

**STRATEGIC AGILITY AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN SIMBA
CORPORATION LIMITED, KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

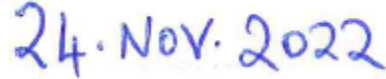
2022

DECLARATION

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



Sign.....



Date.....

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D61/39371/2021

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



Sign.....

Date 24th November 2022.....

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my Dad, Mum and Sister for their prayers, commitment, support and sacrifice in my education. God bless you.

This serves as inspiration for my sister Ann June to pursue success in all academic disciplines at all levels and is evidence that anything is possible if you set your mind to it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research project is a result of the abundant grace and blessings from the almighty God for providing me the courage and knowledge to pursue this fruitful academic path.

I am incredibly grateful to the University of Nairobi for letting me do this study.

I acknowledge my research supervisor Professor Aosa for his relentless support, professional guidance, encouragement and patience in me.

I am also thankful to Simba Corporation Limited for the unwavering support during this research.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AVA- Associated Vehicle Assemblers

COVID- Coronavirus disease

ERP- Enterprise resource planning

ESG- Environmental, social and governance

ICT- Information and communications technology

ISO- International Organization for Standardization

KAM- Kenya Association of Manufacturers

KMI- Kenya Motor Industry Association

ABSTRACT

An organization is said to be strategically agile when is it able to understand the environment in which it operates in, identify changes in that environment and adopt a swift reaction to those changes in order to achieve competitive advantage over other companies. The strategies a company uses to respond to environmental changes are crucial to its performance and could lead to achievement of competitive advantage. The objective of this study was to establish the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. The research was anchored on the theory of competitive advantage and Institutional theory. The study adopted a case study research design and data was collected using interviews. The data was then analyzed using content analysis and presented in prose form. Product agility, business model agility, Information technology agility, quality agility and human resource agility were recognized as the agility strategies used by Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya to achieve competitive advantage. Product agility helps the company to meet changing customer demands therefore increase market share. Information technology helps to ensure accuracy in data analysis and processing. Quality agility ensures compliance to quality standards and regulations thereby making the company attractive to potential investors and business partners. The study emphasized that competitiveness of any company depends on how agile the company is in response to environmental changes. The study recommends that Simba Corporation should consider accelerating its regional expansion drive to enjoy a less saturated east and central African market which guarantee reduced competition and ultimately better growth prospects. The study also recommends a policy framework to be created by the management and owners of Simba Corporation limited Kenya, to promote strategic agility which will increase Simba Corporation's competitiveness. The study further recommends regular documentation of implemented strategic agilities in order to keep track on progress of the company. The study also recommends involvement of each staff member in the process of developing new strategies in order to promote strategic agility which will in turn lead to competitive advantage in the organization.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic agility is the capacity of an organization to consistently integrate, build and reconfigure its competencies to address rapidly changing environment, Teece et al (1997). These competencies allow the firm to deliver the products that customers want, serve multiple markets and therefore achieve competitive advantage. This can be achieved by adapting the internal and external organization's abilities to match the changing environment. According to Porter (1985), a company's competitive advantage is any attribute that sets it apart from competitors and enables it to perform at a higher level than other companies. A company can achieve this by employing either cost leadership, differentiation or focus strategy. Njihia et al (2022) stated that strategic agility, competitive advantage and success of an organization are all positively correlated. To be strategically agile and gain competitive advantage, organizations must have three things: a clear understanding of their operating environment, the ability to quickly identify changes in that environment and the flexibility to quickly adapt their plans in response to those changes. Highsmith (2021).

According to the Michael Porter's theory of competitive advantage (1985), businesses should work to develop strategies that enable them to produce goods and services more efficiently than their competitors, thereby increasing their profit margins. He introduced the three generic strategies of differentiation, focus and cost leadership. These elements give the company the ability to minimize costs, innovate and concentrate on a particular niche market thus generate higher sales and higher margins than its competitors. According

to the Institutional theory (1977), organizations are the result of social pressures. Organizations need to be aware that the institutional environment can have a major impact on how formal organizational structures emerge. Institutions are the basic units of social, political, and organizational existence. They consist of governmental and social arrangements, norms and rules that shape perceptions of behavior and choices Bobbie (2014).

Nkwadi (2020) argues that when COVID 19 hit, there was a simultaneous supply and demand shock in the automotive industry as there was no input in form of raw materials due to supply chain disruptions and no output as demand for motor vehicles fell globally due to job losses and reduced purchasing power. According to Lera (2020), the growth of the automotive sector in 2020 decreased by 25% compared to 2019. Demand for new cars decreased, importation of spare parts declined, vehicle workshops were closed, workers lost their jobs and general corporate expansion plans were shelved. According to Denise (2020), the automotive players who were able to recover from the shock and resume their growth were those who placed great emphasis on both flexibility and adaptability of their employees to the changing environment. In Simba Corporation Limited, the Covid 19 pandemic reduced the sale of vehicles, spare parts and workshop operations due to the decreased purchasing power of customers, vehicle and parts shortages. The pandemic presented such a challenging scenario that Simba Corporation Limited was forced to review the number of employees, job descriptions and restructured the organization by declaring some staff redundant, Kotecha (2020).

1.1.1 The Concept of Strategic Agility

Teece et al (1997) revealed that companies need to develop dynamic capability which is the capacity of firms to realign and reconfigure their internal and external resources to address the environment's rapid change. According to Sprigg (2021), the capacity of an organization to react quickly and adapt to changes in the business environment is known as strategic agility. It requires the company to understand the environment in which it operates in, identify the changes in that environment and respond to the changes in flexible manner. According to Whittington et al (2020), organizations need to develop strategic agility which enables them to identify and respond to strategic opportunities and threats amid the changing environment. Agile organizations plan for environmental changes and respond immediately to them when the change occurs this is because change is constant and inevitable Bohannon (2022). Organizations should be able to adapt swiftly to new strategic opportunities and move on from setbacks to new initiatives including reversing existing resource commitments Clayton (2021). The most crucial competitive edge in these times of rapid change is strategic agility. By quickly adjusting their strategies, tactics, and operational procedures to take advantage of new opportunities and counter new threats, organizations that are strategically agile can obtain a competitive advantage over their competitors.

According to Denning (2018), the foundation of strategic agility is the belief that fostering change starts from the lowest department to the highest department in an organization and this will steadily benefit the business. He further reveals that even those companies that were established a long time ago can change their processes, systems, practices and strategy. Businesses that are agile can quickly adapt their products and services to meet

changing consumer demands and quickly develop technical requirements. Moutinho (2018) emphasizes that using properly considered strategic agilities; any organization can reinvent itself in response to changes in the business environment.

Strategic agility enables a company to be aware of what is going on in the environment, know what customers are thinking, know what they are doing differently, and how technologies are evolving and potentially changing. Makori et al (2022) established that employee agility which is type of strategic agility positively influences organizational performance. It requires foreseeing potential outcomes regarding new talent identification, coming up with a clever and unique approach to capitalize on staff unique skills and spending as little time as possible during the recruitment and onboarding process. It is determining how to act on an opportunity as soon as it occurs. Organizations can maintain strategic agility by monitoring both the macro and microenvironments for changes and by constantly reviewing their own plans and strategies. They must also be willing to rapidly make changes when necessary.

1.1.2 The Concept of Competitive Advantage

According to Porter (1980), competitive advantage is any condition or attribute that puts a company in a favorable position compared to other companies. This can be achieved by practicing either cost leadership, differentiation or focus strategy. It is the company's ability to properly use its resources and increase customer value sets it apart from other businesses, Alexandra (2022). These are the factors that permit a company to compete more effectively than its industry peers, Michela (2022). When a company is able to earn above average profits, it is said to have competitive advantage. A company needs to leverage its strategies in order to build resources and capabilities in order to achieve competitive advantage.

Peterdy (2022), notes that businesses can obtain competitive advantage when they produce goods and provide services more effectively than their rivals. By using their competitive advantage to increase margins, businesses will be able to create more value for their shareholders.

Understanding how an organization fits into the overall external environment is beneficial in developing sustainable competitive advantage. In the long run, it gives the organization a competitive edge over its rivals. Profiting from economies of scale and scope, efficiently setting up a production process and producing goods or services at a lower cost per unit than competitors are examples of competitive advantage as a source of financial profit. A business outperforms its rivals and creates value by providing superior quality products and good customer service. According to Odhiambo (2022), the implementation of advanced technologies such as electronic money transfers, mobile and internet banking, internal controls has a favorable impact on an organization's ability to compete. Factors that contribute to competitive advantage of a company include product innovation, pricing, brand quality, distribution system, intellectual property, customer service, highly skilled labor and organization culture, access to resources, unique location, brand image and recognition. A company with these attributes can achieve the largest market share and influences over market segments thus attain competitive advantage.

1.1.3 Motor Industry in Kenya

The automotive industry is a key pillar of the Kenyan economy and a driving force behind macroeconomic stability and technological progress. Changing consumer demands, state of the economy, globalization, innovation and technology and the regulatory environment all influence this industry. The assembly, sales, and distribution of motor vehicles, spare

parts and vehicle workshops make up the majority of the automotive industry's activities in Kenya. Kenyan vehicle assemblers are challenged by intense competition from imported secondhand cars, primarily from Japan. According to De Souza (2021), Kenya is typically a lower income country; therefore, used vehicles are more in demand than new vehicles.

President Uhuru Kenyatta issued a decree in 2019 asking all Kenyan government ministries to acquire locally made cars in order to further the "Buy Kenya Build Kenya" initiative. According to Midani (2021), this caused a dramatic rise in sales of locally assembled vehicles which benefited Kenya's motor industry. The automotive sector in Kenya is populated by key players such as the Motor vehicle assemblers, motor vehicle dealers, spare parts dealers, and motor vehicle workshops. Across the country, Kenyan car dealers are engaged in the distribution business. The abundance of vehicle repair and spare parts shops in Kenya, availability of skilled labor and technology advancement are major components of the country's automotive industry that contribute to the overall growth of the industry.

1.1.4 Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya

According to the Simba Corporation Limited employee handbook (2014), Simba Corporation Limited was established in 1948. Originally a used car dealership, the business expanded to include investments in the hotel, vehicle leasing, automotive assembly and distribution, spare parts distribution, and vehicle repairs. The company provides innovative, game-changing solutions and is one of the most successful indigenous businesses in Kenya, with its headquarters in Nairobi. Simba Corporation is the authorized distributor of well-known automakers in the commercial, passenger and agricultural markets, including Fuso, Mitsubishi Mahindra, Deluxe Trucks & Buses, SAME and

Proton. The business has expanded into the hospitality industry as well, managing, and operating hotels in a variety of portfolios, including the Villa Rosa Kempinski, Olare Mara Kempinski, Hemingway's Collection, Acacia Premier hotel Kisumu and Nairobi Street Kitchen. In addition to being a part of Simba Corporation's strategic orientation, these diversification and expansion initiatives are also a reaction to environmental changes.

During the COVID 19 pandemic, there was a dramatic fall in the demand for motor vehicles. Vehicle assembly plants and auto parts manufacturing industries experienced closure across the world. Workers lost their employment and consequently had less money to spend on cars. According to Kotecha (2020), Simba Corporation Limited Kenya has retained its competitiveness despite the environmental changes. This could be attributed to the organization introducing more agile processes and procedures, adaptable business practices amid the changing environment. This led to creation of value for customers, suppliers, employees, investors, partners, and nurtured mutually beneficial relationships and efficient operations thus leading to the company's continued success. Further, Simba Corporation's staff members have constantly kept the company's core values, mission and vision.

1.2 Research problem

When a disruption in the external environment occurs, a company that is not strategically agile will experience a performance decline and ultimately collapse. Organizations need to be strategically agile and alter their operations to align to the changes in the external environment. According to Teece (1997), an organization that has Dynamic capability is able to adapt fast to changing environments by combining and reorganizing its resources. It can swiftly alter its resources to match the shifting external environment by looking at

each resource's worth and cost. By adapting to the changes in the external environment, an organization will therefore be able to achieve competitive advantage. Porter (1985) established that an organization needs practice either cost leadership, differentiation or focus strategy in order to achieve competitive advantage. Organizations need to look at each activity involved in the business and assess their cost vis a vis benefit. Once this is achieved, the businesses owners need to identify and maintain those activities that generate cost and create value for customers thus create competitive advantage.

The frequency with which businesses in Kenya experience growth stagnation or even closure fills owners, stakeholders, and the Kenyan government with concern and anxiety. When the external environment changes, businesses are unable to immediately alter their business strategy. The importation of secondhand vehicles, inadequate qualified labor force, insufficient research and development, and the lack of long-term financial solutions to enable investments in technology are the issues the motor industry continues to face. Simba Corporation experienced a wide range of impacts as a result of the economic disruptions brought on by changes in the external environment. Sales of new cars, auto repairs, and motor vehicle parts all saw a fall in performance, Kotecha (2020).

Studies have been conducted on strategic agility and competitive advantage. According to Chan (2022), strategic agility links people's individual performance to that of organization performance. In order for employees to respond rapidly to changes in the external environment and work as a unified team to promote organizational success, they must be nurtured and developed as valuable resources. Wangasa (2018) found that when technology use increased, organizational performance increased as well. Mahasi (2010) discovered that in order to respond to changes in the external environment and remain

competitive, a firm must be innovative and embrace business diversification. Previous studies, including Murugi (2015), were founded on historical modifications to the external environment; therefore, applying the same models to the current times is not practical. Prior scholars have also studied competitive advantage and strategic agility in organizations however, a recent study into the strategic agility and competitive advantage in the motor industry particularly Simba Corporation Limited Kenya has not been done.

Foregoing studies have established that strategic agility influences competitive advantage. It would be expected that in the competitive environment in which Simba Corporation operates in, it would be necessary to have strategic agility in order to maintain competitive advantage. There has been a myriad of changes in the motor industry with the number of secondhand vehicles being imported from Japan increasing, disruption of parts supply and frequent changes in technology. The study evaluated the strategic agility methods by Simba Corporation factoring in the changes in the external environment for the purpose of gaining a competitive edge by looking at the process through which strategic agility leads to competitive advantage. How does strategic agility influence competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya?

1.3 Research objectives

This study will have one objective. This is to establish the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya.

1.4 Value of study

The motor industry practitioners will gain from this research. The research will help to create awareness on the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of an

organization. The study aims to enable Simba Corporation managers and other practitioners in the motor industry to realize the importance of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of their organizations. This will ultimately lead to the development and growth of their organizations because they will be able to anticipate change and respond appropriately. The study will influence the motor industry practitioners to offer their full focus and determination in ensuring the preparedness to the changes in the external environment and ensure strategic agility of organizations which will lead to competitive advantage.

To the policymakers in the Kenyan government, this study will make them aware of the value of organizations in the country being strategically agile in order to maintain their competitive advantage and contribute to the development and growth of the economy. As a result, the Kenyan government will provide resources, to ensure the development of policies that will promote organizations to be strategically agile amid the rapid changes in the external environment and develop their competitive advantage. The study will also encourage commitment among government officials on the growth and sustainability of organizations. The government policy makers especially in motor industry will also use this research because it is aimed at creating an awareness and emphasis on the viable ways to be strategically agile and maintain competitive advantage amid the changing and uncertain environment.

Researchers will use this study to identify gaps on the research to be conducted on Strategic agility and competitive advantage. This research will help to give new insights, concepts and accelerate more interest on the topics of Strategic agility and competitive advantage. Researchers will also be able to benefit from this study by gaining more understanding on

different ways a company can anticipate change and respond adequately in order to gain competitive advantage and benefit the company.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the theoretical foundations of the study, variables of the study, empirical studies, and research gaps. This study of the literature highlights important ideas about strategic agility and competitive advantage and their practical applications. It is acknowledged as a crucial tool for exploring the knowledge available and identifies gaps in the literature and introduces new research questions contributing to the development of research ideas.

2.2 Theoretical foundation of the study

2.2.1 Michael Porter's theory of competitive Advantage

Michael Porter described the three generic strategies of differentiation, cost leadership, and focus in his book *Competitive Advantage* (1985). By implementing either differentiation, cost leadership, or focus strategies, the theory describes how a company can outperform its competitors. A company that strives to be the lowest-cost producer in the industry is said to be a cost leader. It involves keeping product and services costs very low and in turn the customers will be offered lower selling prices. This is accomplished by making sure that the business processes are effective by utilizing economies of scale and having preferential access to raw materials to reduce costs and increase profit margin. According to Braslina (2014), economies of scale will help to lower the cost per unit produced. Differentiation strategy involves introducing a product that stands out from the competitors and establishing a unique selling point for example unique and innovative product features and quality customer service. This will enable the organizations to charge higher prices. Focus

strategy involves targeting a specific customer group within a larger market. Cost focus and differentiation emphasis are the two variations of the focus strategy. Janice (2022) notes that while the differentiation focus will be on the unique needs of the buyer, the cost focus will be on the cost behavior of the client.

Porter (1985) explains that in order to achieve competitive advantage in the market, the three generic strategies need to be understood. The firm can offer a cheaper, unique product or service that is innovative compared to its competitors. Cost leadership can be attained by employing economies of scale, in which low-cost producers sell a standard product to a wide consumer base. The companies must also be effective in procurement, production, and distribution to minimize on cost. According to Porter (1985), differentiation strategy enables a company to find specific items in a product that are attractive to customers and improve on them, this includes brand image. For special product attributes and brands, consumers are willing to pay more.

Porter's theory of competitive advantage makes the following prediction that a company can choose to be a differentiator, cost leader or a focus. Porter argues that a company should focus on one of these strategies to deliver superior value. This company will tend to be more successful than a company that uses all of these strategies. Porter clearly notes that companies that tend to use more than one of these strategies will find themselves stuck in the middle. These companies will tend to be less successful than companies that only focus on one of these strategies.

2.2.2 Institutional theory

According to Meyer et al (1977), Companies are often influenced by other institutions. Institutional theory examines how organizations react to these external pressures from other Institutions. The theory states that all companies eventually become the same over time. They start adopting the same practices. This is referred to isomorphism. For example, in the motor industry, all companies practice lean management that is the principle of continuous improvement. They all produce sustainability reports. The theory asserts that companies behave in the same manner due to three isomorphic pressures: coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. Coercive pressure for example is when a new law is introduced, and all organizations have to follow it. Toola (2018) notes that mimetic pressure is where a company copies another company's strategy in order to perform better. Companies that are subject to normative pressure take a more professional approach and adhere to all industry-specific regulations.

Institutional theory explains that companies will all be the same over time. However, in reality, that is far from the truth. Even if all firms become the same, we have different organizational responses to the environment. This is because, even if all companies prepare sustainability reports, the reports will be different. This is explained using institutional logics. This helps to describe the different variations and different responses in organizations. Institutional logics represent the value and principles of a company. According to Queen (2021), the theory helps to explain how institutions interact with their environment social systems. Institutions are the building blocks of the society. The theory illustrates how social behavior is governed by authoritative schemes, norms, and rules.

2.3 Strategic agility and competitive advantage in organizations

Competitive advantage is the dependent variable in this study, whereas strategic agility is the independent variable. Elali (2021) revealed that businesses that have mastered strategic agility are better equipped to react to any unforeseen changes in market conditions and consumer expectations. By making use of strategic agility, these businesses can boost their market share, brand recognition, and therefore achieve competitive advantage. Denning (2018) emphasizes that Strategic agility focuses on sustainability of organizations in enhancing value for their customers by introducing new products and adopting new business models.

Tilman et al. (2019) notes that an organization can outperform its rivals by grabbing chances in the face of environmental difficulties. According to Lean (2021), businesses that have embraced technology have been more effective and efficient in their operations as a result of task automation, which lowers the likelihood of work-related errors. Organizations that dominate various market segments and have competitive advantage are those that have a cost advantage where they enjoy economies of scale and are very efficient in production. Other companies that are said to be market leaders are those that have a differentiation advantage. This is where customers perceive superior value of the goods and services of a company thus beats the competition Riley (2020).

Ahmed (2021) indicates that by utilizing agile human resources, firms can achieve competitive advantage. He underlines that businesses with managers who can foster employees' enthusiasm and technical innovation abilities will equip them with the ability to respond creatively and innovatively to the various problems and difficulties they face. This is an essential part of the organizational transition's progress and continuity in an

uncertain economy. In order for firms to be strategically agile and gain a competitive edge, governance of those organizations is essential, according to McKinsey & Company (2015). The individuals at the bottom of the organization must be given clear instructions so that they can make decisions whenever a change occurs.

In order to give enterprises a competitive edge, Saputra (2021) suggested implementing leadership agility and individual staff learning agility as views of strategic agility. Managing a variety of human resources in an environment that is constantly changing requires a manager to play a strategic role in giving direction. Therefore, the manager must identify each employee's personal strengths and weaknesses, continually improve the team's skills, and serve as an example of self-development. On the other hand, the employee needs to take ownership of their actions, learn from mistakes as they happen, and seize possibilities for advancement demonstrating strategic agility and therefore making the company achieve competitive advantage.

2.4 Empirical studies and Research gaps

According to Lean (2021), delivery agility is a form of strategic agility. Companies can achieve delivery agility by delivering fast, high-quality products and services in order to retain customer loyalty. Companies need to determine what the best products for their customers are hence achieve innovation agility. This is achieved by conducting regular experiments, coming up with new customer segments, learning what customers need, faster than competitors. Another form of strategic agility is organizational agility; organizations need to evolve their processes, structures, and culture. This has to be done by reducing bureaucracy and introducing new leadership styles. In agile organizations, leaders are the front runners they create the right environment to deliver agility.

Chege et al (2020) conducted research on Information technology skills usage and enterprise agility abilities in Kenya. The study's findings showed that there are several common strategies for bridging the Information technology skills gap including employee training and mentorship. The study revealed that organizational agility leads to increased corporate value, meeting consumer expectations, and creating a positive shared culture. According to Aosa (2018), performance of a company depends on its fundamental competencies. Organizations need to develop an organizational approach meant to guide everyday operations toward the achievement of desired future goals hence achieve competitive advantage.

A majority of studies including Murugi (2015) are based on historical changes to the external environment; it is impractical to use the same models in the present context. There is no recent, thorough examination into the strategic agility and competitive advantage of Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. Prior researchers have examined strategic agility and competitive advantage in various organization firms. However, this study will perform a case study on Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya, and how the strategic agility influences the firm's competitive advantage.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that was adopted in conducting the study. It contains the research design, data collection and data analysis methods that were used to collect data needed to achieve the objectives of the research.

3.2 Research Design

A case study research design was used because the study focused on one specific entity, Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. The case study concentrated on a thorough research of a Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya and it provided an appropriate framework for the study that determined the collection of relevant data. Mahasi (2010) employed this strategy and lauded it for its capacity to exploit the advantages of the qualitative data that the interviews produce. The case study research design provided a structural framework as well as techniques utilized by the researcher.

The case study research design was appropriate for answering the research problem. It provided a framework that included the methods and procedures to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The case study research design established a foundation for data analysis. The methods and procedures for obtaining and analyzing the variables were described. The case study research design helped to organize research study and demonstrated how the key research components all work together to address the main research objectives Machuki (2011).

3.3 Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected. The data was ideal since it provided different strategic agilities and their influence on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation limited, Kenya. The information in the data allowed the researcher to analyze research variable information in a planned and methodical manner. The qualitative information made it easier to comprehend how the organization's competitive advantage has been impacted by strategic agility.

Interviews were conducted to collect data in this study. The interviews included were open-ended questions that allowed the interviewees to give answers without restrictions. The interview guide was divided into three sections: demographics section, environmental changes section and strategic agility, and competitive advantage section. The demographics section included personal background designed to obtain basic information about the target department and person. Environmental changes section included changes that have occurred in the business environment. The strategic agility and competitive advantage section included questions on how strategic agility influenced competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya.

In interviews, the responder and the researcher spoke face to face while exchanging information. The researcher asked "how" and "why" questions during the interview and gave interviewees the chance to describe their narrative in their own terms. According to Yin (2014), interviews, observation and documents are the three main sources of evidence in a case study.

The respondents of the study included seven head of the departments as follows: workshop, parts, sales, marketing, finance, human resources and information technology. These

respondents were ideal since they were responsible for cascading the overall company strategy to their staff and were in a better position to explain how strategic agility has influenced competitive advantage of Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. The researcher also interviewed the strategy manager that is the overall head of the company strategy department. The researcher sought to understand her perspective of how strategic agility has influenced the company's competitive advantage.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis. Grad (2021) noted that content analysis was resourceful and adequate for purposes of data analysis for a case study research design. It evaluated the importance, frequency, and connections of specific terms and subjects obtained during the interview. Content analysis was used to analyze and categorize patterns of verbal or behavioral information. The data collected was evaluated by the researcher to check for partiality or bias. The researcher inferred the meanings of the words and explanations of the interviewee and the relevant context.

Content analysis was ideal since the researcher interpreted the collected data by applying logical and analytical reasoning to identify relationships and similarity of information obtained. It enhanced thorough examination of the information collected from the interviews, produced findings and inferences, and gave the information collected significance. It enabled drawing of conclusions from the data while maintaining a strong chain of evidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains information about how respondents reacted to the questions during the interview. It contains the research findings and discussions on strategic agility and competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. This is based on the research carried out and data collected from the respondents. These respondents were interviewed since they are directly involved in ensuring Simba Corporation is strategically agile in order to maintain competitive advantage. The respondents were well aware of the strategic agility and its influence on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya.

4.2 Profile of the respondents in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya

The respondents of the study were nine Simba Corporation managers and head of departments including; Strategy manager, Parts operations manager, Service manager, Head of supply chain, Business analyst, ICT manager, Head of marketing, Government Sales and Leasing Officer and Internal auditor. The respondents were interviewed and provided data to be analyzed for the research study. Respondents were from both operations and business support departments. The respondents were responsible ensuring the cascading down of strategy to various staff in the departments and review to ensure that the company strategy is implemented. The respondents were staff who worked over three years in the company and therefore understood the operations and procedures of Simba corporation Limited, Kenya.

4.3 Strategic Agility and Competitive Advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya

The researcher sought to establish whether Strategic agilities employed by Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya had an effect on the company's competitive advantage. Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has strategic agility in different methods and forms across all departments, all of which have influenced the firm's competitive advantage. The following strategic agilities were examined: Product agility, business model agility, quality agility, ICT agility and Human resource agility.

4.3.1 Product agility

Simba Corporation Ltd introduced various new modern vehicle brands which are better aligned to respond to the ever-increasing customer need for modern cars with latest technology and safety features. The brands include the Proton X70, Proton Saga and Mitsubishi expander. The introduction of these new products as affirmed by all respondents has been essential to the attainment of competitive advantage by ensuring meeting customer demand for modern cars therefore increasing customer satisfaction leading to improved market share and growth. These cars are equipped with modern features that make them attractive to customers including feature such as voice command and online navigation systems.

The first entirely locally assembled saloon vehicle in Kenya is the Proton Saga. The car was developed to meet the needs of Kenya's expanding middle class, which was looking for reasonably priced modern vehicles. Trade-in value is Kshs 1.2 million, and it has a 5-year, 150,000-KM warranty. Proton X70 is the second automobile. It is a high-end sports utility vehicle (SUV) with a 1.5-liter turbocharged engine that generates 180 horsepower

and costs Kshs 4.8 million. The Mitsubishi Xpander is Priced at Kshs 3.4 million, it is a versatile and spacious car with three rows of excellent seating.

The first Euro 4 Mitsubishi L200 truck was assembled and distributed by Simba Corporation in Kenya for the first time in July 2022. European regulations limiting environmental contamination by vehicles are known as Euro 4 regulations. This was a guide that vehicle assemblers had to abide by. The rules mainly targeted pick-up trucks, buses, and other domestically produced commercial vehicles.

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya, concentrated on assembling cars that adhere to EURO 4 pollution standards. The company was able to meet the new EURO 4 environmental pollution standard by conducting product planning, incorporating new technology into vehicles, installing equipment like particulate filters and catalytic converters that convert toxic gases into less-toxic pollutants, confirming the quality of fuel, and preparing its assembly plants to handle these new engine requirements. By adhering to this new standard, Simba Corporation showed its dedication to ensuring compliance and took the lead in advocating for and upholding the Euro 4 emissions regulations. This makes Simba Corporation more attractive to customers including corporates that are conscious on impact of vehicle emissions to the environment.

4.3.2 Business model agility

Simba Corporation Ltd acquired Mombasa-based Associated Vehicle Assemblers (AVA) in 2017 a move made to ensure the company assembles its vehicles in Kenya and reduces costs significantly. The move to assemble cars locally was informed by tax incentives, which lower the price of the new vehicles compared to those imported fully built from overseas. Assemblers of all types of vehicles in Kenya enjoy waiver of 25% import duty

and 20% excise tax. The Kenyan government also exempts 16% value-added tax (VAT) for assemblers of passenger cars as long as they source 30% of the vehicle parts locally. These tax incentives lower the price of new cars, which in turn attracts purchasers who previously preferred, used models and boosts Simba corporation Limited, Kenya vehicle sales. The company has invested necessary computerized machinery and is currently assembling various vehicle brands including, FUSO, Proton saga, Mahindra, Mitsubishi. It also earns revenue from assembly of other competitor brands including Scania, Toyota and Bajaj Maxima Tuk Tuk. The acquisition of AVA assembly plant also gives Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya an advantage over its competitors since it is established as a unique business that completes the value chain from importation of vehicles, assembly and distribution of the motor vehicles. The company now plans to start assembling Pajero Sport and Proton X70 from the year 2023.

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has also partnered with bank partners to provide asset finance to make it easier for their customers to own new show room zero-mileage, high value car. The company diversified its operations by opening up a new branch in Nyeri town in the year 2021 in order to sell vehicles, repair vehicles and sell parts to the central region of Kenya. This project is earmarked at radically redefining the Simba Corp's core business and revenue lines in central Kenya.

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has also been able to supply genuine parts that ensure the customer's car is preserved for longer, making value on their investment. Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya also offers quality service and repairs, as well as extensive aftersales support countrywide by setting up business partnerships and agreements with

agents and dealerships including crater auto mobiles, Auto-express, Automobile Warehouse Ltd (AWL) who sell Simba products and create more brand awareness.

There has been a shift in Kenyan government strategy from purchasing of new vehicles to leasing of vehicles. This has caused Simba Corporation to also engage in supply of lease vehicles to government ministries through the government leasing program that enables the company to sell vehicle leases to the government parastatals and state agencies in order to meet their demand for lease vehicles.

4.3.3 Quality agility

Simba Corporation was awarded ISO 9001:2015 certification in 2021. The ISO 9001:2015 is an international standard for quality Management that specifies a framework for enhancing the quality of operations, processes, and transactions for any business aiming to deliver goods and services that consistently satisfy customers' needs and expectations.

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has been able to align procedures throughout the entire organization to produce efficiencies, better customer experience and create new opportunities and continuous growth of the company ultimately leading to competitive advantage.

The company strives to be strategically agile by continuously maintain standards in compliance with the ISO certification thus leading to competitive advantage. The company is dedicated in accomplishing this through the implementation of a Quality Management System incorporating the 7 principles of IS09001:2015 which enhances quality. The 7 Quality Principles include Integrity, Accountability, Stewardship, People, Innovation, Relationship and Entrepreneurship.

4.3.4 Information Technology agility

Simba Corporation has been strategically agile by investing in a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) system known as Microsoft Dynamics 365. This has improved order customer fulfillment, accurate forecasting, and increased efficiency, all of which have increased the company's competitive advantage. Process automation has reduced order processing errors and improved order fulfillment lead times. Through cloud computing, the system database is kept online. This guarantees that data is constantly backed up and secure and the company achieves competitive advantage.

Technology advancement has however also increased risk of cyber security, data leakage, viruses and even loss of data. Simba Corporation mitigated this by investing in modern security technological solutions including firewalls installations and antivirus to shield from these threats thus leading to competitive advantage.

The company makes data driven decisions therefore there is a lot of emphasis on data accuracy and safety. The company has also set up internet that allows staff to access systems remotely thus allow them to work from home through Virtual Private Network (VPN) as was evidenced during the Covid 19. VPN services encrypt internet data across unsafe networks. External parties are unable to monitor employee online behavior and steal data as a result. This enabled staff to continue offering their services and meet customer expectations hence increase customer retention.

The respondents of the study also affirmed that Simba Corporation upgraded its website, social media accounts on Facebook and Instagram, and web portal functionality to support online marketing and e-commerce. The website contains all of the product lines, unique product offers, and other important details. Each product has an own social media page to

promote brand independence and create unique brand identities. Simba Corporation also increased its social media advertisements and electronic media presence by partnering with other companies like Mozza-bet to enhance sales of new vehicles through promotions for example: Bet to win a car. Social media advertisements were designed by the marketing department to ensure brand visibility, recognition, awareness and identity in order to revamp sales.

4.3.5 Human resource agility

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has been able to transform the ways in which the talented and skilled staffs are recruited, trained, nurtured and sustained. The respondents of the study affirmed that rather than developing training programs for employees the company has now started to engage employees and develop training programs with them. This helps to improve employee performance and experience at the workplace. Simba has invested both in staff through technical vehicle trainings to maintain the newer vehicle models and workshop equipment.

The company has introduced new performance management methods that involve regular monitoring of staff work and giving immediate feedback by the line managers rather than waiting for the end of year in order to give feedback on a staff performance. The Human resource department has regularly urged managers to appraise their staff after every task in order to ensure fast identification of weakness and identify areas for improvement.

The company has also introduced management training that is meant to identify and develop high performers in the company and nurture their skills and talents in order to enable to grow and take leadership positions. The training involves onboarding of staff and frequently monitoring their performance and aligning them to the company goals and

objectives. As part of reinventing its operations department and initiatives, the organization hired top talent from local leading companies and provided them with training so they could develop their talents.

Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has also participated in regular staff recognition programs, such as the Aspire awards, which recognize employees who have the ability to perform and reward them to encourage them to do so. The business acknowledges that its most valuable resource is its people. As a result, the business is dedicated to the professional development of its personnel. The organization has continued to experience continuous growth, uniform, constant performance, which results in high-quality work and a competitive edge. This is due to the talent identification and skills development programs.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. From the study, it was found out that the organization's competitiveness is affected by strategic agilities that the company has. According to the analysis of interview responses from the respondents, the strategic agilities by Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya have influenced the competitive advantage of the company.

The study established that Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has put in place five major agility strategies namely, Product agility, business model agility, ICT agility, quality agility and Human resource agility in order to achieve its competitive advantage. Product agility included: new products and brands. Human resource agility included attracting and retaining the right talent of staff, ICT involved employing new ICT solutions to promote efficiency and effectiveness of business and quality agility involved being able to comply

with the latest quality standards. All of these strategies have helped to guarantee that the business improves its operations, resulting in continuous customer satisfaction, continued organization development and expansion and ultimately gained competitive advantage.

These findings are in agreement with the Michael porter's theory of competitive advantage which this study is hinged. The findings demonstrate that Simba Corporation limited, Kenya has been strategically agile in response to environmental changes thus leading to competitive advantage. The company has adopted a focus strategy. The company has selected a market segment in the industry that is interested in FUSO, Proton, Mitsubishi and Mahindra and tailored its strategy to serving this particular market segment thus enabling the company to cement on its market position which provides the company with ability to achieve competitive advantage by dedicating itself to the market segment exclusively as postulated by porter's theory of competitive advantage. The agility strategies deduced from the respondents put Simba Corporation limited, Kenya at a better position to focus on a particular market segment within an industry and achieve competitive advantage.

These findings are also consistent with the institutional theory on which this study is based. According to the theory, a company should be able to comprehend the frameworks, plans, regulations, customs, and practices that are developed as authoritative standards for social behavior within a particular industry. Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya recognizes institutions governing and regulating the Kenyan motor industry including Kenya Motor Industry Association (KMI), Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and abides by its regulations. The company recognizes that organizations and management practices are a product of social rather than economic pressures. The results also demonstrate Simba

Corporation's adaptability to environmental change. For example, during the COVID 19 pandemic, staffs were allowed to work from home in order to ensure company operations remain running and staffs are safe. The government of Kenya also changed from buying new vehicles to leasing vehicles making Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya to also adopt the lease vehicle sales program to cater for this new demand. The adoption and retention of organizational operations by Simba Corporation limited, Kenya have also been dependent on social pressures for conformity and legitimacy as postulated by Institutional Theory.

Gaps and findings from the study were explored and through compared. The results of this study are consistent with those of Otieno (2021), whose goal was to determine how agility strategies affected Coca-Cola's and competitive advantage. The agility strategies employed by Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya are product diversification, ICT Penetration, quality assurance, retaining skilled human resources and new business models. Although there is a connection between strategic agility and the competitiveness of the firm in both studies, this study goes into greater detail about how strategic agility affects Simba Corporation Limited's competitive advantage.

Ogolla's (2017) study on strategic agilities adopted by the state corporations concurs with the findings of this research that, in order for a business to gain a competitive advantage, strategic agility is necessary. The focus of the study was on the strategic agilities practices used by the state corporations, and the results showed that strategic agilities are beneficial to an organization's competitiveness.

In his study of strategic agility as a competitive advantage in Egypt Air, Al-Romeedy (2019) found that strategic agility has developed into a key instrument for a business to attain competitive advantage in a dynamic environment. The study aimed to comprehend the consequences of cost leadership, delivery dependability, quality agility, and product innovation. Murugi (2015) highlighted the main strategic agilities were Market acuity, business continuity planning and change disposition. The results of the study showed that strategic agility, which affects innovation and adaptability, significantly impacts the competitive advantage of private universities in Kenya. The study's results confirm that a company's strategic agility affects its competitive advantage.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations as obtained from the findings and interpretations of this research. It also highlights the limitations of study and suggestions for future research.

5.2 Summary of findings

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. According to the research, product innovations have led to a diverse and interesting product portfolio. Additionally, Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has been able to maintain its competitiveness in the automotive industry due to new business models, information systems, quality agility, and flexible human resources.

The findings of this study conform to predictions of the theories anchoring this study. Findings from the study align with the Michael Porter's theory of competitive advantage. The theory advocates for adoption of focus strategy. Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has adopted a focus strategy that entails concentrating on a specific niche market and developing specially tailored products for the market, such as the Proton saga, X70, and Mitsubishi expander.

The findings also confirm the predictions of the institutional theory that emphasizes that organizations are a product of social pressures. The respondents of the study affirmed that the company has faced different pressures that have shaped decision making and informed

different policies, structures and systems within the organization. For example there has been a shift in Kenyan government strategy from purchasing new vehicles to leasing of vehicles. Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya had to also start supplying the Kenyan government ministries and police with lease vehicles instead of selling them on outright purchase basis. The company also set up technology infrastructure to enable staff to work from home during the covid 19 pandemic.

It was clear that Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya had policies in place to encourage responsiveness and flexibility in reaction to changes in the external environment. The study also discovered that Simba Corporation's strong quality agility gives the company competitive advantage in the industry. This was achieved through compliance, qualification and subscription to the quality standards. Continuous audits and reviews has played a crucial role in achieving competitive advantage. According to the study, it is crucial to hire and develop talented people in order to maintain competitive advantage. It also suggests that businesses must implement information system agility and adaptability. With these strategies, Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya has demonstrated that it is a flexible business that works hard to maintain its position as a market leader.

5.3 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya. Content analysis from the interviews conducted confirmed that strategic agility influences competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya.

This study concludes that strategic agility is essential to ensuring competitive advantage in organizations because it allows the organization the ability to be flexible and adapt to

changes in the environment, as demonstrated by Simba Corporation Limited. The organization is responsible for deciding how to be strategically agile. The study found that the company was able to be strategically agile by utilizing the following agility strategies to gain a competitive advantage: product agility, business model agility, quality agility, information system agility, and agile human resources.

The study clearly shows that the type of strategic agilities that a company adopts determines its ability to maintain a competitive edge. When choosing which agility tactics to use, the organization's human resources must be agile and lead the way in helping the organization make the best decisions to achieve competitive advantage. This study concludes that product agility helps companies adapt to the ever changing customer demands and preferences hence the company will achieve competitive advantage. Agile business models ensures that organizations adjust to changes in the environment and achieve competitive advantage. Organizations with flexible ICT infrastructures that guarantee compliance with constantly changing quality standard criteria will also have a competitive edge.

5.4 Recommendations

The study recommends that Simba Corporation should consider accelerating its regional expansion drive especially now that the window of the east and central African common Market is open. Market dynamics have it that market pioneers enjoy a less saturated market which guarantees reduced competition and ultimately better growth prospects. This study also recommends that a policy framework needs to be created by the management and owners of Simba Corporation limited Kenya, to promote product agility, business model

agility, ICT agility, quality agility and human resource agility all of which will increase Simba Corporation's competitive advantage.

The company must make resources available to allow for the execution of strategic agilities. Resources should be used in particular to support efforts aimed at actualizing product innovations, new business model, ICT innovations, quality compliance and human resource agility.

In order to evaluate how well agility strategies enabled the company to achieve competitive advantage, this study advises that the strategies employed and progress achieved be documented. These shall be key reference points and data sources that will be used to audit and review implementation of the overall organization strategy.

This study also suggests that the organization should welcome and accommodate creative suggestions from its employees by creating a supportive environment through brainstorming sessions, think tanks, and an open-door policy to encourage the development of new ideas and assess their viability.

Through this study, practitioners in the automotive sector now understand how crucial it is to take a comprehensive approach in being strategically agile by including every employee in the business to guarantee achievement of competitive advantage. The Kenyan government also realizes how important it is to provide an environment where companies may have the capacity to be flexible and undertake agile strategies.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The managers interviewed at Simba Corporation Limited were very busy, thus the researcher's time with each of them was limited. The researcher however made several visits and communicated to the contact persons to get favorable responses and delved

deeply into their responses. The respondents also thought that the company's strategic agilities and its influence on the firm's competitive advantage was confidential and private information. The researcher however assured the responders of the research, that the data collected would only be utilized for the research purposes only.

5.6 Suggestions for further Research

An industry wide study on the strategic agility and competitive advantage by various players in the motor vehicle industry in Kenya could be conducted. This would make it easier for players in Kenya's motor industry to understand the importance of strategic agility on competitive advantage in their organizations.

Other studies could carry out on strategic agility and competitive advantage in other motor vehicle related entities like the vehicle parts manufacturing companies, vehicle repairers and financiers. Scholars could also examine strategic agility and competitive advantage in motor vehicle companies globally.

Further study should be done on strategic agility and competitive advantage in other industries to understand the strategic agilities that lead to competitive advantage in those industries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introduction letter



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October 26, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER: PETER MBUGUA NDICU

The above named is a registered Master of Business Administration Student at the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, University of Nairobi. He is conducting research on: “**Strategic Agility and Competitive Advantage in Simba Corporation limited, Kenya.**” The purpose of this letter is to kindly request you to assist and facilitate the student with necessary data which forms an integral part of the Project. The information and data required is needed for academic purposes only and will be treated in **Strict-Confidence**.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Mukola'.

PHILIP MUKOLA (MR.)

FOR: ASSOCIATE DEAN, GBS & R

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Appendix 2: Interview guide

This interview is to collect data purely for academic purposes. The study seeks to find out the influence of Strategic agility on competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya

Section A: Demographics Information

1. Respondent's name.....
2. In which department are you working?.....
3. How long have you been employed by Simba Corporation Limited?.....

Section B: Changes in the external environment.

1. What changes have occurred in the external environments that have affected the Kenyan Motor industry?
2. What changes have occurred in the external environments that have affected Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya?
3. What challenges have these effects posed to Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya?
4. Please describe the severity of the impacts on the company's key performance indicators of the following developments in the external environment:
 - a. Sales of new vehicles.....
 - b. Sale of parts.....
 - c. Workshop sales.....

- b. Total sales revenue.....
- c. Profitability.....
- d. Rivalry within the industry.....
- e. Operational costs.....

Section C1: strategic agility and competitive advantage in by Simba Corporation Limited.

Product Innovation strategy

1. What are some of your company's product strategies?
2. How has the Product Innovation strategy helped your business establish a competitive edge?
3. In what ways have these tactics helped you gain an edge over your rivals in the beverage sector?

Business model agility

1. What types of acquisitions has the business used as a strategy, for example? In what ways has employed mergers and acquisition as a strategy contributed to competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited?

Quality agility

1. Do you have quality management system?
2. How does quality management system contribute to competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited?
3. In what ways has the company employed Sales promotion and advertising agility?

4. In what ways has the employed Sales promotion and advertising agilities contributed to competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited?
5. In what ways has the company employed Environmental sustainability and governance strategy?
6. In what ways has the employed Environmental sustainability and governance agilities contributed to competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited?

Information communication and technology (ICT) agility

1. In what ways has the company employed Information communication and technology (ICT) agility strategy?
2. In what ways has the employed Information communication and technology (ICT) agility strategy contributed to competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited?
3. Do you have technology that enables strategic agility and is tied into your strategic objectives?
4. Do you have technology that enables strategic agility and is tied into your strategic objectives?

Human resource agility

1. In what ways has the company employed human resource agility?
2. How does changing strategy affect the commitment and accountability of staff?
3. How does the age of staff affect strategic agility of the company?
4. What were the responses by staff to the strategic agilities undertaken by Simba Corporation Limited Kenya?
5. Is strategic agility and transformation visible in your staff?

6. Does hiring the people that thrive in a strategically agile culture contribute to competitive advantage?
7. Do employees feel comfortable taking risks and changing whenever there is need, are they resistant to change?

Section C2: strategic agility and competitive advantage in by Simba Corporation Limited.

1. What are some strategic agilities undertaken by Simba Corporation Limited Kenya?
2. How does strategic agility influence competitive advantage in Simba Corporation Limited, Kenya?
3. Please explain the challenges that were faced by the organization when being strategically agile in order to gain competitive advantage.