

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FACTORS AND PERFORMANCE OF TEA INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Tea is one of the main export cash crops and major foreign exchange earner for Kenya. Tea industry which has been doing well and the most influential sector in the Kenya economy is now no longer performing as expected. Like other industries, the tea sector is expected to be a function of efficiency, effectiveness and with sufficient management operations. In recent times, the industry has experienced declines in earning. This decline in earnings forms part of the basis for this literature review and subsequent study since the earnings are a product of performance of the respective factory companies as premised on strategic corporate governance, innovative technology, cost controls and quality of product(s). This study seeks to analyze the management factors that have influence on the performance of the Small- Scale tea industry in Gusii Region, Kenya. The specific objectives then will be to; establish if corporate governance has influence on the performance of the tea industry, determine if innovative technology influences the performance of the tea industry, to evaluate the effect of cost control on performance of tea industry, evaluate the effect of leadership on performance of tea industry, assess the influence of product quality on the performance of the small-scale tea industry and determine the combined effect of corporate governance, innovative

technology cost control and product quality on the performance of the small scale tea industry. The study will be guided by Resource Based Theory and will apply organizational management practices like time management, and stakeholder's theory. The target study population will be twelve (12) small scale tea factory companies in Gusii Region as at 31st December 2019 with a population of 240000 farmers, 1200 employees, and 72 directors. The sample size of study will be 520 respondents. Data analysis will be by use of descriptive statistical techniques using means, frequencies and standard deviation. Pearson's product moment correlation will be applied to test the strength of relationship between the variables. Simple and multiple regression analyses will be used to test the effect and level of significance of effect of the variables. Study findings will help improve the management of the small-scale tea industry, benefit tea industry venders, consulting and advisory firms, governments and policy makers and regulatory authorities like the Tea Board of Kenya and establish new frontiers for further studies on strategic business management in the fast-changing competitive business environment.

Key words: Strategic Management Factors, Organizational Performance, Product Quality

INTRODUCTION

Identification and Definition of General Topic

Strategic Management

Strategic management is explained as the process of making decision on strategy and planning on how to put that strategy into effect, Rao (2016). Strategic management is a multifunctional process that is interactive, continuous and intended to hold an organization as a unit suitably matched to its environment. The purpose of strategic management is to exploit and create new and different opportunities for tomorrow through long-range planning

Strategic Management Practices

Strategic management practices involve the management in environmental analysis, formulation of organizational direction, establishment of business' strategy actualizing the strategy and controlling strategically so that business firms and industries ensure their competitiveness in any given market (Porter, 2009). For fear of economic uncertainties and increasing production costs the tea industry is continuously exercising strategic measures through diversification, modernization and technological advancement to facilitate achievement of and business growth. Nyankoba Tea Factory (2021)

Performance of Business

Business performance, which is closely tied to commercial effectiveness, is determined by the ability of a company to implement optimal organization with the aim of offering a product or service that meets the expectations of consumers and customers, Taouab,(2019) The business performance of a company is based on multiple criteria such as management style, customer relationship management and the quality of product and service provided, but also the effectiveness of incentive compensation schemes and employee motivation. Various key Performance indicators (KPIs), innovations applied to sales and recognition.

Tea Industry in Kenya

Tea is one of the main export cash crops and a major foreign exchange earner for Kenya. The production of tea in Kenya started in the year 1904. However, crop started being produced as a commercial product in the 1920s. The Kenyan tea industry comprises of two basic sectors namely the small-scale sector which is owned and managed by small scale tea farmers and the plantation or large-scale sector which is owned and managed by multinational companies like James Finlay and Sasin company limited, Kenya Human Rights Commission, (2008)

In 2015, Kenya was ranked fourth among the highest tea exporters in terms of dollars having exported tea valued at \$440.3, representing 7.2% of the world's total tea exports. However, this was a 62.6% decline in the Kenyan tea export from previous years (Workman, 2016). This decline can be attributed to several failures and challenges affecting tea production in the country that are

forcing tea farmers to switch from tea production to alternative crops which offer better returns considering that tea production is becoming less profitable for them. This decline in earnings form part of the basis for this literature review and subsequent study since the earnings are a product of organizational performance.

The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) is a primary provider of services to a large number of tea farmers producing tea in the small-scale sector of the tea industry. This company is made up of 8 subsidiary companies whose core mandates are to provide services such as clearing and forwarding, warehousing, exporting, blending, value addition and general trading to farmers (KTDA, 2016). KTDA managed factories have been experiencing several challenges especially in relation to financial performance like the decline of auction prices, little final farmers earnings, high cost of production with low income earning among others that are leading to increased farmer dissatisfaction and the decline in tea production, (Gesimba et al., 2005). Such business challenges call for strategic management approaches to institute improved, sustainable performance.

2.2.3 Innovation and technology

Published Literature on General Trend on Performance of Tea Industry

Innovation and technology

A study by Muogbo (2013) in Nigeria showed that in Africa strategic management practices has significant effect on competitiveness and productivity of business firms. Juma and Okibo (2016) studied on the effects of strategic management practices on the performance of public health institutions in Kisii County, Kenya and found out that technology creates innovation leading to product quality and high value of the company's offerings hence competitiveness. Strategic drivers of competitiveness both locally and globally therefore are closely linked to specific strategies that maximize organizational performance. Based on the aforementioned observations, this study focused on the influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Kenyan tea which includes market and product development, strategic planning and strategic alliances.

Corporate Governance

Corporate governance refers to the voluntary code of conduct which the board of directors specifically the chief executive officer of an organization is to follow in operating the business, Rao (2016). Corporate governance constitutes of rules, systems, relationships and processes which facilitate and regulate the exercise of authority and control in business organizations. Corporate governance also deals the laws, ethical and moral code which all employees are required to adhere to for the maximum benefit of stake holders. Corporate governance represents the system of practices, processes, and rules that control and direct a firm. It focuses on the relationship between the internal corporation and mechanism of governance and the conception of the society on corporate accountability, Ndege (2015).

The influences of corporate governance in Kenyan private corporations like Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) factories is measured using elements like the board of director's

integrity, transparency, and disclosure, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) clearance, Ethics Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) clearance, Credit Reference Bureau (CRB) clearance and independence of internal auditors. Other measures of corporate governance include balances and checks of the CEO and chairperson, board of directors' resolutions and accountability, monitoring and evaluation and minutes adoption (Ndege, 2015).

Audit committee adheres to these aspects of accountability and most importantly will give the internal corporate governance its independence. This enhances transparency, accountability, and disclosure which influence the performance of the firm (Jackson, 2010).

There have been several studies attempting to determine the effect of corporate governance and financial performance. One such study is research by Hewa, (2012), which analyzed the impact of corporate governance on financial performance in companies within Sri Lanka. According to the study's findings, there exist a positive relationship between corporate governance and a firm's cost.

Another study that supports this finding is a study carried out by Tricke (2012), who observed that the differences in corporate governance among organizational institutions influence the financial performance and the cost of firm.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published some Principals of Corporate Governance in 1999 which were meant to provide guides to helping government in enhancing legal, regulatory and institutional framework that underpins the functions of corporate governance (OECD, 1999). The principles indicate that the functions of corporate governance are very crucial and even supported by government policies.

A study by Amba (2012), posits that corporate governance is vital in influencing financial performance and the responsibility should be left to thinkers, policy makers and regulators to determine how the elements of corporate governance are to be managed to ensure that organizations are productive for all stakeholders' interest.

Qaemi and Shahyari, (2009), studied 77 companies on the corporate governance and financial performance and found that there is a significant relationship between corporate governance and financial performance. From these studies, it is evident that there is a significant relationship between corporate governance and financial performance since governance creates the guidance on which procedures, rules and practices are controlled and directed (Awino, 2015).

Conflicts in Theory, Methodology, Concepts, Findings and Conclusions

This section of the critical review addresses the problems of inference and proof in a researcher's observation. The researcher gathers data by participating in the daily life of the target population or organization he studies by selecting concepts and defining problems for further examination

Becker (2017). The researcher constructs a theoretical model explaining the particular case, so as to refine it in the context of subsequent findings. The three stages of field analysis for research are: the selection and definition of problems, concepts, and indices; the checking on the frequency and distribution of phenomena; and the incorporation of individual findings into a model of the organization under study. The observer, having various provisional problems, concepts and indicators, now desires to understand and select which of these are worth pursuing as major foci of the study. By understanding Conflicts in Theory, Methodology, Concepts, Findings and Conclusions aids the researcher to have his problem clarified and actively look for evidence to test a hypothesis, besides establishing study gaps. This section also reviews the problem of the research bargain, on the basis of possible solutions to the problem of publication concluding that there is no reasonable basis for avoiding conflict over publication by failing to include the items that will provoke conflict. The researcher needs to consider the possibility that the relationship between the social scientist and those he studies contains elements of irreducible conflict. The review explains the reasons for some reports of social science research not containing conflict-provoking findings and suggests some possible ways handling the problem. The social researcher's decision to publish will also be affected by his determination of the degree of harm that will actually be done to a person or group by the publication of data about them. Publication of field research findings often poses ethical problems.

Sociological Methods

Denzin, (2017) posits that considering methods, courses and a major contribution to sociological theory helps the researcher to understand the principles of research and how to construct and test theories and bring coherence to the study of methods by presenting four major approaches to experimentation: survey research, participant observation, life histories, and unobtrusive measures from a single theoretical point of view, symbolic interaction. It demonstrates the need for a synthesis between theory and methods, and shows how different methods limit and affect research results. Denzin's, (2017) further holds that no single method, theory, or observer can capture all that is relevant or important in reality. He supports the use of triangulation and for a view of theory and methods as "concept sensitizers." His approach enables sociologists to acquire specific facts about a particular situation while simultaneously elevating these to the level of shared meaning. He also gives guidance on how to proceed with research, bringing sharply into focus the possibilities and their limitations. Denzin, (2017) points out aspects of research that fall outside the scope of a given method yet they affect results, and emphasizes the need to employ several methods to cross-check each other.

Poky Science's Dominant Neopositivist Methodologies

Fischer (2005), posits that Neopositivist policy science has failed in its effort to develop a usable body of predictive generalizations, it has been unable to supply effective solutions to social problems partly due to its outmoded epistemological assumptions. Post positivist conception of policy science has been designed to address the multidimensional complexity of social reality.

Based on practical reason, the post positivist approach situates empirical inquiry in a broader interpretive framework. Further to being an epistemological alternative, the approach is offered as a better description of what social science actually do in practice.

Case study methodology

Jack, (2009), explains case study as an exclusive methodology and an adjunct to exploring particular aspects of phenomena under investigation in larger or mixed-methods studies. This explanation makes case study suitable for research into the large tea industry in Kenya.

Meta-analysis

Lee (2019) explains meta-analysis as a statistical method that combines and synthesizes different studies and integrates their findings into a single conclusion. Meta-analysis increases the sample size, and consequently, the power to study the effects of interest by combining primary studies and providing a precise estimate of the effects. A meta-analysis approach, renders decisions transparent, and its statistical analysis yields an objective measure of the integrated quantitative evidence besides limiting or overcoming biases of narrative reviews. The systematic approach and transparency in meta-analysis helps to resolve conflicts and uncertainties between studies, when individual studies are inconclusive, while leading to significant conclusions and increases the generalizability of the results of individual studies. Although meta-analysis is criticized for its limitations like susceptibility to the methodological quality of included studies, publication bias and the formulation of eligibility criteria, a systematic approach and transparency in conducting meta-analysis aids to resolve conflicts and uncertainties between studies and to generate valuable conclusions. The use and value of meta-analysis has potential growth in the future given its power to reveal new findings. Thus, the use of meta-analysis is apparently relevant and increasingly popular as a powerful tool for this study.

Gaps in Research

The literature review, in considering past knowledge, reveals weaknesses in the past findings, clarifies researcher's opportunity to discern or generate the unknown required knowledge on the strength of establishes gaps in concepts, perspectives, theory, methodology, population, analysis, implications and methods. The research gap between the known and unknown further indicates the inconsistencies controversies, conflicts and contradictions that inform development of conceptual frame or theoretical frame for study, Kumar DM (2020), and Wafula (2019), as summarized and tabulated as in table 3.1 below.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review surveys scholarly sources on a specific topic and provides an overview of current knowledge, enabling identification of relevant theories, methods and gaps in the existing research. Writing a literature review involves finding relevant publications critically analyzing

them, and explaining reviewer's findings. Literature review summarizes sources and analyses, synthesizes and critically evaluates literature to provide some clarity of the state of knowledge on the subject, Shona, (2021).

This literature review seeks to consolidate the empirical studies, theories and other relevant literature that have evaluated business competitiveness in different industries. In particular, strategic management practices literature and research, based on industrial organization (Porter, 1980; 1985) and the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 2002; Conner, 1991; Mbui, 2015) provide the context and the background of the study.

Grouped Research Studies

Gitonga, (2019), did a study to investigate the influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Kenyan tea. Specific objectives of the study included influence of market development, product development, strategic planning and strategic alliances on competitiveness of Kenyan tea. The research was based on both primary and secondary data. The study was guided by theories related to competitiveness including the theory of international competitiveness, theory of competitive advantage, Resource-Based theory, new trade theory, Strategic Management theory and Product Life Cycle theory. The study applied a cross-sectional survey research design, targeting organizational population composed of one hundred and forty-two member organizations of the East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA) who participate in the tea auction at Mombasa. The accessible population comprised of four top managers from the 142 organizations translating to five hundred sixty-eight (568). The sample size consisted of one hundred and five (105) organizations where the four top managers were drawn from translating to four hundred and twenty (420) managers which were drawn by aid of Slovin's formula (1960). A questionnaire was used for primary data collection from the sampled respondents. A test for the validity and reliability of the research instrument was done by conducting a pilot study. Internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α). Collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package for social sciences (SPSS) to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. The response rate was at 80%. Regression results statistically indicated that the strategic management practices significantly explained competitiveness of Kenyan tea sector. The data analysed revealed an adjusted R² of 0.639 signifying that 63.9% of variations in competitiveness of Kenyan tea sector is influenced by market development, product development, strategic planning and strategic alliance. The P-Value of F statistics indicated that all the independent variables, jointly, are significant in influencing the competitiveness of Kenyan tea sector. The study concludes that strategic management practices influenced competitiveness of Kenyan tea sector. The study recommends managerial and policy adjustments in line with strategic management practices to strengthen competitiveness of Kenyan tea sector.

Abdi's (2018) study examined the effect of strategic leadership on organizational performance of tea estate companies in Nandi County. The study objectives included; to establish the effect of

visionary leadership, to examine the role of managerial leadership, to investigate the influence of inspirational leadership and to establish the effect of transformational leadership on organizational performance of tea estate companies in Nandi County, Kenya. The research used Herzberg's two factor theory, the Transformational leadership theory and Path goal theory of leadership. The study helps policy makers in the Kenyan tea subsector by providing information on ways and means to better performance of tea estate companies in Kenya. The findings of the study consequently enable the government appreciate the importance of visionary, managerial, inspirational and transformational leadership aspects in the tea sector in promoting production and efficiency which help the country expand its production capabilities. The management of the tea subsector benefits from the findings of the study. Descriptive research design was used with target population of nineteen (19) tea estates. The study stratified the target population into 19 top level managers, 38 middle level managers and 57 low level managers and simple random sampling techniques was used. The sample size of 36 respondents was selected and 32 of the respondents filled and returned questionnaire representing a response rate was 89% which was adequate to continue with data analysis. Closed and open-ended questionnaire, whose reliability and validity were determined, was used for data collection. The study conclusion was that strategic leadership affects organizational performance contributing to 82.2%. The study established that the most significant factor in influencing performance in tea estate companies in Nandi County is visionary leadership, followed by inspirational leadership, transformational leadership and managerial leadership respectively.

Omari (2015) conducted a study to find out the determinants of tea export performance in Kenya. About ten (10%) of the population in Kenya depends on tea production (Tea Board of Kenya, 2012). The main objective of the study was to establish the determinants of export performance of KTDA managed factories in Kenya. The main variables considered were marketing strategy, firm size, liberalization and technology and how they affect performance. The study established that export performance in the tea industry is affected by over production, collapsing prices, deteriorating quality, poor marketing strategy, lack of value addition and the growing inequality along the tea value-chain. The study applied descriptive research and used random sampling technique. The actual number of respondents targeted was 84 however 76 were interviewed from a study sample of 21 out of a targeted 65 KTDA managed factory companies. The four senior managers, FUM, PM, FA and FSC were interviewed. The response rate was 90.5% as 76 questionnaires were successfully filled and analyzed. The tea growing areas under KTDA management divided administratively into seven regions. Primary data was collected using closed and open-ended questions and some were on a Likert scale. Data analysis was done using a number of tests including Pearson Correlation Coefficient, multiple regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study found out that marketing strategy, firm size, liberalization and technology are critical determinants of export performance of KTDA managed factories in Kenya. Government policy which was the moderating variable was found to have a negative effect on Tea export performance in Kenya.

Chepkemoi, (2017), investigated smallholder tea production and its effects in Konoin, Bomet County in the period 1954 - 2002. The objectives of the study were: to investigate the factors that led to the introduction of tea growing in Konoin, Bomet County; to analyze the effects of smallholder tea production on food crop production and to examine the role of KTDA on the expansion of Smallholder tea production in Konoin, Bomet County from 1954 to 2002. The study was based on two theories: The Dependency theory and The Articulation of Modes of Production theory. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify the respondents. Interview schedule and observation schedules were used as the research tools for the study. Data was collected from farmers, and those practicing tea related activities sampled from the study area. Data analysis entailed corroboration of secondary data with primary data. Finally, data was analysed and presented qualitatively. The study established that smallholder tea production impacted adversely on food production as too much land was put under cash crop's production. This, therefore made people to rely on purchased food hence their living standards was compromised. KTDA was also found to have had a positive impact in the development and expansion of smallholder tea production in Konoin, Bomet County

Wachinga, (2016), did a study to identify and examine how organizational factors such as top management and support team, organizational structure and the corporate governance influence the financial performance of KTDA managed factories. The study used the quantitative research method. A census was done on 9 factory managers and their assistants, finance officers and human resources managers. The total population comprised of 18 factory managers and their assistants, 9 finance officers and 9 human resources managers all totaling 36 target respondents. The study solely relied on primary data collected using questionnaires. Regression analysis was done to determine the correlation between each organizational factor and tea factories' financial performance. Data was analyzed using SPSS software. The study findings were that: Most of the respondents rated the organizational structures of the tea factories as highly layered and having occasional opportunities of impairing and negatively affecting the decision-making processes. Most of the respondents felt that the members of the top management cadres merited their positions but situations of challenges occasioned by poor employee performance attributed to unqualified personnel in top management positions were confirmed. All the respondents confirmed the tea factories had code of ethics that guided the interactions between the shareholders and the institutions. The ability of the codes of ethics to assure harmonious interactions by the membership was confirmed. All the respondents confirmed there had been instances of strained internal relations which they attributed to the inadequacies of the codes of ethics in use. The study recommended that: organizations should strive to ensure that they have lean organizational structures as a measure of reducing operational costs and enhancing efficiency. In the situation of the tea factories, conferring them with independence from the KTDA parent company may greatly enhance their positions in terms of freeing them from obligations to the parent company. The top management in private companies should equally be required to work diligently to ensure that the

ideals of the organizations are met. The organizations should ensure that the recruitment of the top managers is driven by merit and ascension in the organizational hierarchy is meritorious. The tea factory Boards of management should seek to ensure that the prescribed tenets guiding corporate governance expectations are adhered to as a measure of assuring them confidence from stakeholders.

Maina (2015) did a study focused on factors that influence sustainability of small tea enterprises in Kenya. Specific study objectives were: to assess the influence of enterprise characteristics on sustainability of small tea enterprises, to analyze the influence of the way of doing business on sustainability of the enterprises, to explore the relationship between finance and sustainability, examine the relationship between resources and sustainability and, to analyzed how independent variables (enterprise characteristics, way of doing business, finance, resources, product and services) influence the dependent variable (sustainability) on small tea enterprises in Kenya. The population of the study was an estimated 420,000 small tea entrepreneurs who are members of Kenya Tea Development Agency spread across the seven tea growing regions in Kenya. The study used cross-sectional survey, and descriptive design, and was carried out in the seven tea-growing regions. The study used a mixed method, which involved both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Self-administered questionnaires were used for primary data collection while journals, books and the Internet were used for secondary data collection. Factor analysis was used to measure the variability among the variables. For test statistics, p-value of less than 5% was considered significant. Cronbach's analysis was used to test the equality of means of all independent variables. A regression model was also developed to establish the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. Presentation of information was done using mean scores, percentages and standard deviation. The findings indicated that four out of five hypotheses of the study were supported. These findings, are expected to bridge the gaps in literature, identify and articulate alternative models for assessing sustainability of small tea enterprises for adoption, and will be used in the academia, agribusiness and by policy makers to improve the tea sector in Kenya.

Wambeti (2017) did a study to find out the challenges facing small scale tea farmers in Rukuriri Tea Factory with specific objectives focusing on: marketing strategies; production costs; climate change; and government regulatory policies all to the small- scale tea farmers. A descriptive research design was used. Multistage random sampling technique with an aspect of stratified sampling technique was used to establish the sampling technique. Primary data collected by administering questionnaires to the small-scale tea farmers was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of excel software. The research findings were expected to open up avenues for Rukuriri management and farmers, the Government of Kenya, the Tea Board of Kenya, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya (TRFK) towards streamlining their operations to improve efficiency and effectiveness. The study recommends that clear government policies should be spelt

out by the government. Further, involvement and participation of the farmer on the policy formulation should be addressed.

Waithaka (2012), studied the effect of Economic and social factors such as globalization, political, legal, social-cultural, competition, liberalization, and advanced technology on changes in organizations. The study objectives were: to establish what change management practices were adopted at KTDA, what challenges were faced during the change management process and what measures were adopted in dealing with the challenges of change management. Primary qualitative data was collected from senior managers of KTDA using an interview guide. The six senior managers were interviewed and their responses analyzed and recorded. Findings show that a planned strategic approach to change management was adopted. Strategic change management is a structured approach to shifting or transitioning individuals, teams and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It ensures that predetermined objectives of introducing the process change are achieved, and it also helps prevent and resolve conflicts, service disruption, culture clashes and other problems associated with process change. The change process worked well for KTDA. It was embarked on as a matter of urgency considering the circumstances the organization found itself in. It was led by the CEO with his team of senior managers who all led by example. There was effective sensitization and education on what was happening and what needed to be achieved. The change was introduced in the whole organization and carried out systematically step by step until the desired results were achieved. Resources were availed, both financial and human, and KTDA recorded impressive growth in the number and size of factories, number of subsidiary companies and returns to the farmer. Everybody was involved in the change process and this contributed to its success. Although a lot has been achieved, there are a number of aspects that are not yet complete. The growth and success of KTDA must have exceeded the expectations of the government when it was privatized over 10 years ago. However, since change is a continuous process, the KTDA management needs to address the issues revealed by this study in order to boost the achievements made and remain a shining example of what privatization can achieve.

Nyakweba (2019) investigated the financial service accessibility strategies for economic empowerment in Kenya based on a survey of small-scale tea farmers in Kisii County. It was guided by the Resource-Based View Theory and incorporated the Financial Inclusion Theory, Classical Theory of Interest Rate, Financial Deepening Theory and Imperfect Information Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were used. A sample size of 398 of tea farmers was studied, which represented all registered KTDA farmers in Kisii County. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data and the data analysed with the aid SPSS version 20. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to establish the relationship between variables and draw conclusions. The key findings, using principal component analysis extraction method, showed that there was significant positive relationship between the level of financial providers, physical proximity, economic factors, social factors, and the

moderating effect of demographic factors on the relationship between financial service accessibility strategies and economic empowerment and the joint influence of financial service accessibility on economic empowerment among small-scale tea farmers in Kisii County –Kenya. It was concluded that the level of access to financial service providers is a significant aspect in enhancing economic empowerment, there is inadequate infrastructure development in the rural areas which affect financial accessibility by tea farmers, and that educational level determines tea farmers' financial accessibility. The study recommends that financial institutions should develop financial products that are tailor-made to the needs of tea farmers to increase financial inclusion among farmers and adopt reliable information technology which will enhance financial inclusivity among tea farmers. The national government, through the ministry of lands and the national land commission, should ensure that land ownership challenges are addressed so that those lands can be used for economic purposes which include using the title deeds for securing credit facilities from financial institutions to enhance their economic welfare. Through collaboration between KTDA and financial institutions, tea farmers should regularly organize workshops, training on financial literacy to create awareness on financial management and opportunities for their economic empowerment. Suggestions are proposed for further research in financial service access strategies that can economically empower farmers in Kisii County and the other counties in Kenya and Africa as a whole.

Ateka, Onono & Etyang, (2018), studied Technical Efficiency and its Determinants in Smallholder Tea Production: Evidence from Nyamira and Bomet Counties in Kenya. The smallholder tea sub-sector in Kenya has enjoyed relative growth in acreage, output, and number of growers since its inception in the early 1960s, but productivity has remained low. There are huge differentials between actual and potential yields suggesting underlying production inefficiencies. This study estimated the level of technical efficiency and analyzed its determinants among tea farmers from two selected counties in Kenya. Using data from a sample of 525 farm households, the non-parametric data envelopment analysis was applied to estimate technical efficiency scores. The scores were then regressed on a set of explanatory variables to establish their influence on efficiency. The average efficiency score of 0.46 indicates that overall productivity in Kenya's smallholder tea sub-sector is low but has a potential to increase if most of the farmers can adopt practices of the frontier farms. The intensity of family labor use, farm size, age of the tea farm, education level of the household head, access to extension services through the farmer field schools, and the sale of green leaf through alternative marketing channels have a significant influence on levels of efficiency.

Gikunju, Gakure&Orwa (2018), investigated the influence of technology innovation as a strategic management practice and determinant of performance of tea industry in Mount Kenya region. In Kenya, Tea industry has not been competitive. As a result, the earnings have not been commensurate with tea production efforts that have often attracted the wrath of farmers to the extent of tea picking boycotts, uprooting of tea bushes, destruction of factory property and even

threatening the lives of tea industry managers. This phenomenon is attributed partly to the fact that the small-scale producers market their tea in bulk, semi-processed products and therefore fails to attract premium prices for their produce. As result, strategic interventions are required for the tea industry to remain competitive. The study was guided by the Technology Acceptance model and Industrial Market Theory. Mixed methods research design was used. The target population was 117 management team comprised of five regional managers; regional accountant, operations manager, production manager, auditor, and 112 top management in 16 factories who include, 16 manager 16 production managers 32 accountants 32 training managers and 16 field coordinators of the sixteen factories that lie in Mount Kenya region. Stratified, simple random sampling was used to select 92 respondents out of 112, based on Krecjie and Morgan Table. Purposive sampling was used to select five regional managers. Data was collected using questionnaires. Reliability was examined using pilot study and internal consistency test. Regression analysis indicated that value addition strategy has a strong positive relationship with financial performance of the tea industry in Mount Kenya region. Regression results also established that technological innovation and strategy implementation have a strong positive relationship with financial performance of the tea industry in Mount Kenya region. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that strategic management practices positively influence performance of tea industry in Mt Kenya region in Kenya. The adoption of strategic management practices has a high potential of improving tea industry performance and thus better prices to the farmers. The study concluded that tea factories should provide incentives for research and development on adoption of newest Technology in the market to support cost reduction and improve quality. Professionals in the tea industry should spend more time, effort and resources towards innovations.

A study by Yvahome, (2012), inquired into social economic factors influencing increased tea production. This case study focused on smallholder tea farmers in Kirinyaga County. According to literature the World tea supply was increasing at a higher rate than demand thus raising concern about an oversupply of tea against decreasing consumption and low prices. The study was guided by four main objectives; to assess how levels of education, to determine how poverty influenced tea production, to establish how availability of farm inputs and, to evaluate how tea market influenced tea production by the smallholder tea farmer. Descriptive survey design was used as the research methodology for this study. A valid and reliable structured questionnaire was used as the key research instrument. The findings of the study were that education levels, availability of both farm inputs and market, and poverty, all interact to influence increased tea production. The analysed findings mainly indicated that, a more understanding of the social economic variables surrounding tea production by the policy makers and tea related institutions was necessary in order to plan adequately for the smallholder tea farmer. This study recommended that the Government, the Tea Board of Kenya, the Tea Research Foundation of Kenya and the KTDA develop an appropriate infrastructure and formulate sustainable tea technologies, and economical strategies for the farmer. Further research was commended in various areas un addressed.

Ongong'a and Ochieng (2013), conducted a study on innovation in the tea industry: the case of Kericho Tea. The two-month study that involved correlation analysis investigations and both quantitative and qualitative data was collected from primary and secondary sources. The study revealed that innovative strategies adopted resulted into increased revenues, high productivity levels and reduced costs.

Wanjira, Kubaison and Nzomo (2016), studied the effect of innovation on performance of KTDA-managed factories in Meru County. This study was guided by descriptive survey design. This study concluded that innovation had a positive effect on the performance of KTDA managed factories. The study concludes that there is a positive effect of cost reduction strategies on the financial performance of tea factories. The cost reduction strategies help in minimizing costs of production as well as costs of labour, thus having a positive impact on the return to the farmer. Automation of key processes in tea processing has also led to improved efficiency and reduced costs.

Ondego (2016), conducted a study on lean manufacturing practices and performance of tea processing firms in Kisii, Kenya. The study adopted census survey research design where both cross sectional and longitudinal research design were adopted. The findings of the study indicated automation was the most used lean manufacturing practices in all the tea processing firms in Kisii region together other practices like kaizen, total productive maintenance, and standardized work and bottleneck analysis.

Njagi (2012), conducted a study to investigate the impact of automation on the operational performance of the KTDA managed factories. The study used an exploratory research design. The results of the study show that although fully automated factories have higher operational performance compared to partially automated ones, the overall performance is not significantly different.

Marusoi (2013), conducted a study to establish the effect Financial Innovation has had on the financial performance in the tea industry in Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey research design methodology. In conclusion, the study established that the introduction and use of the financial innovation process in the tea industry has resulted in a positive effect on financial performance and a better alignment of earnings to turnover and costs

DISCUSSION

The reviews of theoretical frameworks and the empirical studies that have been done by other researchers give a clear indication that the organizational factors are the ones that drive financial performance of a corporate organization. Though much research has been done on the corporate governance and the financial status of an organization, not much research has been done focusing on the direct influence of the organizational factors of governance, technology, cost control and

product quality on the performance of the small- scale tea industry in Gusii Region. The purpose of this paper is to close this gap of research by studying the organizational strategic factors of the small- scale tea industry in Gusii Region of Kenya and identify how the performance of these small-scale tea industry factories are influenced by these organizational strategic factors.

Numerous studies have been carried globally and locally on the influence of strategic management practices on organizational performance. For instance, Melchorita (2013), Bakar et al (2011), Murimbika (2011), Dauda et al (2010) and Ofunya (2013) analyzed the relationship between strategic management practices and organizational performance in different organizations but none of them investigated the influence of strategic management practices on performance of tea factories in Gusii region. The study used qualitative methodology to analyze data. McCormick et al (2011; 2013) have carried out studies to understand and explain various strategies employed in the Matatu sector, but do not touch on its influence on performance. The study used qualitative methodology to analyze data.

This study reviewed literature on studies related to strategic management practices influencing competitiveness of industries in the global market. The study established that the reviewed studies provide diverse perspectives about competitiveness. Atikiya (2015) indicated that although Porter's generic strategies; cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategies have been one of the most studied fields of strategic management, not all industries pursuing the strategies remain competitive globally. Due to this scenario, other factors influencing the country, firm, and product or service competitiveness in the global market need to be undertaken. Other studies conducted by key players in the tea industry such as KTDA, Tea Board, TRFK (2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015) reflected that the Kenyan exports of tea have been declining in most of the key markets eroding its competitiveness. Further, while many individual firms appear competitive having created niche markets for their products; the number of these firms has rather not increased an indication of market power commanded by a few players thus curtailing the competitiveness. Competitiveness of Kenyan tea has reduced as the market changes and emerging, increased consumers' demand that is not satisfied with the current outlook of product. This justifies the significance of conducting this study.

The Resource Based Theory has also been criticized in that with few exceptions, this approach has focused on what is, in fact, a highly aggregated dependent variable, namely, firm performance and while this aggregated dependent variable may be of intrinsic interest to both scholars and managers, it may not always be the best way to test Resource-Based Theory (RBT). Madhani (2010) posits that the lack of commonality of terms with RBT research has received a lot of criticism in the literature (Fahy, 2000; Priem & Butler, 2001; Montealegre, 2002; Rugman & Verbeke, 2002; Foss & Knudsen, 2003; Hoopes et al., 2003; Wade & Hulland, 2004).

Similarly, Hax and Wilde (2001), suggest a significant limitation of RBT research is the vagueness of the theory. Another criticism levelled is that it is superfluous and repetitive. Hoopes et al. (2003), also challenged the premise of the RBT, suggesting that the view “seems to assume what it seeks to explain”. Furthermore, the researchers posit that the lack of clarity about core aspects of the RBT impede the development of theory and fruitful debate.

Rouse and Daellenbach (1999) question the strong bias towards quantitative research methods suggesting that such a methodology is not appropriate for RBT research in general. The researchers suggest that the nature of advantages in organizations should be firm based and complex and, as such, qualitative and field-based methodologies are much appropriate. Despite the limitations, the RBT theory is a viable alternative to Porters model in explaining firm performance in this current era of fast changing globalized world, if an organization is able to change swiftly and be more alert to changes in the competitive market, and then they are more likely to gain and sustain competitive advantage (Madhani, 2010). Newbert (2005) asserts that in addition to possessing these ingredients, firms seeking a competitive advantage must also demonstrate the ability to alter them in such a way that their full potential is realized,

An analysis of literature review reveals how strategic leadership is crucial for there to be good performance in any organization. The upper echelon theory argues that a firm’s outcome is directly related to the extent of managerial discretion that exists. Managers with higher discretion have a higher opportunity to influence the employees.

The trait theory only helped in identifying traits instrumental in leadership and it included honesty, responsiveness and decision-making skills. It failed to explain whether other variable such goals, vision and mission statement setting contributes to successful leadership in which this research examined. Transformational theory required to encourage ideas and `concepts in the organization from members by promoting innovativeness and creativity. The leaders are not to blame others for their wrong doings and failures. The theory may not be realistic because of the difficulty in training employees as it is comprehensive and depends on employee capacity to think and also applicable for the selected individual. The path goal theory argues that manager should select leadership style that is in line with the characteristics of individuals of a specific group and organization.

Omari (2015) observed that economic factors such as trade blocks have facilitated building of strategic networks and alliances, technological factors have facilitated creating linkages with customers, suppliers and members of strategic alliances. This supports the current study objective on strategic alliances and product development. Cheserek et al., (2015) indicated that tea production as an enterprise depends substantially on weather stability. Fluctuating weather climate sends a red signal to the tea stakeholders in the tea industry. Cheserek (2015) citing Stephens and Carr (1992), noted the major environmental variables affecting tea growth to include temperature, plant and soil water deficits, rainfall and evaporation. Tea production is greatly influenced by

extreme weather events, particularly drought, frost and hailstorms. Diverse climatic conditions impact negatively on the quality of tea leading to loss of competitiveness and ultimately the country losses in terms of value and foreign exchange earned.

Product Life Cycle Theory on international trade identifies the keys stages of a product as introduction, growth, maturity, and decline. Industries introduce their products in many different markets at the same time to gain cost benefits before its sales decline. The Kenyan tea is produced in primary and secondary grades which are all traded in bulk in the global market at the same time. This makes the products to compete amongst themselves causing some products saturate the market and the demand of some to decline while others remain stagnant. This scenario contributes to the significance of this study which advocates on product innovation and diversification.

The product life cycle theory asserts as cited by Omari (2015) that marketing strategies must evolve along with a product from inception through obsolescence. At introduction it involves tailor marketing mix to spark interest and educate potential customers. At growth phase, efforts shift to secure a wider audience by building brand loyalty, a stable supply chain and additional distribution channels as defenses against competition enter the market.

Increasing shift towards value added teas for example tea bags is an example of increasing demand and market share of Kenyan tea in the global market. The Kenyan tea firms, having made only small investments for value addition, can remain competitive in the global market and attract substantial number of consumers if only they can change the strategy of exporting the bulk of the teas as loose teas to exporting value added teas. Whatever new investments in value additions, such as machineries for tea bags and blending are not comparable with Sri Lanka that had already invested heavily during the last decade thereby commanding a large share in the global market. Sri Lanka is also an orthodox tea supplier and does not strongly compete with India which as well exports the orthodox teas.

International competition at the firm level has changed over the last decade because of the changing patterns of world trade, globalization of the world economy, rapid dissemination of technology and information, and the rise of the transnational organization. It is this emphasis on competition among firms in world markets that has renewed intellectual interest in international competitiveness at a country level (Porter 1990a, 2003; Rugman, 1990, 1991; Dunning 2000), which has more recently been revisited by Aiginger (2006), Grilo and Koopman (2006); Kohler (2006); Ketels (2006); Siggel (2006); Stone and Ranchhod (2006). Some of the scholars have supported Porter's strategies of competitiveness while other have criticized them reason being that industries pursue different objectives and the capabilities of the individual firms are as well different.

Nyariki (2013) sought to examine the strategic management practices as a competitive tool in enhancing performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Kenya. The study failed to investigate

in depth the specific practices resulting to a general conclusion of the study that strategic management practices enhance performance of the SMEs in Kenya thus leaving a gap for further research. The study recommended for strategies such as products reputation, customers' differentiation, product pricing, cost control, technology, quality of the product, product and service innovations and customer service strategies. A study conducted by Awino (2013), on how strategic planning affected the competitive advantage of ICT small and medium enterprises in Kenya indicated that strategic planning significantly changes competitive advantage and performance of the SMEs in Kenya. Tea Board of Kenya (2014) established that lower earnings per kilogram of exported Kenyan tea was as a result of low product portfolio and low value addition which is caused by selling tea in bulk form. The report advised that a strategic management approach through market promotions, partnerships, product diversification, cost leadership and technological innovation was a necessity in the entire management of Kenyan tea subsector to enhance competitiveness of the Kenyan tea both locally and globally.

Oyedijo (2012), analyzed the effects of product and market diversification strategy on organizational performance and growth in Nigeria. The study concluded that the financial performance and sales growth of firms in Nigeria were greatly affected by diversification methods adopted by the firms. The study failed to address other likely benefits specifically expansion of the market share and customer base which was a research gap that the study sought to fill.

Raudan (2013), assessed the strategic management theory and its linkage to the resource-based view of the firm's competitive advantage. The study found out a firm can regain its competitiveness through its core competences. The existing gap in the research was that the study failed to address the product innovativeness as strategic management practice that would enhance competitiveness of the firm or an industry in a given market. Muogbo (2013), investigated the impact of strategic management on organizational growth and development. The outcome from the analysis indicated that strategic management was inadequately practiced in manufacturing firms making them lose competitiveness. The findings of this study sought to bridge the existing gap since the study results indicated that there was significant influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Kenyan. The study findings would be generalized to suit the tea manufacturing firms as well.

Herath and Silval (2011), conducted a study on strategies for competitive advantage in value added tea in Sri Lanka. The study failed to address the aspects to value addition that would enhance its competitiveness in the global market. This study confirmed that value addition on Kenyan tea would increase its competitiveness. Specifically, the study established flavoring, tea bags, repacking and rebranding as the key attributes of value addition.

Omari (2015), attested that there is need to find the extent of quality difference between tea from KTDA factories and those from multinational firms and how this difference affects

competitiveness of Kenyan tea in the international markets. The study failed to establish the significance of quality on competitiveness. This study established that quality was critical in determining the competitiveness of Kenyan tea hence providing a solution to the existing gap in the study by Omari (2015).

Table 3.1: Literature Review Summary Matrix

Author	The study conducted	Objectives and concepts	Theory	The study findings	The gaps identified
Omari,(2015)	Determinants of export performance of Kenya tea development agency managed factories in Kenya	The main objective of this study was to establish the determinants of export performance of KTDA managed factories in Kenya. The main variables considered were marketing strategy, firm size, liberalization and technology and how they affect performance. Export performance in the tea industry is affected by massive over production, collapsing prices, deteriorating quality, poor marketing strategy, lack of value addition and the growing inequality along the tea value-chain.		The study findings attested that there is need to find the extent of quality difference between tea from KTDA factories and those from multinational firms and how this difference affects competitiveness of Kenyan tea in the international markets	The study failed to establish the significance of quality on competitiveness.
Wafula,	Impact of Public Debt on Economic Growth in the Public Sector	The specific objectives of the review were to identify trends in published literature on			The gaps revealed that majority of publications reviewed were not grounded in theory for

	in Kenya: A Critical Review of Literature.	public debt components and economic growth in the public sector; identify major conflicts and or inconsistencies in theory, concepts, methodology, findings and conclusions; identify the gaps and flaws in research within the context of public debt components and economic growth; and build propositions based on identified thematic areas.			their studies, a lack of agreement on the overall impact of public debt components on economic growth. A conceptual gap was noted in which all the research publications ignored the impact of intervening variables on the relationship between the predictor variables and the output variables.
Gitonga (2019)	Investigated the influence of strategic management practices on competitiveness of Kenya tea	To establish the influence of market development, product development, strategic planning, and strategic alliances on competitiveness of Kenyan tea	Theories used included: international competitiveness, competitive advantage, resource based, new trade, and product life cycle theories	Strategic management practices influenced competitiveness of Kenya tea sector.	There is need for policy and managerial adjustments for stronger competitiveness. Study was not based on any stated theory and does not clarify findings to justify conclusions and recommendations.

Chepkemoi (2017)	Small holder tea production and its effects in Koroin, Bomet county 1954 – 2002	To establish influence of top management, support team, organizational structure and corporate governance of financial performance of KTDA managed factories.	Qualitative	Organizational structure of the factories is highly structural. Top management merited their positions. Some unqualified top management to blame for poor decisions. There were cases internal strained relationship.	There is need for corporate governance and alternative business model like cooperating strategy to improved performance and address ethical issues N/B; coops are managed and led on the basis of the seven principles to boost independence.
Wachinga, (2016)	Organizational factors influencing financial performance of private companies in Kenya.	Asses influence of enterprise characteristics on sustainability of small tea enterprises, analyze the influence of way of doing business on sustainability of small tea enterprises and explore relationship between finance and sustainability.	Mixed method (cross-sectional survey and descriptive study) involving both qualitative and quantitative data analysis.	Four of the hypotheses were supported by the study.	Study did not touch on the cooperative model of business. No study theory applicable to the study.

Maina (2015)	Factors that influence sustainability of small tea enterprises in Kenya.	Focused marketing strategies, production costs, climate change and government regulatory policies.	Descriptive study.	There is need for well spelt out government policies.	The need to improve farmers in policy formation and engage in clear governmental policies.
Wambeti (2017)	Challenges facing small scale tea farmers in Rukuriri tea factory.	To establish what change management strategies were adopted, challenges faced and measures adopted to deal with change of management.	Qualitative	Planned strategic approach to change management works well for the small-scale tea sector.	No study theories. Expansive growth in the sector not manageable.
Waithaka (2012)	Change management at the Kenya Tea Development Agency Limited	Effects economic and social factors (globalization, political, competition, liberalization and advanced technology on changes in organizations.			

CONCLUSION

From the Literature review it is clear that sound strategic management practices are key to an organization being able to perform, remain relevant, competitive and meet its mission without which demise is the natural progress and ultimate business failure.

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