athletics series aimed at transforming communities through sporting activities. The respondents added that such events, organized at grass-root level had given an opportunity for identification of key talent for team Kenya which have proceeded to compete in Global Olympic events such as the world marathon hence putting Kenya in the Global Map

The interviewee stated that Safaricom had succeeded as a brand because they have tried to incorporate the user as part of the brand, hence they positioning their products and services in a way that addresses the customer’s challenges through technological solutions such as Mpesa among others.

Other mechanisms used to build the brand as reported by the interviewees was corporate social responsibility (CSR) which had been to a large extent used by the company to give back to the society, consequently building the brand. In his response on the use of CSR at the company to promote the brand, the operation’s manager said “*since its inception, the company has been committed to impacting the society and uplifting the livelihoods of the*

*vulnerable for instance the Ghetto classics which is community based programme that has transformed the lives of over 650 children in Dandora, Huruma Korogocho and Mkuru kwa Reuben by equipping participants with music education skills to provide youth with opportunities to better themselves with music education skills*". The interviewees also acknowledged programs such as the Ndoto Zetu that was launched in 2019 and to support 500 projects initiated by individuals doing extra things that impact the community positively. Such projects included the drilling of boreholes, supporting the impaired with digital literacy skills and donating learning material in schools all geared towards achieving Safaricom's brand purpose of transforming lives.

#### **4.2.2 Human Resource**

The interviewer assessed the recruitment process at Safaricom Limited. The findings revealed that Safaricom had a fair recruitment process since the company maintains an open access to various subscribers and job advertising agencies. The interviewees reiterated that the jobs and vacancies were posted on a real time basis and applications left open for a reasonable period hence the company was able to identify the best talent from a huge crowd of people. The close interrogation made with the shortlisted applicants in accordance with the measures outlined in the recruitment policy led to the selection of the most suited employees. According to the interviewees, 70 per cent of the customers were happy with the level of service delivery offered by the staff.

When asked about the qualifications and ratings for various rank's the human resource manager said "*the ratings for top jobs requires at least a three years' experience to ensure that those recruited have a good understanding and extra skills for the job and require less training to execute the roles attached to the job hence bringing the desired innovativeness*

*to improve service delivery*". The interviewees stated that high level skills set among the employees raised their ability to implement new strategies for the firm's operations. Additionally, those polled stated that qualified and experienced employees at Safaricom had facilitated efficacy and quality of services to the customers. Additionally, the study established that promotions and salary increments at Safaricom were limited to the employee's performance which was determined through customer satisfaction surveys and appraisal reports made after every year.

For posterity purposes, the interviewees reported that the company retains promising, hardworking and trustworthy employees through adequate compensation and benefits. This was done in the spirit to keep the employees for future management of the company and retain resourceful employees hence avoiding draining the knowledge acquired to another company which could be used against the functioning of the company. It also emerged that Safaricom limited has a robust policy in place to collect feedback. This allowed timely detection of problems before damages arose. The operation's manager for instance stated "*we continuously evaluate customer suggestions and implement the appropriate strategies to prevent customer dissatisfaction thus we attract customer loyalty*"

On being implored about how the human resource function was structured to ensure service delivery, the interviewees stated that Safaricom's HR planning process was aligned with the organizational planning policy. This included the ability to forecast the future resource requirements and align with company goals. They argued that having a clear HR strategy allowed them to leverage on the HR resources accordingly and to forecast and budget the available resources to meet their needs of the clients.

When asked whether, the company uses any system to manage the human resource function, the interviewees indicated that Safaricom had an established human resource information system where all critical information was stored for easy and unlimited access was given to all authorized persons which was introduced to improve the internal efficiency and quality of service delivery at the company. While commenting about the system, the human resource manager said *“our employees have been able to share reliable and consistent information seamlessly through the human resource information system which has provided many benefits to the users and changed the way the clients consume our services”*

The respondents also indicated that the Safaricom management has employed several tools to measure the morale of the employees such as the employee engagement and manager index to gauge the commitment they feel to the organization and the passion dedicated to their jobs which impacts service delivery. In his remarks, the human resource manager added *“Ninety-four percent of our employees recommend Safaricom as a great employer reflecting the affection and commitment to the brand.* The interviewees added that the staff turnover at Safaricom was at five per cent which was an all-time low. The 84% manager engagement index as argued by the interviewees demonstrated the company’s ability to create a conducive environment for the staff developing a team that is able to deliver excellent services.

Further, the respondents indicated that the company had partnered with other companies and institutions such as Nokia, Huawei, the Institute of Certified Public Accounts (ICPAK) and the Strathmore Business School to provide learning opportunities for the staff to

promote employability in addition to other programs such as the company-wide planning and counselling sessions that had benefited approximately 4000 employees.

#### **4.2.3 Information Technology**

The investigator sought to examine the areas in which Safaricom have applied information technology to become a technology partner of choice and improve service delivery. The questions were anchored around improved security, internet of things, cloud computing, increased efficiency and developing business solutions.

When asked about how information technology has been used to develop digital solutions for the user, the interviewees indicated that Safaricom has largely leveraged on Technology to develop digital business solutions. According to the respondents, the company has developed various applications such as the Safaricom app and other web based applications including the platform that was used for sim card registration to ensure that customer needs are met conveniently. The use of applications such as the Safaricom app had ensured that various services are integrated, business operations are simplified and made easily accessible by the customer.

When asked about how information technology has been used to ensure improved security, the study established that the company had put in place measures to ensure that customers had access to a wide range of security solutions to protect their IT systems. Among the services mentioned were managed security operations centre solutions, cybercrime management, managed security solutions and security assurance and advisory services. Through these services, the respondents indicated that individuals, companies and

enterprises can have access to their emails, websites and IT systems and secure them on a real time basis through the unlimited access. In his response, the It manager said *“we realise that all clients have unique needs and different budgets. Our IT cyber security solutions are designed to cater for the needs of each customer so that they can get the best value and strategically select solutions, we are excited to see that the solution is gathering interest with some of our customers in the transport and financial services industries”*

Additionally, the respondents indicated that the company provides the customers with an information storage platform referred to as the virtual cloud where valuable business information may be stored. It emerged that the company has collaborated with different public cloud providers to resell their cloud solutions such as email and hosting services, disaster recovery solutions, communication and collaboration tools and storage. The IT manager while commenting on the same stated, *“Safaricom for instance partnered with Amazon Web Services to provide customers with the deepest cloud platform and to demonstrate our commitment of creating a culture of customer obsession hence accelerating digital transformation in Kenya”*

The interviewees further added that the company offers consulting services to businesses by establishing where they are in the digital journey and developing strategies and roadmaps based on their capabilities and experiences with new technologies. It was discovered that the company had partnered with consulting partners such as the Amazon, through the Amazon Partner Network (APN) to build solutions and services for their customers through valuable business, technical and marketing support.

Finally, the interviewees mentioned the use of Internet of Things (IoT) at the company through various initiatives with the vision to connect things with things and things to the

people. The IoT solutions offered by Safaricom include asset tracking and utility management. Among the projects mentioned by the participants is the use of smart meters by Safaricom to offer real-time monitoring of water consumption for Embu water and sanitation company and the partnership with Kenya Breweries which saw the installation of sensors that leverage the power of IoT for various functions.

#### **4.3 Challenges influencing the adoption of different strategies at Safaricom Kenya Limited**

The researcher evaluated the factors that influence the introduction and application of various strategies at Safaricom Limited.

The respondents referenced resource constraints as a major challenge in the implementation of various strategies. They alluded that various steps were involved before a new strategy was introduced which include market research, hiring of professionals and consultants, purchasing systems and trials which consumed a substantive amount of funds. In his response, the human resource manager said *“we spend a lot of resources before making some decisions, which may sometimes not see the light of the day even after allocating huge resources and committing a lot time, though this has to be done since the consequences of deploying a strategy without facts are more harmful”*. The respondents also indicated that it takes some time before the costs and investments used to introduced a new strategy are covered and may sometimes run obsolete even before the gains are realized.

The interviewees cited changes in customer behaviour and preferences as a challenge in the adoption of various strategies. They indicated that the customers are becoming highly sophisticated and selective in their choice of services hence forcing the company to

constantly innovate products and services to meet this needs. They added that customers are increasingly becoming delicate and aware of their rights hence every step taken by the company anticipates a reaction. Such dynamics put the company in a state of constant change and uncertainty.

Intensified competition was also mentioned as a threat to the delivery of services. The interviewees stated that they are competing with other mobile companies in Kenya such as Airtel and Telkom which offer alternative cheaper calling and SMS rates hence reducing the company's customer base. The use of mobile banking by banks such as equity and other banks was cited as a threat to Safaricom's mobile money services such as Mpesa. In his response the operations manager said "*the recent splitting of Airtel money business into a separate entity called Airtel Money Kenya Limited is definitely a threat to our business since this will almost compete directly with our Mpesa business*"

The interviewees further indicated that technology shifts were a major challenge for the company since new technologies were constantly emerging which must be embraced and installed to meet and offer customer services effectively and conveniently. The respondents indicated that the purchase and installation of new systems was expensive or the company and that there was no market to offset the old equipment's and technologies hence bearing the company some losses if the technology shift was rapid.

Another impediment to service delivery highlighted by the respondents was rising cyber-crime and emergence of imposters who pretended to represent the company to extort the unsuspecting clients. This had resulted to loss of money and essential data by the client hence ruining the image of the company. Such incidences had compelled the company to



invest in additional security features and even use resources to arrest and charge the perpetrators in collaboration with the police.

#### **4.5 Discussion of the Findings**

The study revealed that Safaricom has leveraged on brand image to a large extent to build and maintain itself as the leading telecommunication brand in the market through various interventions that have in turn resulted to improved service delivery. The findings revealed that the company engages in various advertisement activities via mainstream and digital media to sell the brand among other initiatives such as contributing to the society through various corporate social responsibility programs. Such include sponsoring sports events, supporting community programs such as provision of water and education which have been crucial in elevating livelihoods in the society and hence building the brand. These findings agree with Santouridis & Trivellas (2010) who reported that brand image is very critical in the service sector especially for companies that provide services with little differentials such as the telecommunication sector as it reduces further marketing efforts and foster customer retention.

The results also revealed that effective human resource have been largely leveraged by Safaricom to improve service delivery. The findings revealed that Safaricom has a fair and competitive recruitment process aimed at hiring the most qualified employees with the needed skill set to innovate and offer quality services to the employees with less supervision. The employees, were capacitated within the system through a human resource information system for open access to information and rewarded based on performance to motivate more efforts toward the delivery of services. These findings agree and concur

with Robbins (2015) that having effective human resource enables the company to ensure the correct number of employees with the necessary skill set who have the capacity to completing tasks effectively and efficiently therefore enabling the firm to deliver its services accordingly and achieve organizational goals,

The results also demonstrated that information technology was at the centre of the company's service offering. It was observed that IT was applied in nearly all facets of the organization ranging from information storage and data management, creating a closer interface between the company and customer through various applications, securing data and control of crime through data security and providing solutions to other companies through Internet of Things (IoT) to simplify complex processes and easy management of utilities. These developments are in line with (Chen et al., 2009) who reiterated that there was need to place a greater emphasis on the role that information technology plays in service provision among companies that deal in telecommunications services in order to provide clients with integrated services that make use of apps that run in real time.

Finally, the study noted that the application of various strategies was impeded by a number of challenges which include the huge resources involved in the development of new technologies which sometimes have a short-time span in the market. The study also established that the unpredictable customer behaviour and the tendency by most survey have compelled telecommunication companies to constantly invest and be on the lookout for new areas of service offering. It was further discovered that intensified competition and rapid shifts in technology made it rather expensive for Safaricom to maintain the desired levels of service delivery and compete effectively. These findings are in line with Kiveu, Namusonge & Iravo (2019) who documented competition, changing technology,

government regulation and changes in customer behaviour as hindrances to the growth of telecommunication companies.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The section details summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestion for future studies. The conclusions and recommendations are derived based on the study's objectives.

### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

Below is a summary of the findings emerging from the analysis of the results and subsequent discussions.

Demographic information findings show that the respondents included the human resource manager, the head of strategy department, marketing manager the ICT manager, the operations manager and the sales manager. The findings revealed that most of the respondents had acquired a minimum of undergraduate degrees which was a prerequisite for the managerial positions they held at Safaricom. As on the duration worked in the organization, four out of the six managers interviewed had worked for Safaricom for more than five years while the other two joined the organization on direct advertisement.

As on brand image, the findings revealed that the company's branding strategies include advertisement, promotion, sponsorships, Safaricom slogans, customer service and corporate social responsibility programs. It was established that Safaricom has launched various slogans to promote the uptake of its products and services and promote Kenya's culture, diversity and spirits. On the use of advertisements to build the brand, the

interviewees stated that in addition to the use of the mainstream media such as the television and radio to advertise the various products, the company has partnership with other platforms such as google and you tube, to advertise products and services through Pop-Up-Ads. It also emerged that the company is involved in various sponsorships aimed at building the brand. These include sponsoring sports events, supporting community programs such as provision of water and education which have been crucial in elevating livelihoods in the society and hence building the brand.

The results revealed that Safaricom had a fair recruitment process since the company maintains an open access to various subscribers and job advertising agencies. The investigation showed that The interviewees reiterated that the jobs and vacancies were posted on a real time basis and applications let open for a reasonable period hence the company was able to identify the best from a huge crowd of people. The findings revealed that Safaricom has a fair and competitive recruitment process aimed at hiring the most qualified employees with the needed skill set to innovate and offer quality services to the employees with less supervision. The employees, were capacitated within the system through a human resource information system for open access to information and rewarded based on performance to motivate more efforts toward the delivery of services. It also emerged that Safaricom has partnered with other companies and institutions such as Nokia, Huawei, the Institute of Certified Public Accounts (ICPAK) and the Strathmore Business School to provide learning opportunities for the staff to promote employability in addition to other programs such as the company-wide planning and counselling sessions that had benefited approximately 4000 employees.

Further, the results showed that Safaricom has largely leveraged on Technology to develop digital business solutions. According to the respondents, the company has developed various applications such as the Safaricom app and other web based applications such as the platform that was used for sim card registration to ensure that customer needs are met conveniently. The use of applications such as the Safaricom app have ensured that various services are integrated, business operations are simplified and made easily accessible by the customer. The results also indicated that the company has put in place measures to ensure that Safaricom customers have access to a wide range of security solutions to protect their IT systems. It also clear the company provides the customers with an information storage platform referred to as the virtual cloud where valuable business information may be stored.

Finally, the findings revealed that the adoption of different strategies at Safaricom was faced with challenges. These include resource constraints since various steps were involved before a new strategy is introduced such as market research, hiring of professionals and consultants, purchasing systems and trials which consumed a substantive amount of funds. Another was changes in customer behaviour since customers are becoming highly sophisticated and selective in their choice of services hence forcing the company to constantly innovate products and services to meet this needs. Intensified competition was also mentioned as a threat to the delivery of services. The interviewees stated that they are competing with other mobile companies in Kenya such as Airtel and Telkom which offer alternative cheaper calling and SMEs rates hence reducing the company's customer base. cyber-crime and imposters who pretended to represent the company to extort the unsuspecting clients was also cited as a challenge.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

From the findings, it is evident that Safaricom has employed various strategies to offer excellent services to its customers and maintain the market leader position in the mobile telecommunication industry. It emerged that it is imperative to employ various strategies such as the brand image, human resource and information technology to survive in the highly competitive sector and meet the needs of the customers satisfactorily.

The study concludes that brand image is akin to the success of a company as customers want to be associated with a successful brand and attach some level of trust and loyalty to it. As such, the company has engaged in aggressive programs to promote the brand such as advertisement and offering personalized services to the customers. Part of brand image building initiatives at Safaricom included organizing sports events, and initiating programs such as the Ghetto Classics to uplift the livelihoods of different groups in the society and supporting programs that impact the society hence marketing and positioning Safaricom as a household brand.

Similarly, the study concludes that human resource is critical for the delivery of excellent services which has seen various concerted efforts by Safaricom to establish and build the human resource function through a clear and competitive process driven by the motive to hire qualified personnel who can help the company maintain the desired level of service and compete effectively. The organization has supported the staff through various training programs and creating databases such as the human resource information system for easy access to information needed for decision effective making hence effective service delivery.

Further, the study concludes that information technology is essential for effective service delivery at Safaricom. The study revealed that through information technology the company has been able to offer customized services to the customer through various applications and supported the customers in information storage among other functions such as web hosting thus supporting the day to day activities of the customers.

Finally, the study concludes that the adoption of various information technology strategies is hampered by various factors such as rivalry with other telecommunication companies which increase marketing costs and the rapidly changing technologies which increase the costs of acquiring and maintaining new technologies. The study noted that some of these challenges were unprecedented and must be tackled as they arise to maintain effective service delivery.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

To maintain their brands, telecommunication companies must regularize their pricing in addition to the various CSR programs and extensive advertising. The customers are faced with competing needs and were often be attracted to a cheaper alternative which is an area that Safaricom may consider for the long-term sustainability of the brand. The company may also initiate programs such as “own a smart Phone” initiative and publicize the campaign to the rural setups to sell phones at a subsidized prices in partnership with various phone manufacturers to enhance the uptake of their services.

The company should ensure that a healthy human resource is maintained through robust programs to build the capacities of the employees to offer excellent services which may



involve inviting external trainers and professionals to train the employees and offering scholarships for the staff to attend various trainings and programs abroad and bring new talent home tailored at improving service delivery and impacting on the lives of the staff. A clear work-life balance program also improves the productivity of the employees hence effective service delivery.

Since the telecommunication sector is highly competitive and regulated, mobile telecommunication companies must constantly innovate new products to create new streams of revenues and take advantage to identify the gaps in the needs of the customers who are becoming tech-savvy and position their products accordingly. This may be achieved through constant market research and keeping an eye on the global trends.

The company must put in place robust risk management strategies and business continuity measures to counter challenges as they arise. Among the solutions to reduce costs and competition is by partnering with other telecommunication companies to establish the network infrastructure and sharing network infrastructures. The companies may also use forecasting and simulations to predict occurrences that may be a cause of potential challenges and put in place measures accordingly.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

There was very limited time between the period of proposal defence, data collection and presentation of the final report. The investigator however planned her schedule accordingly to ensure that the work was delivered without compromise. Resource constraints was also a challenge since funds were required to pay the fees for the project and the resources involved for logistics to collect the data from the field given the hard

economic times that we live in. Despite this limitation, the researcher was able to allocate the available resources prudently, to make the study a success. Getting an appointment with the respondents was also a challenge which compelled the investigator to make several calls and visits to Safaricom. Some respondents were also hesitant to discuss the strategies on grounds that the telecommunication business was competitive venture hence the need to keep their strategies a secret. The respondents were however assured of non-disclosure and confidentiality of the information provided.

#### **5.6 Suggestions for further Studies**

A study on the strategies employed by Safaricom to attain effective service delivery should be conducted using quantitative data, qualitative data was exclusively utilized by the current study. Preceding studies may also incorporate more variables to validate the findings. Furthermore, study that incorporates all the mobile telecommunication companies in Kenya should be conducted. The study should be conducted in other fields such as insurance, banking, public sector and small businesses to find if the same findings prevail.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Interview Schedule

- 1) What is your position in the company?
- 2) How long have you been working for the company?
- 3) What is your highest education level?
- 4) What can you say about service delivery in your company?
- 5) Which are the main factors influencing service delivery in your company?
- 6) How has the company harnessed the following strategies to improve service delivery?
  - Brand image
  - Human resource
  - Information technology
- 7) How has these strategies influenced service delivery in your company?
- 8) What can you say about the adoption of such strategies by other telecommunication sector organizations in Kenya?
- 9) Challenges influencing the adoption of different strategies at Safaricom Kenya Limited
- 10) Please suggest other strategies and efforts that can be put in place to ensure efficient service delivery in the telecommunication sector as a whole