

# Effect of Strategic Leadership on Competitive Advantage of Animal Feeds Manufacturing Firms in Upper Eastern and Central Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Over time, enhancing a company's performance had mainly involved securing a competitive position compared to industry peers. A competitive advantage results in improved performance by cultivating greater customer loyalty, heightened satisfaction, improved financial outcomes, and a larger market share. As a result, organizations were increasingly working to strategically position themselves within their industries to surpass competitors. Despite implementing various strategic changes to maintain a competitive edge, companies in the animal feed manufacturing sector, including those in the central and upper east regions of Kenya, confront intense competition from both established and new players. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of strategic leadership on the competitive advantage of animal feed manufacturing firms in Upper Eastern and Central Kenya.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The competitive advantage theory will provide insights into the research. Employing an explanatory research design, the study focused on 96 animal feed manufacturing firms in Central and Upper Eastern Kenya. The research adhered to ethical standards and principles, presenting the findings through charts and tables. Charts and tables were utilized to present the findings of the study.

**Findings:** The conclusions drawn from the results suggest that the adoption of strategic leadership exhibits a constructive and considerable influence on competitive advantage within Animal feeds manufacturing firms in Central and Upper Eastern Kenya. The study advises animal feeds manufacturing firms to prioritize bolstering strategic leadership across managerial echelons, from mid-level managers to top executives, to ensure they grasp their responsibilities in fostering and preserving competitive advantage over the long haul.

**Paper type:** Research paper

**Keyword:** *Strategic Leadership, Competitive Advantage, Performance.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, companies encounter the difficulty of navigating a multifaceted and ever-evolving environment. This dynamic context was shaped by various influences, including globalization, frequent and unpredictable changes, and the increasing reliance on information technologies (Petricevic & Teece, 2019). Numerous enterprises diligently pursue optimal tactics to bolster their market standing. Securing and upholding a competitive advantage, coupled with strategic implementation, frequently ensures a company's longevity in the market and favorable financial results (Amesho et al., 2022). The evaluation of firm performance entails examining the effectiveness with which a company utilizes its fundamental resources to yield revenue (Taouab & Issor, 2019). This evaluation acts as a broad measure of a firm's financial health over a certain period and enables benchmarking against peers within the same sector or across various sectors. Financial performance can be measured using several indicators, including operational revenue, operating profit, operational cash flow, and total sales volume. Additionally, a thorough examination of financial statements may reveal

insights such as margin growth rates and changes in debt levels, providing a more nuanced understanding for analysts and investors (Taouab & Issor, 2019).

In the contemporary global landscape, businesses operate within highly competitive environments, necessitating the adoption of strategies aimed at enhancing their competitiveness (Kahiga, 2017). A company's competitive advantage refers to its capacity to secure a stronger foothold within an industry and surpass rivals in achieving the primary objective of profitability (Muthoni Ndei & Mutuku, 2021). This advantageous market position empowers the company to attain performance levels that exceed the industry average. As competition intensifies, there's an increasing emphasis on retaining this competitive edge.

A competitive advantage is identified in a company when its profit margins and profit growth outpace those of its rivals who are vying for the same customer base. The sustainability of this advantage was determined by the behaviors and strategic elements that foster a lasting preference among a significant number of customers for the products or services of a business over those offered by competitors (Tan et al., 2022). As Eklof and colleagues (2020) highlight, the benefits of a competitive advantage are evident in diverse performance metrics, such as customer loyalty, enhanced customer satisfaction, better financial results, and expanded market presence. Consequently, the main goal of a competitive strategy was to surpass the performance of competitors. The three widely acknowledged methods for establishing a competitive advantage were through differentiation, cost efficiency, and focus (Abdella et al., 2021).

Companies often strategize their positioning by leveraging their strengths or advantages over competitors. The notion of Sustainable Competitive Advantage holds significant importance in determining an organization's strategic leadership in comparison to its rivals. Competitive advantage refers to the long-term advantage a company gains by implementing a unique value-creating strategy that competitors were not using at the moment and cannot easily replicate. This advantage empowers companies to uphold exceptional performance and retain a prominent market position by consistently adjusting and innovating their strategies to outpace competitors. It underscores the importance of developing and nurturing unique capabilities, resources, or approaches that provide a firm with a distinctive edge in the marketplace.

Australian companies were increasingly focusing on strategic positioning within their respective industries to gain a competitive edge. In the competitive landscape, organizations adopt various leadership strategies, such as surpassing competitors' barriers, successful competition through preemptive actions, remaining unpredictable, misleading competitors, or overcoming rivals' market-based maneuvers (Muro, 2020). Arsawan et al. (2022) endorse the idea of organizations assessing their competitive advantage in comparison to market counterparts and implementing leadership strategies to enhance their standing if found lacking. Consequently, companies define their strategic orientation by pinpointing the most effective defensive measures against competitive forces, recalibrating the dynamics to strengthen their market position, and proactively choosing a competitive approach ahead of their rivals' actions. This process involves a thorough analysis of the competitive landscape, enabling businesses to make informed decisions that capitalize on their unique strengths and mitigate potential vulnerabilities. By doing so, they can not only defend their current market share but also identify opportunities for growth and expansion, ensuring long-term success and sustainability in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Paker (2021) delved into the leadership approaches of internationally and culturally diverse service brands, analyzing how brands such as Visa, MasterCard, Amex, and Diners Club establish their leadership positions in the market. The study revealed that while there isn't a universally preferred leadership strategy among these four brands, Visa, MasterCard, and Amex primarily focus on building their leadership through brand name recognition. However, Diners Club's leadership strategy in this aspect remains less defined.

In a separate investigation, Grant (2021) explored strategic leadership within Denmark's food industry, concentrating on how companies attain and sustain a long-term competitive advantage. This research emphasizes the diverse leadership tactics employed across various markets and industries, underscoring the importance of tailored leadership strategies to secure a sustainable competitive edge. Paker's study (2021) scrutinized the leadership strategies of global and multicultural service brands, specifically examining Visa, MasterCard, Amex, and Diners Club. The research unveiled a propensity towards brand name leadership among Visa, MasterCard, and Amex, with Diners Club displaying less clarity in its approach. Grant (2021) investigated the Danish food industry to comprehend how strategic leadership contributes to maintaining a competitive advantage. The study identified key factors such as product innovation, high-quality offerings, efficient resource utilization, market responsiveness, differentiation strategies, cost effectiveness, and pricing tactics as drivers of competitive leadership. Miao et al. (2023) scrutinized the banking industry in Turkey, focusing on how strategic leadership and considerations of quality influence the competitive landscape. Their findings underscored that banks establish their leadership positions through pricing strategies, targeting specific market segments, adopting technological innovations, providing superior product services, catering to the needs of SMEs and mortgage banking, ensuring credit accessibility, enhancing delivery mechanisms, promotional endeavors, building a strong reputation, and pursuing differentiation strategies.

Furthermore, Chung & Song (2021) conducted research on how strategic leadership influences the performance of the airline sector in Korea. They noted that enhancements in performance were associated with aspects like competitive pricing and efficiencies in production and service costs, operational cost efficiencies, unique products and services, distinctive business processes, and innovative technologies employed by airlines. In Malaysia, the prosperity of cooperative organizations hinges significantly on their capacity to maintain a competitive edge and realize enhanced organizational performance. Othman et al. (2018) had highlighted that the utilization of resources to deliver value to customers was instrumental in fostering a sustainable competitive advantage, which, in turn, catalyzes superior performance. For cooperatives to stay ahead in the competition, it was imperative for them to continue offering innovative and dynamic services while employing strategies that leverage their competitive advantages, alongside being attuned to environmental considerations. Achieving standout performance was possible through the execution of effective strategies, which were borne out of a deep understanding and recognition of the organization's primary competitive advantages (Othman et al., 2018).

To strengthen their competitive edge, the bulk of SMEs in Nigeria's manufacturing sector had embraced strategic orientation (I.A. et al., 2019). The Nima (2022) study, which examined how strategic leadership helps Safaricom Limited achieve a durable competitive advantage, was one of the strategic positioning studies carried out in Kenya. According to the report, Safaricom had a significant competitive advantage thanks to its use of cutting-edge technology. The company's capacity to sustain its competitive advantage was further aided by the broad adoption of its Mpesa service. Furthermore, Nzioka & Kariuki (2021) looked into the connection between Kenyan commercial banks' performance and their strategic leadership. According to the results, strategic leadership significantly and favorably affects organizational performance, especially when it comes to performance evaluation. Riaz et al. (2023) investigated the factors influencing the banking industry's implementation of strategic leadership in mobile banking. Their findings indicated that some banks had moderately embraced mobile banking, focusing on leveraging it as a strategic tool to enhance customer satisfaction, drive revenue growth, and enhance their standing in the market. In addition, a study on strategic leadership as the cornerstone of creating a long-lasting competitive advantage in Kenyan supermarkets was carried out by Musyoka (2023). The study's findings emphasized a number of supermarket competitive advantage tactics, such as cost-maximization, recapitalization, rebranding, and enhanced customer service.

In 2016, the Association of Kenya Feed Manufacturers (AKEFEMA) released a study stating that the 23 accredited feed manufacturers in Kenya provide around 60% of the country's animal feed needs, with unregistered feed manufacturers providing the other 40%. Nairobi and the central region of Kenya had a considerable concentration of animal feed makers, mostly because of the area's high concentration of commercial poultry and dairy farms. The International Feed Industry Federation (IFIF) said in 2020 that the combined percentage of poultry and dairy feeds produced in Kenya was 41% and 39%, respectively, of all animal feeds produced in the country. Small-scale businesses make up 90% of the animal feed sector. These were followed by medium-sized businesses, which produce 1,000–5,000 tons monthly, and large-scale businesses, which produce more than 5,000 tons monthly. Maize and wheat were the main cereal grains and their derivatives used in the manufacture of animal feed. In Kenya's cutthroat manufacturing sector, positioning in the majority of businesses represents how customers see an organization's or product's performance on certain criteria in comparison to that of its rivals. Manufacturers of animal feed must thus either improve or maintain their consumers' perceptions of them. In light of this, the research looks at how strategic positioning affects a firm's success.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of companies producing animal feeds. Consequently, intense competition has emerged, putting established companies under pressure to maintain their market share or risk losing it to new entrants (Achieng, 2016). The majority of animal feed production businesses were centered in Kenya's major cities. Business activity was being hindered by the growing price of wheat on the international market as well as a scarcity of raw materials (Varpio et al., 2020). When combined, these factors create a hostile environment for businesses, which means that in order for them to grow and maintain their present market positions, they must make the best strategic decisions. This may also make it easier for businesses to grow into other cities since there may be less competition in the market. The industry was characterized by intense competition. Companies in the industry had been driven to improve their production capacities and tighten their control over expenditures by competition for market share. The company's strategic choices assist it to compete effectively, maintain its relevance, and maintain its client base by overcoming market forces. As a result, the business performs better and beats its competitors (Kowo et al., 2018). This had forced industry participants to embrace new management techniques. Plans for a company's expansion should consider its internal resources, competitive environment, and business agility.

The link between corporate efficiency and expansion goals had been the subject of several studies. For example, King'ori (2018) examined how different pricing strategies affected the prosperity of agrochemical companies in Nairobi County's Industrial Area. The study demonstrated how the companies distinguished themselves via innovation and high-quality products. The present research will examine how animal feed manufacturing companies in Kenya's Central and Upper Eastern regions were affected by strategic leadership

factor. Research by Farhiya (2015) on strategic leadership as a source of long-term competitive advantage indicates that the leadership strategies adopted by a company lay the groundwork for developing and organizing the fulfillment of the business's mission. According to the report, in order for an organization to succeed in strategic leadership, it must improve its capacity to mobilize the resources needed to support its plans and introduce new goods and services that would provide value and improve performance. While the present research will incorporate several strategic leadership techniques and analyze their effect on competitive advantage, the previous study mostly focused on product and service differentiation.

Kang et al. (2021) research examined the impact of strategic leadership on the performance of the Korean airline sector. The study found that competitive advantage was derived from operating cost advantages, pricing competitiveness, and production and service cost advantages. Additionally, airlines' results were enhanced by the employment of unique technology, distinctive goods and services, and unique business procedures. The industrial sector was isolated since the aforementioned research primarily examines the aviation business. The conceptual and contextual gaps identified in the reviewed studies will form the basis for the researcher's investigation into the impact of strategic leadership on the competitive advantage of animal feed manufacturing companies in Kenya's Upper Eastern and Central regions.

## **A. Literature Review**

### **1. Theoretical Literature**

According to Porter (1985), the Competitive Advantage Theory emphasizes the importance of companies implementing strategies that focus on delivering top-notch products and commanding higher prices in the market. Porter highlights the crucial role of enhancing productivity growth in national strategies. Within this context, the term "competitive advantage" denotes a company's capacity to outperform others in the same market or sector, accomplished through a multitude of factors and resources. Given the demanding nature of the current market, there has been a surge in research interest surrounding the attainment of superior performance and competitive advantage. According to Macharia and Titimba (2018), a firm gains a competitive edge by implementing a strategy that generates value and is challenging for competitors, both present and future, to imitate.

A number of researchers, including Omalaja and Eruola (2011), had provided critiques of Competitive Advantage Theory. These critiques raise concerns that were thought-provoking and inquire about the validity of the theory as a scientific notion. According to the findings of their research, having a competitive edge was not necessarily a necessary and sufficient prerequisite for experiencing greater returns. Some people believe that there was no theory of competitive advantage that can be disproved without resorting to ideology. This leads them to suggest that competitive advantage is, at most, a metaphor useful to those in strategic management. Despite this, Liu and Wilson (2013) utilize competitive theory to enhance the ability to sustain a competitive advantage in challenging business environments. The Competitive Advantage Theory, relevant to this investigation, posits that a company's unique characteristics give it an edge over competitors, leading to higher performance. According to Josiah (2013), a company that had a competitive advantage may effectively execute strategies that allow it to outperform both existing rivals and future competitors. According to Powell (2001), the theory proposes that a business strategy can impact various resources directly under someone's control, and these resources can provide a competitive advantage. Competitive edge can be gained through improved performance and a dominant position in production resources. The theory suggests that a firm can maintain a competitive advantage by continually enhancing the quality of its products and services. Therefore, continuous improvement is considered a vital component of competitive advantage. This theory was used to explore how businesses can achieve and sustain a competitive edge.

### **2. Strategic Leadership and Competitive Advantage**

Strategic leadership was a type of leadership that places an emphasis on the capacity to form and influence the overall direction, strategy, and vision of an organization rather than just directing it. It entails steering the company toward its long-term objectives and adapting to an environment that was always changing, which goes beyond the day-to-day management duties that were typically performed. Strategic leaders were responsible for making crucial decisions that aligned with the organization's mission and contributed to its success.

In the context of private universities in Iraq, Al-Mahdi (2021) conducted a study to investigate the influence of strategic leadership on achieving a competitive advantage. The research aimed to determine how strategic leadership skills contribute to establishing a sustainable competitive advantage across all private colleges in Iraq. Data was collected through a "self-administered questionnaire." The results showed a significant positive association between strategic leadership capabilities and the ability to maintain a competitive edge over time. Additionally, the study emphasized that human and social capital are essential sources of sustained competitive advantage, requiring constant nurturing and growth. The importance of strategic leadership competencies for organizational success was highlighted, focusing on cultivating and protecting the mix of organizational resources, capabilities, and knowledge to build a sustainable competitive advantage.

In contrast to the current research, which will focus on animal feed manufacturing companies in Kenya, Omar's study focused on private institutions in Iraq. In a recent study, Geke (2021) explored the relationship between strategic leadership and sustainable competitive advantage within the context of Kenyan commercial banks. The study sought to explore how strategic leadership techniques impact long-term advantages of financial institutions in Kenya. Using a descriptive research approach, the study focused on 43 commercial banks, collecting data through questionnaires and analyzing it using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that strategic leadership is crucial for maintaining a competitive benefit for moneymaking banks in Kenya over time. Strategic leaders were identified as essential individuals capable of anticipating opportunities and challenges. While the previous study focused on the financial sector, particularly commercial banks, the current research will concentrate on the manufacturing sector.

In a study conducted by Kahiga (2017), the focus was on examining how strategic leadership practices can influence the competitive position of the National Bank of Kenya. Our main focus was on investigating the ways in which strategic leadership practices enhance the competitiveness of the National Bank of Kenya. Through conducting interviews, data was collected using an actual study methodology. The findings indicated that the National Bank of Kenya primarily utilized strategic leadership practices, including establishing strategic direction, maintaining core skills, and providing frequent training and development opportunities. These practices were found to strengthen staff unity while working towards shared objectives. Similar to the study by Geke (2021), Kahiga's research was conducted within the banking sector. However, the present study will focus on animal feed manufacturing companies.

## II. METHODS

### A. The Materials

This research employed an explanatory research design, a method outlined by Haydam and Steenkamp (2020) that focused on uncovering information about who, what, where, when, and how much. The choice of the design was informed by the primary objective of establishing a meaningful relationship and elucidating how various factors supported the subjects under investigation. This approach was deemed appropriate for exploring the influence of strategic locating on the competitive benefit of animal feed manufacturing organizations in Upper Eastern and Central Kenya. Employing this design enabled the researcher to acquire in-depth knowledge about how strategic positioning affects the performance of these firms. It provided a thorough comprehension of the variables central to the research problem, facilitating a nuanced analysis of the strategic maneuvers that contribute to a firm's competitive edge in the marketplace.

The target audience for the research consisted of the businesses from which data was collected (Rahi, 2017). The specific group under investigation encompassed animal feed manufacturing firms located in Central Kenya (Kiambu, Murang'a, Kirinyaga, and Nyeri) and Upper Eastern Kenya (Embu, Tharaka Nithi, and Meru), according to the AKEFEMA., these regions collectively housed a total of 96 animal feed manufacturing firms. This research was centered on these 96 firms, detailed in Table 1, focusing on two key individuals from each firm: the branch managers and the operations manager or their equivalents.

*Table 1: Animal Feed Manufacturing Firms per County*

<i>Animal Feed Manufacturing Firms per County</i>			
<i>Targeted Counties</i>	<i>Number of firms</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Targeted population</i>
		<i>Per Firm (2)</i>	
<i>Kiambu County</i>	26	<i>26 * 2 (respondents)</i>	52
<i>Murang'a County</i>	19	<i>19* 2 (respondents)</i>	38
<i>Nyeri County</i>	16	<i>16 * 2 (respondents)</i>	32
<i>Kirinyaga County</i>	15	<i>15 * 2 (respondents)</i>	30

<i>Meru County</i>	9	9 * 2 (respondents)	18
<i>Embu County</i>	7	7 * 2 (respondents)	14
<i>Tharaka Nithi county</i>	4	4 * 2 (respondents)	8
<i>Total</i>	96		192

Source: Association of Kenya Feed Manufacturers (AKEFEMA, 2022)

**B. Methods**

The researcher utilized both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze the data that was collected. After the data was collected, a thorough review of the questionnaires was conducted to guarantee their accuracy, consistency, and completeness. Before the final analysis, a thorough cleaning process was conducted to eliminate any discrepancies. Subsequently, the data was categorized based on similarities and then tabulated. To facilitate statistical analysis, the responses were coded into numerical form.

The study employed a range of presentation formats, including tables, pie charts, and percentages, to effectively condense and convey the participants' responses. The impact of independent variables on the dependent variable was determined using multiple regression analysis in the context of inferential statistics. This analytical technique evaluated the relative influence of each independent variable by examining its covariance with the dependent variable, which proved useful for predictive purposes. Although traditionally applied to interval variables, regression analysis was also used by some social scientists with ordinal data. It's important to note that, like correlation, regression analysis assumes a linear relationship between variables.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**A. Response Rate**

The research aimed to gather responses from 192 participants through distributed questionnaires. Ultimately, the researcher successfully collected 153 completed inquiry form. A good response rate of 79.7% was achieved, therefore implying that 20.3% of the intended sample did not participate. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009). They opine that a response rate of 50% is good for analysis, 60% is good, whereas anything above 70 percent great. The response rate was achieved and is good for conclusions and representative of the population. The probable reason a high response rate was achieved is that the researcher administered the questionnaires personally and so anytime some areas were unclear to the participants, they were clarified to ensure cooperation.

**B. Strategic Leadership and Competitive Advantage.**

In doing this stage of the research, the respondents were to indicate their agreement from the extent the strategic leadership within their organization describes the true scenario. The answers were used to establish the means and the standard deviations for the respective statements, having their respective answers. The findings are displayed in the Table 2.

*Table 2: Strategic Leadership and Competitive Advantage*

<i>Statement</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>The company has leader-member exchange.</i>	153	1	5	3.90	0.961
<i>Employee motivation increases the company's competitive edge</i>	153	1	5	3.59	1.001
<i>The company has a positive culture of followership</i>	153	1	5	3.81	0.912

<i>Strategic leadership enhances the competitive advantage of the firm</i>	153	1	5	3.87	1.004
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	153				
<i>Overall Statistic</i>				3.79	0.970

Source: Researcher (2024)

The participants indicated that leader-member exchange is present within the organization, with a mean score of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.961. Additionally, they agreed that enhancing worker motivation contributes to the firm's competitive advantage, reflected in a mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.001. The mean score for followership was 3.81, with a standard deviation of 0.912. Participants also believed that strategic leadership enhances firm competitive advantage, as indicated by an average score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.004. The mean score for the impact of strategic leadership on competitive advantage was 3.79, with a standard deviation of 0.970, demonstrating a significant influence.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Omar (2014), which found a strong positive correlation between strategic leadership capabilities and sustainable competitive advantage. Similarly, Nyawira (2015) confirmed the essential role of strategic leadership in sustaining competitive advantage for commercial banks in Kenya over time.

**C. Correlation Results of Study Variables**

The Pearson correlation method was used to calculate coefficients that assess the strength and direction of relationships between the variables. On a scale of +1 to -1, a coefficient of zero indicates that there is no correlation between the variables. A Pearson coefficient greater than 0.5 is generally considered to be strong. The correlation findings can be found in Table 3.

*Table 3: Correlation matrix*

		<i>Strategic leadership</i>	<i>Competitive advantage</i>
<i>Strategic leadership</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1	
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		
	<i>N</i>	153	
<i>Competitive advantage</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	0.736*	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	0.002	
	<i>N</i>	153	153

Source: Researcher (2024)

The study examined how strategic leadership impact the competitiveness of animal feed manufacturing companies in Upper Eastern and Central Kenya. We conducted Pearson correlation analyses to investigate the connections between these variables. The findings, as shown in Table 11, uncovered noteworthy positive connections between strategic leadership and competitive advantage. This finding was supported by a coefficient of  $(r(153) = 0.736; p < 0.05)$ . This finding aligns with Omar's (2014) research, which highlighted the importance of strategic management in bolstering long-term competitive advantage.

**D. Regression Analysis**

A thorough examination was carried out to establish a mathematical relationship between strategic leadership and gaining a competitive edge. These are the conclusions that have been given. The summary results offer a brief summary of the regression findings, as displayed in the model. The results can be found in Table 12.

*Table 4: Model Summary*

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>.826a</i>	<i>0.683</i>	<i>0.675</i>	<i>0.357</i>

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic leadership variables in predicting competitive advantage, the study employed the coefficient of determination. Based on the analysis, it was found that strategic leadership played a significant role in determining competitive advantage. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.675 further supports this finding. This indicates that the model functions as a reliable predictor.

In addition, a statistical analysis known as ANOVA was performed to investigate the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

*Table 5: ANOVA*

<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>1 Regression</i>	<i>4.099</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1.025</i>	<i>24.556</i>	<i>.000b</i>
<i>Residual</i>	<i>272.620</i>	<i>149</i>	<i>1.842</i>		
<i>Total</i>	<i>276.719</i>	<i>153</i>			

- a. Dependent Variable: competitive advantage
- b. The table above displays a significance level of .000, indicating that the model effectively predicts the connection between strategic leadership and competitive advantage.

The findings of the multiple regression study, as presented in Table 14, illustrate clear connections within strategic positioning variables and gaining a competitive edge. The research question was interpreted using the regression coefficients.

*Table 6: Regression analysis results*

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
<i>1 (Constant)</i>	<i>3.276</i>	<i>0.562</i>		<i>5.869</i>	<i>0.000</i>
<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	<i>0.601</i>	<i>0.086</i>	<i>0.015</i>	<i>0.177</i>	<i>0.012</i>

a. Dependent Variable: competitive advantage  
Source: Researcher (20240)



Enhancing your competitive advantage involves a combination of factors. These include continuous improvement, strategic leadership, strategic assets, and product differentiation. By focusing on these elements, you can elevate your position in the market and stand out from the competition.

According to the results in Table 14, when all other factors are kept at zero, the competitive advantage is found to be 3.276. The beta coefficient for strategic leadership is 0.601, which demonstrates an important and favorable effect on competitive advantage with a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . Therefore, a small rise in strategic leadership can result in a significant boost of 60.1% in competitive advantage for animal feed manufacturing companies in Upper Eastern and Central Kenya.

The research conducted by Nyawira (2015) provides support for the correlation between strategic leadership and sustainable competitive advantage in commercial banks in Kenya. It has been observed that strategic leadership plays a crucial role in maintaining a competitive edge for commercial financial institutions in Kenya, as Nyawira has concluded. On the other hand, a study conducted by Kahiga (2017) yielded different findings, indicating that the widely used strategic leadership practices had little impact on the competitive advantage of the National Bank of Kenya.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes, based on the results, about the effect of some strategies on competitive advantage. The study infers that the implementation of strategic leadership positively and significantly influences competitive advantage. The study infers that if there be strong motivation and a high spirit of followership be engendered within the firm, then strategic leadership will be enhanced and competitive advantage within the firm improved.

##### A. Recommendations

The management hierarchy for such animal feed manufacturing companies should therefore be enhanced with good care from strategic leadership at middle levels to the topmost levels of management. This will also help ensure that there is good alignment of people at all relevant levels, keeping in mind the roles they play in ensuring the organization protects and enhances the competitive advantage for the long run.

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