



## INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY SHOP BUSINESS ON COMPETITIVE PERFORMANCE IN NAKURU TOWN CBD

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### ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to determine the strategies used by shop business to achieve competitive performance. Specifically the study sought to establish the influence of product differentiation and supply chain management as strategies adopted by shop business to achieve competitive performance of hawkers. The study was guided by dynamic capability theory and Porter's perspective of competitive advantage. The research employed descriptive cross sectional survey which enabled the researcher to explain the relationships among many variables. The main focus of the study was quantitative in spite of some focus being qualitative. The sample size was calculated using the mathematical approach developed by Miller and Brewer. The target population of the study constituted 260 shop business owners in Nakuru CBD dealing with electronics while the sample comprised of 72 shops. The study used a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from the respondents. After data was collected it was cleaned to get rid of extreme outliers and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. This was performed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) tool. Descriptive analysis entailed measures of distribution, central tendencies and variations while inferential analysis used Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression. A linear regression model was used to depict the connection between the various variables. From the findings the researcher concluded that a positive association between product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors. The researcher further concluded that there is positive significant association between supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors in Nakuru town CBD. From the findings the researcher recommended that shops within Nakuru Town should differentiate themselves and their product from street vendors. They can achieve this by making the customer more sensitive toward the buying process. The study further recommended that shop business owners should find a low-cost supply base and at the same time meet the quality requirements. The researcher suggested that further studies should be conducted on capability dynamism and competitive advantage of SMEs in Nakuru Town.

**Keywords:** Street vending, Business performance and Shop business

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The informal sector is estimated to have created 713,600 new jobs in 2015 accounting for 84.8 per cent of all new jobs (Economic survey 2016 report; KNBS). The importance of this sector has therefore been underestimated, neglected, and usually seen more as a liability

rather than a potential resource of employment creation and a source of national income generation (Kusakabe, 2006). Globally street vendors have invaded commercial streets to sell their wares invading the business areas of shop business owners. The competition between street vendors and shop business owners is quite stiff and to some level detrimental to the parties. Shop owner's laments that for years some of their toughest competitors have been able to undercut their business plying their trade on the sidewalks. Some of their wares include electronics, clothes, shoes, kitchen wares, books among many other goods. This has posed a major challenge to shop business owners as they compete for the same customers with street vendors who do not pay rent, rates, water bills, electricity bill, and licenses among other forms of taxation (Bromley, 2000).

Despite street vending having provided many people with a means of earning livelihood and employment, it has in equal measure denied others livelihood and posed many problems of urban planning causing huge congestion and traffic jams (Donovan, 2008). Most traders locate themselves at strategic points with heavy human traffic, while others walk from one place to the other carrying their wares to customers at places of high pedestrian concentrations (Bhowmik 2005). They locate themselves along main roads and streets, near shopping centers or at corners where they can be seen by pedestrians and motorists. Traders settle in streets spontaneously without any official allocation (Mitullah 2006). In Malaysia, Small and medium enterprises are mainly involved in the services sector, accounting for 87% total business Small and medium enterprises. The biggest share of Small and medium enterprises in this tertiary sector is in the distributive trade, including wholesale and retail, as well as hotels and restaurants. Small and medium enterprises in the manufacturing sector and agriculture accounted for only 7% and 6% of total Small and medium enterprises, respectively (SME Corp, 2010).

In Nigeria, overall regulatory framework for the shop business owners is driven by specific Small and Micro Enterprises Acts which specify the key institutional linkages for effective coordination. In many African countries retail trade is coordinated by the government through their respective trade and commerce ministries or their equivalent in order to formulate policies, promotion, development and protection of small scale enterprises. It also monitors the execution of the formulated policies to ensure their effective implementation (Chege, 2014).

The Kenyan retail sector has experienced a paradigm shift in the last couple of years with stiff competition and entry of new well established players, changing regulatory provisions and prudential guidelines, financial sector deepening processes, changing consumer tastes and preferences and technological advancements. The Economic strategy for wealth and employment creation 2003-2007 indicates that about 25% of all households engage in some form of small business activity with the majority depending on their business for all household income (GoK, 2007). Successful environment serving organizations are open systems and continued organizational survival depends on its ability to secure rewards from its environment which replenishes the resources consumed in the conversion process and also ensures social legitimacy. Competitive strategies in Shop business owners have become very critical for their survival since they are operating in a very turbulent environment and have difficulty in coming up with the appropriate strategy that will ensure success in their mode and operations. Strategic deployment of competitive strategies is a fundamental function for Small and Medium Enterprises (Shop business owners). Any shop business owners that fail to adopt competitive strategies will continuously experience heavy financial losses and loose competitiveness.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Small Medium Enterprises are becoming increasingly important in terms of employment, wealth creation, and the development of innovation. According to the Kenya Private Sector Alliance brief 2016; SMEs contribute 98% of GDP, 50% of workforce and 25% of enterprises (Odhiambo,2017). Street vending, however, has not yet been integrated as a component of urban economies in most countries of the world, especially in the developing world (Uwijite,2013). Street trade is an important economic activity that sustains a significant percentage of rural and urban dwellers especially the developing countries. The activity falls among the small and micro enterprises that form a main thrust for economic development in developing countries. In Nakuru, the sector has operated outside the mainstream economic development, and falls within the informal economic activities in the urban space (Hussein, 2010). There has been no sufficient research done on the competitive strategies employed by shop business owners who face cut throat competition from these street vendors. Shop business owners must have employed some strategies in order to shake off these competitors. Studies on strategies intentionally arrayed by shop business owners to remain competitive, however, do not seem prevalent in the literature. To fill this gap in the literature, the current study investigates the influence of strategies adopted by shop business owners in Nakuru town CBD to achieve competitive performance against street vending business.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study has both general and specific objectives

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The main objective of this study was to determine the influence of strategies adopted by shop business to achieve competitive performance against street vendors in Nakuru town CBD.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

To establish the influence of product differentiation by shop business owners on their competitive performance.

To determine the influence of supply chain management by shop business owners on their competitive performance.

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

H01: Product differentiation strategy has no significant influence on competitive performance of shop business owners

H02: Supply chain management has no significant influence on performance of shop business owners

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW**

This study used porter's perspective of competitive advantage and dynamic capabilities Theory

#### **2.1.1 Michael Porter's perspective of competitive advantage**

Porter (1985) model of competitive advantage is about taking offensive and defensive action to create strong position in an industry in order to generate a higher return on investment. This theory holds that a firm is able to deliver the same benefits as competition but at a lower cost (cost advantage) or deliver benefits that exceed those of competing products (differential advantage). Cost advantage is achieved through economies of scale, increased efficiencies

due to technological investments, mass distribution among other factors. By using an effective competitive strategy, an organization finds its industry niche and learns about its customers (Porter, 1980).

Porter's argues that the national environment influences the ability of its firms to succeed in particular industries. Differentiation advantage is achieved through development of unique offering that is targeted at high end customers who are not sensitive to price instead value quality and uniqueness. Porter's guidelines for achieving competitive advantage are highly rigid. He affirms that firms can achieve competitive advantage through either cost leadership or differentiation, and he advises firms to avoid being 'stuck in the middle' (Porter, 1980).

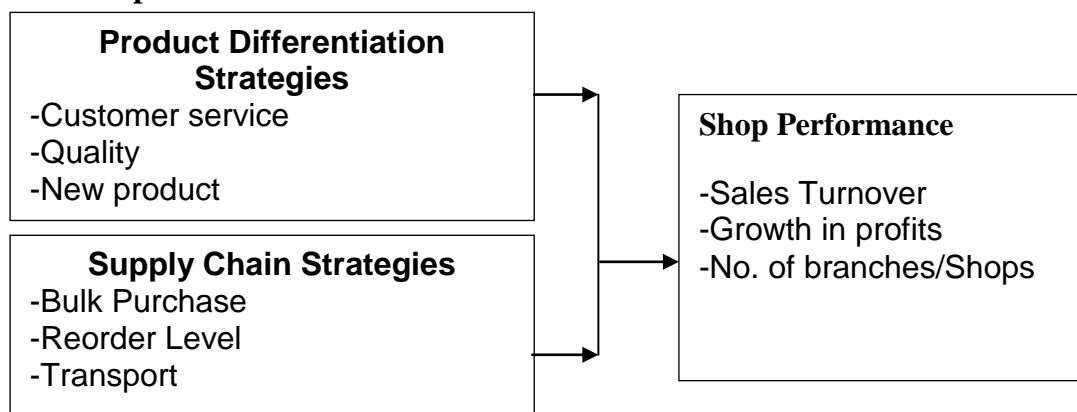
Shop business owners should explore economies of scale in the business, this is because their competitiveness would be enhanced. The economies of scale will enable the shop business owners to enjoy cost leadership in the industry. Increased efficiencies due to technological investment by shop business owners have made it possible for shop business owners to scout for new products in the market. They browse the internet for the new products in the market and order the same for their customers. The new products give the business enormous advantage over others and the shop business owners may use the new products to woo more customers. Shop business owners have efficient mass distribution channels which enable them to market their products widely enhancing competitiveness.

### 2.1.2 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Dynamic capabilities theory was introduced in 1989 by Gary Hamel in a multinational strategy research that led to the development of the core competencies of a corporation. The dynamics capability theory is based on the firm's ability to use the dynamic capabilities in order to create competitive advantages in their firms. The dynamic capabilities are defined as the firm's strategy to constantly integrate, reconfigure, renew, and recreate internal and external resource in a response to dynamic and rapidly shifting market environments in order to attain and sustain competitive advantage (Muchiri, 2016).

The dynamic capabilities explain on how the business create, define, discover, and exploit innovative opportunities in complex and volatile external environments in search for a strategic matching of resources and markets. The dynamic capabilities are applicable to the study as it demonstrates on the ways in which the hospitals are able to embrace new opportunities and create competitive advantages from them.

### 2.2 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## 2.3 Empirical Literature

### 2.3.1 Product differentiation Strategies on Competitive Performance

A differentiation strategy aims at offering a product or service with unique attributes that are valued by customers and that customers perceive to be better than or different from the products of the competition. The value added by the uniqueness lets the firm command a premium price. The key characteristic of differentiation strategy is perceived quality (whether real or not). This may be through superior product design, technology, customer service, dealer network or other dimensions. The advantage of differentiation is that perceived quality and brand loyalty insulates company from threats from any of the five forces that determine the state of competition in an industry.

New business strategies new organizational approaches, new business and new enabling technology are being used by many forward thinking companies to continually improve their through development process. According to Porter(1980), a product can be differentiated in terms of :design ,brand image, technology, features or dealers network , in addition he says that this strategy may preclude the firm from gaining high market share but its gets compensated by creation of loyal customers who are not price sensitive. A company attempting to succeed through differentiation strategy must study buyer's needs and behavior carefully to learn what buyers consider important, what they think has value and what they are willing to pay for.

Price increases from powerful suppliers can be passed on to customers who are willing to pay. Buyers have only one source of supply. Brand loyalty protects from substitutes. Brand loyalty is also a barrier to new entrants. The risks to differentiation strategy include limitation due to production technology. The 'shelf life' of differentiation advantage is getting shorter and shorter. Customer tastes may also change and wipe out the competitive advantage.

### 2.3.2 Supply chain Strategies on Competitive Performance

According to by Laney (2007) and Quinn (1997), supply chain links all process incurred within an organization from acquiring raw material from supplier to delivering final product to customer. Supply chain strategy is part of the overall business strategy, designed around a well-defined basis of competition (innovation, low cost, service, quality) actually it is a strategic asset. It is integrated with marketing strategy and with customers' needs, product strategy as well as power position. On the other hand, supply chain strategy must adapt as market conditions and competitive advantages change. In that way, supply chain strategy designs a unique supply chain configuration that drives strategic objectives forward.

According to Cohen (2004), a supply chain strategy consists of five building blocks. These are; Manufacturing strategy, Outsourcing strategy, Channel strategy, Customer service strategy and Asset network. Shop business owners have developed a well-established supply chain management system whereby they buy their stock in bulk to enjoy economies of scale, they maintain correct stock levels to avoid stock-outs and idle stock and a courier service for timely and efficient transport of their products. When these attributes are properly employed, they become a very strong competitive strategy for the firms employing them giving it a competitive advantage over the other firms. Shop business owners have repeatedly applied supply chain management as their strategy against street vendors due to their higher financial muscle and business physical address. Since their businesses are carried out in permanent buildings, their suppliers have a tendency to believe their businesses are going concerns thus enjoy favorable credit terms in trade.

## 2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature

This chapter has presented literature review starting with the theoretical perspective where competitive advantage and resource based view theory were discussed. The chapter then discussed several variables that would affect the performance of a firm. These variables are; product differentiation strategy and supply chain strategy.

A product can be differentiated in terms of :design ,brand image, technology, features or dealers network , in addition he says that this strategy may preclude the firm from gaining high market share but its gets compensated by creation of loyal customers who are not price sensitive. A company attempting to succeed through differentiation strategy must study buyer's needs and behavior carefully to learn what buyers consider important, what they think has value and what they are willing to pay for. Product differentiation thus becomes an effective strategy as customers would be faced with a choice of products outside price while the firms will compete more on quality rather than price.

## 2.5 Research Gaps

The competitiveness of firms has been studied widely using theories in strategy, these theories have been used time and again though not much has been done to address their short comings. Government regulations have huge impact towards competitiveness of any business, therefore the presence of policies and regulations need to be studied on how they impact the strategy theories. The magnitude of the impact of government regulations on the competitiveness of firms has not studied and quantified. Governments are fond of making rules, regulations, tariffs, quotas, preferential trading blocks and other trade arrangements in the view of protecting its market and this may adversely affects the competitive of firms.

## 3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. This research design was used for this study because the researcher focused on factors influencing workplace wellbeing balance among employees in Kenya. The researcher sought to make observations of phenomenon under study without any manipulation but present the report as per observation.

### 3.1 Target Population

The sample size was calculated using the mathematical approach developed by Miller and Brewer (2003). Given a population of 260 and precision level of 0.1 the sample size was calculated as;

n= The sample size was calculated using the mathematical approach developed by Miller and Brewer (2003). Given a population of 260 and precision level of 0.1 the sample size was calculated as;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where ; n is the sample size, N is the population size and e is the level of precision(0.1).

$$n = \frac{260}{1 + 260(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 72$$

The sampling frame of the study constitutes 260 shop business owners while the sample comprise of 72 shops. The sampling technique used was random sampling, this ensured all

the electronic shops within Nakuru CBD had an equal chance of being selected in the research.

### 3.2 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from the respondents. A questionnaire is the most appropriate tool of collecting primary data in survey research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). The questionnaire was structured in a way that it was understood by the respondents with clarity and depth in response. Data collection was preceded by obtaining of the necessary permits and consents. First, the researcher notified the administration of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology of the intent to collect primary data upon which formal consent was issued.

### 3.3 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS version 24 statistical software. The use of the SPSS software is considered appropriate due to the use of the structured questionnaire hence presenting an easy way to analyze the data. The extracted data was quantitative in nature which was presented in tables to simplify the analysis process. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics constituted of means and standard deviations. The inferential statistics was scrutinized using the principal of multiple linear regression. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relationship between various independent variables on the dependent variable.

## 4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Response Rate

The study thus administered 72 questionnaires for data collection. However, 54 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented 75 percent overall successful response rate. The 75 percent response rate was attributed to the use of self-administered questionnaire.

### 4.2 Background Information

The researcher sought to find out the legal structure of the targeted business.

#### 4.2.1 Legal Structure of the Business

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Academic Qualifications**

<b>Legal structure of your company</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Partnership	6	11
Sole trader	44	81
Registered company	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the findings, 11% of the respondents stated that their business is a partnership in nature, 81% of the respondents stated that their business is a sole trader in nature while 7% of the respondents stated that their business is a registered company in nature. This implies that majority of shops in Nakuru Town are sole proprietorship in nature

### 4.3 Descriptive Findings and Discussions

#### 4.3.1 Product differentiation on competitive performance of shops against street vendors

The respondents were asked to indicate the influence of product differentiation on competitive performance of shops against street vendors. The findings resulting from the analysis are presented in Table 2

**Table 2: Product differentiation on competitive performance of shops against street vendors**

<b>Product differentiation</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std</b>
Different customer service aids your business	1	5	4.158	.886
High quality products influence customer's preference of your shop	1	5	3.632	.942
Stocking new product gives your shop an advantage	1	5	3.790	.935
Product features helps shops to increase their customers	1	5	3.790	.935
Lighting system and good visibility of products affects sales	1	5	3.974	.915

From the findings, majority of the respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.158; stddev = .886) that different customer service aids the business. In addition majority of business owners strongly agreed (mean = 3.632; stddev = .942) that high quality products influence customer's preference of the shop. Further majority of the respondents strongly agreed (mean = 3.790; stddev = .935) that stocking new product gives shop an advantage. It was also noted that majority of businesses strongly agreed (mean = 3.790; stddev = .935) product features helps shops to increase their customers.

In addition majority of business owners (mean = 3.974; stddev = .915) strongly agreed that lighting system and good visibility of products affects sales. The findings are in agreement with Morshett (2016) who states that companies aim to create a superior fulfillment of customer needs in one or several product attributes in order to develop customer satisfaction and loyalty, which can often in turn be used to charge a minimum price for the products. The findings further agree with Thompson, (2015) who argued that there are many ways and dimensions by which firms can differentiate themselves and their product from rival companies like quality of product and services and lower demand elasticity.

#### 4.3.2 Supply Chain Management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors

The researcher sought to determine the influence of supply chain management on competitive performance of shops against street vendors. Table 3 shows the respondent's views

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Supply chain management on competitive performance of shops against street vendors**

Supply chain management Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std
Bulk purchasing gives advantage to shop business	54	1	5	3.8947	.95265
Maintaining the correct re-order level makes the shop competitive	54	1	5	4.1579	.88612
Transport arrangement in key in the business	54	1	5	3.8947	.86335
Ability to source and stock new products is key to the business	54	1	5	4.2105	.90518
Shorter lead time is crucial to the business	54	1	5	3.6579	.90871

From the findings, the respondents (mean = 3.8947; stddev = .95265) strongly agreed that bulk purchasing gives advantage to shop business. In addition respondents (mean = 4.1579; stddev = .88612) strongly agreed that maintaining the correct re-order level makes the shop competitive. Further the respondents strongly agreed (mean = 3.8947; stddev = .86335) that transport arrangement in key in the business. The staff also strongly agreed (mean = 4.2105; stddev = 0.90518) that ability to source and stock new products is key to the business. From the study the respondents (mean = 3.6579; stddev = .90871) strongly agreed that shorter lead time is crucial to the business. The study agrees with Christopher, (2011) who argued that longer lead time makes it harder to plan operational activities and impacts the cash flow in a negative way, by tying up capital in physical resources. Key Performance Indicators measure a supplier's compliance with the product and performance criteria.

#### 4.4 Correlation Analysis

The researcher undertook a Pearson correlation analysis to establish the underlying relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

##### 4.4.1 Product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors

The study sought to establish the correlation between product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors in Nakuru town CBD. The findings of the study are as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Correlation between product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors**

		Competitive performance of shops against street vendors
<b>Product Differentiations</b>	Pearson Correlation	.112 <sup>**</sup>
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021
	N	54

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to the findings, there is a positive association between product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors as shown by a correlation coefficient

of 0.112 and a p-value of 0.021. The p-value is less than 0.05 and hence the association was significant. Ardekani, (2010) argues that differentiation strategy create customer loyalty by generating differences in product image through intensive marketing and image management and creating products that are innovative, dependable, durable, and serviceable.

#### 4.4.2 Supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors

The study sought to establish the correlation between supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors. The findings of the study are as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation between supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors**

		Competitive performance of shops against street vendors
<b>Supply chain management</b>	Pearson Correlation	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	54

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings indicated that there is positive significant association between supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors in Nakuru town CBD as shown by a correlation coefficient of 0.462 and a p-value of 0.001. The study agrees with Findlay, (2009) who argue that a long lead time causes increased costs and delivery time, in the end affecting the customers' value benefit of a company's offerings. The shorter the lead times the more effective and efficient the procurement performance will be and this achieves the key aim of supply chain management which is customer satisfaction and achieving a competitive advantage.

#### 4.5 Regression Analysis

**Table 6: Regression Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.797	2.024		3.358	0.000
Product Differentiation	0.213	0.085	0.198	2.546	0.021
Supply Chain Management	0.454	0.091	0.345	4.989	0.001

**Source: Researcher (2018)**

Table 6: shows the overall significant test results for the hypothesized research model.

The interpretations of the findings indicated follow the following regression model.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

Therefore,

$$Y = 6.767 + 0.213X_1 + 0.454X_2$$

From the findings in order to increase an unit of competitive performance of shops against street vendors, 0.213 units of product differentiation must be increased. Further in order to

increase an unit of competitive performance of shops against street vendors, 0.454units of supply chain management must be increased. Therefore shops ought to focus more on supply chain management. The study's research hypothesis was tested using the p values.

H01: Product differentiation strategy has no significant influence on competitive performance of shop business owners. The p-value under the null hypothesis was 0.021. The p-value did not exceed the 5% level (0.05 significance level) leading to a conclusion of rejecting the null hypothesis (H01). This implies that product differentiation strategy has significant influence on competitive performance of shop business owners

H02: Supply chain management has no significant influence on performance of shop business owners. The p-value under the null hypothesis was 0.001. The p-value did not exceed the 5% level (0.05 significance level) leading to a conclusion to rejecting the null hypothesis (H02). This implies that supply chain management has significant influence on competitive performance of shop business owners.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS**

From the findings the researcher concluded that different customer service aids the business. High quality products influence customer's preference of your shop. Product features helps shops to increase their customers. Lighting system and good visibility of products affects sales. The study inferred that is a positive association between product differentiations and competitive performance of shops against street vendors. Ardekani, (2010) argues that differentiation strategy create customer loyalty by generating differences in product image through intensive marketing and image management and creating products that are innovative, dependable, durable, and serviceable.

it was concluded that bulk purchasing gives advantage to shop business. Transport arrangement in key in the business. Shorter lead time is crucial to the business. The study inferred that there is positive significant association between supply chain management and competitive performance of shops against street vendors in Nakuru town CBD.

### **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher recommended that shops within Nakuru Town should differentiate themselves and their product from street vendors. They can achieve this by making the customer more sensitive toward the buying process. As a competitive strategy they should incorporate real qualitative difference in its products and services. They should also engage in advertising programs, marketing techniques, and stocking new products to gain competitive advantage. The researcher further recommended that recommended that shop business owners should find a low-cost supply base and at the same time meet the quality requirements. Shops should consider the duration of delivery of product while choosing a suppliers. And consider suppliers with the least lead time. This will give a competitive advantage over street vendors.

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

More studies should be done on; the effect of competitive advantage strategies on the performance of SMEs in Nakuru Town. The researcher suggested that further studies should be conducted on capability dynamism and competitive advantage of manufacturing small and medium enterprises in Nakuru Town

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