

# **INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE COMPANIES IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The central focus of this research was to establish how organizational capabilities influence the competitive advantage of IT service companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of financial capability, human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability on competitive advantage in IT service companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study was anchored on resource-based theory, human capital theory, dynamic capabilities theory, technology acceptance theory, processual theory of strategy and competitive advantage theory. The study adopted descriptive research. The target population was the top IT companies in Kenya. There were 45 major information technology services provider companies in Kenya. These firms are the most reviewed and have solutions and services that are highly rated. As such, the units of analysis were the 45 IT service providers in Kenya. The study sought opinions of the top and middle managers working in the head offices of the IT firms. Accordingly, the units of observation were the 444 top and middle management staff working in the IT service firms in Kenya. This research used a mixture of sampling techniques including stratified and purposive sampling techniques. The Yamane's formula was used to calculate the sample size. Resulting from Yamane's formula, the study sampled 210 respondents. This study utilized primary data, and questionnaires aided the collection of the data. Pilot study was carried out among 21 management staff working in other IT service firms in Nairobi County. Reliability with a predetermined threshold of 0.7 was conducted using

Cronbach's alpha. The raw primary data collected was coded prior to being input into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data collected was purely quantitative and it was analyzed by descriptive analysis. The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis. The findings were presented using tables and figures as appropriate. The study found that financial capability influences the competitive advantage of IT service firms in Kenya to a moderate degree. HR capability had a significant influence on the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. Technological capability affects the competitive advantage of the IT service firms to a moderate extent. Marketing capabilities have a moderate impact on the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. Process capability affects the competitive advantage of the IT service firms to a moderate extent. The study concludes that financial capability, human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability have a positive effect on the competitiveness of the IT service firms. The study recommends enhancing the levels of financial capability towards efficient utilization of financial resources to enhance service delivery and hence competitive advantage. The IT service firms need to re-orient their employees to align their values with those of the organizations. The IT service firms should develop efficient human capability systems to guide them in making decisions that are consistent with their philosophies and stated objectives. IT service firms should use marketing positioning to attract customers in engaging with the services and products. The IT service firms should

advance process capabilities that emphasizes the importance of specific prerequisites, correct index usage, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

**Keywords:** Organizational Capabilities, Financial Capability, Human Resource Capability, Technological Capability, Marketing Capability, Process Capability, Competitive Advantage.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the dynamically unpredictable environment coupled with increasingly complex economic systems, organizations are required to understand and utilize their capabilities effectively for competitiveness. According to Supriharyanti and Badri (2022), organizations face constant changes in the gradually evolving world forcing them to redirect their strategies, structures, business models, and operations to sustain their operations and achieve competitive advantage. In the past five years, the world has encountered challenging occurrences like the Corona Virus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19), Russian-Ukraine war, energy prices and inflation among others. Worley and Claudy (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted practically all organizations worldwide by putting a strain on supply chains, modes of working, and technologies used.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, rising energy prices, increasing inflation rates, and increasing cyber threats pose another set of challenges to organizations and world markets forcing them to adapt their capabilities to become competitive (Rengkung, 2022). Farida and Setiawan (2022) define competitive advantage as the organizations' accomplishment through their attributes and resources to perform better than their rivals in the industry. According to Friesenbichler and Reinstaller (2022), a competitive advantage is an ability obtained from resources and attributes that helps a firm to show better performance in a similar industry or market than other competitors. Guo and Lu (2021) reiterated that competitive advantages that every organization needs to compete in the global market are the mastery of technology, high-quality human resources, high creativity and motivation; and a high level of efficiency and productivity in the production process, the production of good quality goods, good management systems and organizational structures.

As such, competitive advantage is the leverage that an organization has over its rivals (Farida & Setiawan, 2022; Friesenbichler & Reinstaller, 2022). Yu, Chen and Liu (2022) define organizational capability as 'the ability of an organization to perform a coordinated set of tasks, utilizing organizational resources, for the purpose of achieving a particular end result. Mladenova (2022) defines organizational capabilities activities derived from a combination of organizational vision and organizational structure that a firm does better than any competing

firms. Rengkung (2022) pointed that organizational capabilities are fundamental to firms' ability to solve effectively their organizational problems. Organizational capabilities allow firms to create new products and processes and respond to changing market circumstance.

Shaligram (2022) opined that organizational capabilities involve accumulated knowledge and bundles of skills that enables organizations to make profitable and sustained use of their internal resources to achieve their objectives. Mbithe (2021) pointed that the environment in service firms is characterized by stiff competition, globalization and rapid technological change. According to Kenya National Innovation Agency -KENIA (2022), the competitiveness of IT service firms acts as a significant part that is linked to the strengthening and enhancement of the development of the Country. Mwangi and Ngari (2022) reported that the rapid development and sustainable growth of IT service firms has opened opportunities for employment creation, tangible and intangible assets investments and overall economic growth in Kenya.

Kenya is the regional ICT hub of East Africa, with the country being a leader in broadband connectivity, general ICT infrastructure, Value Added Services (VAS), mobile money, and mobile banking and FinTech services. Communications Authority of Kenya (2022) reported that the ICT sector accounted for 7% of the Country's GDP through IT-enabled services. Internet access has continued to spur economic growth which contributed to the government's development of the Digital Economy Blueprint a framework to improve Kenya's ability to leapfrog economic growth in the region. Mwangi and Ngari (2022) indicated that the IT sector is also instrumental in the realization of international obligations such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Agenda 2063. The world's pioneer mobile money transfer application (M-Pesa) has led to the Kenya's status as a leading digital hub in Africa. Communications Authority -CA (2022) reported that new technologies and business processes have come into the Kenyan market replacing the older technologies.

According to Nyagilo (2019) the Country has moved from offline store to online oriented economy with the connectivity to fiber optics. Computer hardware accounts for nearly 70% of the IT market in Kenya. The total IT systems sales were at approximately \$549 million at the end of 2021 (Kenya National Innovation Agency- KENIA, 2022). Kenya has positioned itself in the digital world's future, which has led to an improvement in IT. The IT sector has grown rapidly in Kenya, and global businesses are becoming aware of how Kenya is outsourcing potential. This awareness has benefited the IT services Providers in Kenya. According to KENIA (2022) there are 45 best IT provider companies in Kenya. The consulting rates in most firms have become highly competitive. Apart from consulting, IT firms in Kenya perform Artificial Intelligence (AI), technology reality, penetration testing, software development, website development, User Experience (UX) and animation and motion design. The competition is high, and, these firms are utilizing their resources to be better than their rivals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Technology has become inescapable in everyday life as IT service firms advance in many sectors like IT software, cleantech, and artificial intelligence (AI) among others (Kountios,

Konstantinidis & Antoniadis, 2023). CA (2022) states that Kenya's ICT sector was valued at \$717 million at the end of the year 2019, where computer hardware accounted for 60% of the total ICT investments and the balance was from other ICT services. The IT services market has been on an upward trajectory as more small and medium-size businesses are entering the online space via creative company websites. A report from CA (2022) puts the number of total registered domain names at 62,215 with “. co.ke” holding the highest share of 92.83%. During year 2020, 250,000 ICT jobs were created boosting the Kenyan economy (KENIA, 2022). However, the IT service firms have been faced with the challenges of coping with economic pressures, uncertainty in IT trends, ever-increasing pace of technology change, transforming to meet regulatory requirements and acquiring and retaining talent which affects their performance (World Economic Forum, 2022).

Word Bank (2022) report showed that the IT sector in Kenya has outperformed other sectors and expanded to over 23% annually in the last decade. Agaba and Njagi (2022) studied the influence of organization capabilities on the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. Bhasho (2021) conducted a study on business intelligence capability, organizational capability, complementary resources and performance of firms listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange. Mbithe (2021) focused on the effect of organizational capabilities on the perceived performance of microfinance institutions in Kenya. Okwemba (2019) did research on the influence of organizational capabilities on non-financial performance of manufacturing firms in Kenya. Omache (2020) studied the relationship between organization capability and performance of AirKenya Express Limited, Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Despite the fact that the IT sector is an important sector in Kenya's economy, the firms in the IT sector face challenges in gaining a competitive edge over their rivals as well as inadequate skills and lack of investment in both research and development. From the foregoing, several studies had been done on different capabilities affecting competitive advantage but little attention was given to the IT service firms in Kenya hence the contextual gap. By adopting different designs and sampling approaches, the studies presented a methodological gap. As such, the existing studies further reveal conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps that ought to be filled. In addition, despite the many feasible benefits of organizational capabilities in the competitiveness of IT firms, the extent to which IT has been applied to carve a niche in the IT industry still remained unclear. It was against this backdrop that the current study sought to establish the influence of organizational capabilities on competitive advantage of IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of organizational capability on the competitive advantage of IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of financial capability on competitive advantage of IT service companies in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ii. To assess the influence of human resource capability on the competitive advantage of IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

- iii. To explore the influence of technological capability on competitive advantage in IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.
- iv. To evaluate the influence of marketing capability on competitive advantage in IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.
- v. To investigate the influence of process capability on competitive advantage in IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### **Resource-Based Theory**

The resource-based theory was originally proposed by Penrose (1959) and later developed and refined by Jay B. Barney (1991) and Penrose (2009) among other scholars. Resource-based theory suggests that resources that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable best position a firm for long-term success. These strategic resources can provide the foundation to develop firm capabilities that can lead to superior performance over time. The RBV theory examines the impact of organization resources and capabilities on competitive advantage that leads to overall organizational performance. According to Priem and Butler (2001) the resources and capabilities that are not conditioned into sustaining activities and business processes will not have positive impact on an organizational performance. According to Drago et. al., (2023), a strategic resource is always an asset for any organization if it is scarce, valuable, cannot be substituted, and hard to imitate. Resources are valuable cause they help firms create and develop strategies that capitalize on opportunities and avoid risks.

Competitors find it hard to duplicate resources. Some organizations' resources are protected by legal means such as trademarks or patents and copyrights; therefore, they are hard to replicate. Others are hard to copy because they represent a specific company's unique aspect. The theory also stresses that a resource can be build or created in a way that will be hard to copy, which will lead to a competitive advantage for the firm. According to Currie (2009), the theory explains the tangible resources and intangible ones. One can see the tangible ones while the intangible ones are hard to see. The intangible ones are the ones that meet the criteria of strategic resources. Resource Based theory also touches on capabilities and stresses them as a critical concept. Capabilities arise over time, and the term refers to what the organization can do. Gupta et al., (2011) pointed that capabilities are vital cause they represent how organizations seize the potential value that resources do offer. Customers won't spend on a firm because of their resources, but because of the capabilities that have managed and exploited the organization's resources which will provide value for customers (Borg & Gall, 2009).

Other firms will develop dynamic capability, which is a unique capability that leads to developing new capabilities. As per Murray (2000), firms with a dynamic capability will help it keep up with the changes in the environment. This unique capability will enable it to have a competitive advantage over its competitors. The Information Technology Service companies have wide range of resources such a Human resources, branches, Technological equipment's and other range of products. Evans (2003) argued that these resources play a major role in the performance of the firm and are very crucial when a firm needs to gain competitive advantage.

This theory relates to the financial capability in this study, a resource-based logic proposes that if a firm possesses valuable resources that few other firms have, and if these other firms find it too costly or difficult to imitate these resources, then the firm controlling these resources likely can generate competitive advantage.

### **Human Capital Theory**

The human capital theory as conceptualized by Schultz (1961) and later advanced by Becker (1964) states human capital can be interchangeable but cannot be transferred as the other production aspects (Bae & Patterson, 2013). Thus, it is a production means where additional investments lead to higher output and a business entity can develop its employees through particular skills, knowledge and experience that are essential for an organizations growth and add value to its employees (Amodu et al., 2017). The theory explains how training and education helps to improve labor productivity by increasing the cognitive levels of economically useful human skills, which is a creation of inmate skills and investment in employees (Chidozie, 2016). The levels of investment in education and training are explained concerning their expected returns from investments. Education and training will have both direct and foregone earnings during this period. This theory also explains patterns of individual lifetime earnings.

The salaries start low when they are young and increase as they age. (Ghez & Becker, 1975). The wages will tend to lower as someone gets close to retiring. Younger people are more likely to invest in human capital compared to older ones. This choice is because they have a longer working life, and therefore, they can benefit from this kind of investment and their forgone earnings. Their earnings then increase as they age, and so is their skills. As a worker grows older, so is their productivity level, which leads to low earning growth. As workers age, they get to the end of their working life, and their skills may depreciate due to the aging process. The depreciation leads to low earnings near the age of retirement (Ehrenberg & Smith 1991). The theory postulates that individuals with a greater human capital perform better when undertaking tasks, and human capital entails the skills and knowledge stock that individuals have (Tessema, 2014).

The theory captures the necessity of investing in human capital as a prerequisite for operational knowledge and skills acquisition that are essential for employee commitment and work performance (Bae & Patterson, 2013). However, the theory is criticized that it neglects that individuals can acquire skills and knowledge through their own experience (Onwumelu & Ikechukwu, 2018). The other limitation of HCT is that it assumes that education increases workplace productivity, leading to greater individual salaries and gives slight insight to the processes through which training and education lead to higher wages (Chidozie, 2016). For this study, the theory supports that investing in human capital development increases employees' value, agility and skills, which increases employee performance and commitment in the organization. Thus, for an organization to achieve strategic capability, it must prepare its employees to be smarter, more flexible and knowledgeable than its competitors. This theory relates to the Human Resource Capability in this study as it spells out both individuals' decision to invest in human capital.

### **Technology Acceptance Theory**

Technology Acceptance Theory was proposed by Davis (1989), being an adaptation of the model Theory of reasoned Action (TRA). However, according to Davis (1989), for being so universal, the TRA was modified specifically, to create models of acceptance in information technology, as in the specific case of TAM. The intention of the development of the model TAM resulted from an IBM Canada contract with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in the 80s to evaluate the market potential to new products of the brand and to make it possible an explanation of the determinants of computers use (Davis; Bagozzi; Warshaw, 1989). Davis (1989) proposed the TAM to focus on the reason the users accept or reject the information technology (IT) and how to improve the acceptance, offering, this way, a support to foresee and explain the acceptance. The theory states that there are two factors that determine whether a computer system will be accepted by its potential users: perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use. Davis (1989) conducted a survey of 112 users at Canada IBM and in 40 MBA students at Boston University.

The validation of the TAM model was based in the acceptance of a software text editor. Davis (1989) on this sample found out that the perceived use had the higher impact in the behavior than the perceived facility. The TAM has the advantage of being specific to IT and has a strong theoretical base, besides the wide empirical support. The model TAM was designed to comprehend the causal relation between external variables of user's acceptance and the real use of computer, trying to understand the behavior of this user through the utility knowledge and use facility perceived by him (Davis, 1989). For Davis (1989) the people tend to use or not certain technology with the objective to improve his performance at work- perceived use. However, even if this person understands that determined technology is useful, its use may be damaged if it is too complicated, in a way that the effort is not worthwhile the use- perceived facility. This way, the TAM is based basically in two constructs: the perceived utility and perceived facility, seeing that both measured completely the effects of external variables, such as features systems, development process, and training in the use intention (Davis 1989).

The intention of this model is to represent the impact of external factors related to information system, under those internals of individual, as the attitudes and use intentions (Lee et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Davis (1989) defines the two main determinants of TAM on the following way: Perceived utility- degree in which a person believes that the use of particular system may improve his performance. Facility of perceived use- degree in which a person believes that the use of an information system will be free of effort. The theory was relevant to this study since it explained the concept of technology acceptance. Based on the theory, individuals will use a determined technology if they believe that this use will provide positive results, focusing in the perceived ease of use and in the perceived usefulness. The Variable under study related to this theory is the technological capability.

### **Marketing Mix Theory**

This theory was proposed by Borden N (1949). Its focus is to translate marketing values efforts into direct and demonstrable connections with occurrences in ROI, sales market and market shares. As per Basuki (2018) marketing mix model denotes a business framework which

centers around price, place, promotion and product which are generally abbreviated as 4Ps. The marketing mix model provides marketing tools which are applied by firms in the pursuit of their set marketing goals. Product according to the model defines the products and services that a firm offers comprising of physical characteristics, the purpose of the products, the differentiating factor from competitors as well as the benefits derived from the products. According to the model, a well-balanced price paves way for a firm to stand competitively in the market while at the same time increasing its profit levels (Basuki, 2018). The pricing aspect proves to be tricky to firms as it is based on the calculations of the value offered versus the cost of units of production such as time, materials and overhead costs. For a realization of a better competitive position in the market, a firm needs to contemplate on what the firm's market is able and willing to pay and whether the product been offered is consistent with the charges levied.

The model advocates for fair pricing relative to the cost of production and benefits accrued from the product or service. The place aspect of the model outlines the locations where a firm sells its products or services and the means of delivering the services or products to its customers (Wiratama, Armini & Pradanie, 2020). According to Blut, Teller and Floh (2018) the model stipulates that a firm's selling place should be in a way that customers bear the information on where and how they can access the products or services. For realization of distinctive competitive place in the market, a firm needs to go an extra mile beyond the basic aspects of the place to more exhaustive aspects such as providing services or product specifics, considering the broader market, and the cost implications resulting from the chosen place ((Perreault & McCarthy, 2000).

The promotional aspect of the model defines the methods that a firm applies to communicate the benefits and features of products or services a firm is offering to target and prevailing customers. This aspect combines the all information gathered from the market such knowing the product, the target market, the pricing aspect, to the place of selling. The best approach for realizing a stand out promotion position in the market is to know and understand where the market of firm's product and services can be located, crafting an enticing promotional message to entice the target market, and formulating the best method of conveying the message. The model specifically informs the study on the influence of marketing capability on the competitive advantage of IT services in Kenya.

### **Processual Theory of Strategy**

The Processual Theory of Strategy developed as an approach to strategic management during the 1970s. It emerged gradually through the contributions of various scholars, notably Henry Mintzberg, Andrew Pettigrew, and James Quinn, who emphasized the practical, day-to-day processes involved in strategy formation (Meng & Yang, 2023). Their collective work highlighted the dynamic nature of strategy rather than viewing it merely as a static prescription. In 1980, James Quinn introduced the concept of "logical incrementalism," and suggested that organizations can effectively navigate complex environments by taking small, manageable steps while continuously learning from outcomes and adjusting their strategies accordingly. In 1985, Henry Mintzberg and James Waters further advanced the theory by exploring the

continuum that exists between intended (planned) and realized (emergent) strategies reiterating that effective strategies often evolve through unexpected pathways, shaped by real-world experiences rather than merely following a fixed plan (Haievskiy et al., 2023).

Pedroletti and Ciabusch (2024) indicated that the theory emphasizes that strategy is not a static, long-term plan but rather a continuous pattern of behavior shaped by the organizational culture, ongoing communication, and adaptation to change. This perspective implies that rather than adhering to a linear, predictable sequence, organizations must embrace the unpredictable nature of their environments, allowing their strategies to evolve organically over time. According to Paula, David, and Julia (2022), the processual theory posits that strategy emerges organically through the incremental adjustments and learning experiences that occur in the context of ongoing organizational activities. The theory adopts a contextualist view, employing a multi-disciplinary approach that draws insights from business history and organizational theory. This allows for a comprehensive examination of the process of change within a nuanced historical and organizational framework (Chia & Holt, 2023).

According to Bala Chakravarthy and Peter Lorange (2018) the primary criticism of the theory is that if strategy is a messy, bottom-up process driven by individual daily decisions, the organization lacks a clear, overarching, and coherent direction. Mahapatra et al., (2020) argued that the processual approach is sometimes seen as being driven purely by empirical data and, as a result, not theoretical enough to provide robust, generalizable frameworks for practice. The Processual Theory of Strategy is highly applicable in this study on organizational capability and performance of IT service firms because the success of these firms heavily depends on their adaptability, continuous learning, and human-centric processes rather than rigid, top-down planning (Ostadi et al., 2021). The processual theory emphasizes incremental adjustments and learning from experience making it better suited to this context. Thus, the theory was instrumental in investigating the influence of process capability on competitive advantage in IT service companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

### Conceptual Framework

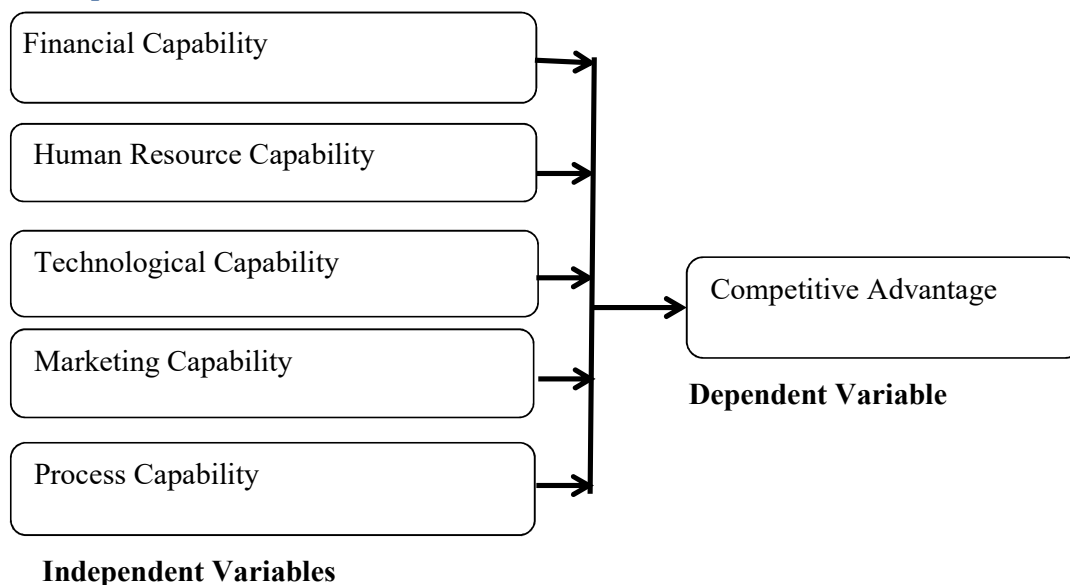


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the research design adopted for the study was descriptive research design under quantitative research methods. The advantage of using descriptive research is that it can make use of various data and also incorporate human experience as well. It provides the researchers with the chance to carefully observe at the study in a wider aspect and a bigger overview unlike other forms of study. Descriptive research has the capability to accurately identify and analyze the relationship between the variables under investigation.

### Target Population

The target population was the IT service firm in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The units of analysis included the 45 top information technology companies registered with the Kenya National Innovation Agency. The units of observation were the 444 top and middle management staff working in the IT service firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

### Sampling Population

The sample frame consisted of 444 top and middle management staffs working in the 45 IT service firms. This sampling frame allowed the study to be conducted on the individuals from the top IT service firms Nairobi City County so that the study's outcome would help derive conclusions that would apply to the entire target population. The sampling frame in the study was the list of the 45 IT service companies based in Nairobi City County. This research used a mixture of sampling techniques. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques was employed in this study. The study purposively selected all the top 45 IT firms operating in the County.

The purposive sampling technique befitted this study as the entire population consisted of only 45 IT service firms in Nairobi City County. In addition, the study employed Yamane's formula to determine the sample size as well as simple and stratified sampling techniques to select the samples in the study population.

Resulting from Yamane's formula, the study sampled 210 respondents to contribute in the study. The sample population of 210 was distributed proportionately within the specific top and middle level management levels working in the IT service firms in Nairobi City County. As such, 33.3% (70) of the 210 respondents were drawn from the top management and 66.7% (140) of them were selected from the middle level management working in the IT service firms. From every category, simple random sampling procedure was used where at least one top or middle management staff working in each of the IT service firms in Nairobi City County was picked to take part in the study until the specified sample of 210 is achieved.

### **Data Collection**

Primary data was gathered directly from respondents and for this study the research used a questionnaire. The questionnaires consisted of open ended and close ended questions. With utmost precision, the research instruments were methodically structured to align with the study's noble objectives. Prior to the main study, pilot testing was conducted on 10% of the sample size. As such, 21 management staff working in other IT service firms in Nairobi County were involved. This pilot population was selected from other IT service firms that were not included in the main study. During pilot testing, the clarity, validity and reliability of the research instruments were assessed. This process involved checking whether the questions are clear and revoking any positive or negative response. It also helped to find out whether the questions measure what was expected. The research instrument (questionnaire) was administered to the respondents through the face-to-face, e-mails and online survey techniques.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

Through the utilization of explanatory statistics with the support of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the quantitative data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed. The analysis was in two stages; the first is descriptive statistics which quantitatively describes or summarizes features from a collection of information. Central tendency and variability measures were used in the description of values in distributions. Frequencies, percentile, mean, and standard deviation measures were applied. Secondly, inferential statistics was used to test the null hypothesis. The outcomes were presented through percentages, means, and frequencies, artfully exhibited in frequency tables. The regression equation employed was

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby

Y = Competitive advantage (dependent variable)

$\beta_0$  = constant or intercept which is the value of the dependent variable when all the independent variables are zero

X<sub>1</sub> = Financial Capability

X<sub>2</sub> = Human Resource Capability

X<sub>3</sub> = Technological Capability

X<sub>4</sub> = Marketing Capability

$X_5$  = Process Capability

$\varepsilon$  = error term

$\beta_1$   $\beta_2$   $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are the regression equation coefficients for each of the variables discussed.

## **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Descriptive Analysis**

The research unveiled that the financial capability of the IT service firms is rated to be good and only a small proportion of the IT service firms had a poor financial capability. The study found that financial capability influences the competitive advantage of IT service firms in Kenya to a moderate degree. There was unanimous agreement that the organizations have always had allocations for all types of things that require to be purchased in its business, the firms take calculated risks and ensures they don't fall behind payments, the Firms always prepare forecast of all monies they hope to get and how to use them, the firms can comfortably service its debt, the firms are in control of their debt through financial planning and budgeting, these firms always prepare list of expected activities and convert them into money values, the firms have excellent links with financiers and financial resources are utilized efficiently to generate extra cash for future investments.

The study found that the IT service firms had a fair rating of their human resource capability and a few of them had a very good rating on their human resource capability. The study established that human resource capability influences the competitive advantage of the IT service firms to a great extent. From the study, commitment of organizational resources is critical in the increment of the organizational results, the current reward system is the key motivating factor for the employees, employee engagement strategy has enabled the employees to continue working for the firms, sufficient human resources contribute to smooth running of the organization, human resource capabilities facilitate strategic plan implementation in the Firms, inspiration and motivation have led to employees showing extra work effort beyond what is expected in the firms, human resource capabilities enable achievement of goals and objectives in the Firms, a good human resource management structure is a critical factor in the success of the IT service Firms and that happy employees in the firms have displayed considerate behaviors and assist customers better.

The study found that most IT service firms received a fair rating on their technological capability and only a small portion of the firms had bad technological capability rating. Furthermore, it was noted that technological capability affects the competitive advantage of the IT service firms to a moderate extent. Moreover, the IT service Firms have invested heavily on technological innovations for cost efficiencies in doing business, acquisition of technology is the central process of improving competitiveness in the organizations, redesigning new products has cut costs and increased profits in the organizations, creating valuable products and services has enhanced customer relationship, developing new products has increased the firm's revenue streams and these Firm harness the power of technological innovations to give customers better services.

From the results, most of the IT service firms had a fair rating of their marketing capability and a few of them had a very good rating of the same. The study found that marketing capabilities have a moderate impact on the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. The results affirmed that marketing capability has played a major role in increasing market share and sales volumes realized in the IT service firms, these firms have adopted integrated marketing strategy which has resulted to competitiveness, product differentiation has made the firm's product superior to alternatives in the market, promotion pricing has increased revenue and build customer loyalty, the organizations are able to identify their different customers' needs and present the customers with the product that appeal to their interest, promotions have increased short term sales and made product marketing easy, marketing capability innovation affects success of the firms' marketing orientation and that product differentiation has helped these organizations stand out.

The study found that process capability is crucial for a manufacturer's success, with key results including the ability to predict and improve quality, estimate non-conformance rates, and provide evidence to customers of consistent production. In addition, process capability is important for the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. From the study, process capability analysis is a powerful tool for identifying areas for improvement, whether by optimizing equipment, revising specifications, or implementing quality control measures. The process capability has played a very great role in increasing market share in the IT service firms. The procedure consistently yields results that either match or surpass client specifications improving customer satisfaction in these organizations and the advanced processes provide a framework on which key products and services are developed to meet customer and market trends.

### **Inferential Analysis**

Correlation analysis was conducted to identify the existence or otherwise of relationship between organizational capability aspects and competitive advantage of IT service firms. From the study, financial capability bears a positive significant correlation with competitive advantage of IT service firms operating in Nairobi County. This is shown by a correlation value of 0.548 and significant value of 0.000. The results bear the implications that enhancing financial capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT service firms. The results are consistent with Yousaf, Tanveer, Panait and Cretu (2022) who found that firms' financing abilities offer a significant advantage and that firms with the ability to offer shares to existing shareholders, issue non-convertible and convertible bonds and access to bank financing are sustainable in long-run.

The results also show that human resource capability bears a positive significant correlation with competitive advantage of IT service firms operating in Nairobi County. This is shown by a correlation value of 0.365 and significant value of 0.006. The results bear the implications that enhancing human resource capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the firms. The results tallies with Mustafa and Boyd (2022) who noted that human resource

capabilities like training and development, skills, innovation with the help of adoption of latest technology improve firms’ competitive advantage.

The results additionally show that technological capability bears a positive significant correlation with competitive advantage of IT service firms operating in Nairobi County. This is shown by a correlation value of 0.413 and significant value of 0.001. The results bear the implications that enhancing technological capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT firms. The results are consistent with Khaddama (2021) who highlighted that technology transfer, open innovation, and rapidly responding to environmental changes is vital to the performance favorable outcomes in the firms’ competitive advantage.

The results further show that marketing capability bears a positive and significant correlation with competitive advantage of IT service firms operating in Nairobi County. This is shown by a correlation value of 0.109 and significant value of 0.045. The results bear the implications that enhancing marketing capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT firms to significant levels. The results are in tandem with Raja (2020) who established that marketing capability help explain firm competitiveness by highlighting and defining the approaches and methods by which a firm builds and uses its resources to offer its customer better value.

Finally, the study showed that process capability bears a positive significant correlation with competitive advantage of IT service firms operating in Nairobi County. This is shown by a correlation value of 0.428 and significant value of 0.031. The results bear the implications that enhancing process capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT service firms. The results are consistent with Dong *et al.*, (2021) who found that process capability positively impacts a business by improving product quality, reducing variability, and enhancing efficiency

**Table 4.1: Correlation Analysis**

<b>Variable</b>		<b>Financial capability</b>	<b>Human resource capability</b>	<b>Technological capability</b>	<b>Marketing capability</b>	<b>Process capability</b>	<b>Competitive advantage</b>
Financial capability	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
Human resource capability	Pearson Correlation	0.172	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.081					
Technological capability	Pearson Correlation	0.119	0.212*	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.096	0.134				

Marketing capability	Pearson Correlation	0.104	0.184	0.341**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.113	0.088	0.079			
Process capability	Pearson Correlation	0.128	0.174	0.425**	0.392	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.101	0.072	0.062	0.064		
Competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.548**	.365*	.413**	.109**	0.428	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0.006	0.001	0.045	0.031	
	N	164	164	164	164	164	164

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

From the study, the *R* value was 0.947, the R-Square was 0.8974 and the adjusted R-Square was 0.768. The R-Square value of 0.8974 implies that the independent variables (organizational capability) would contribute to 89.74% of the dependent variables (competitive advantage) when the external factors are not eliminated from the model. In addition, the adjusted *R-square* of 0.768 indicated that when the external effects are eliminated, the independent variables would provide a 76.8% of the prediction of the dependent variable. The values of the Adjusted *R-Squared* showed that after the model is adjusted for inefficiencies the independent variables would explain 76.8 percent of competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi County. From these statistics point that there was a strong correlation between the independent and dependent variables.

**Table 2: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.850	0.723	0.693	0.0958

The research also involved an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the statistical significance of the model connecting independent variables to the dependent variable. As per Table 4.33, the F value estimated at a 5 percent significance level was 3.228, with a significance value of 0.010, which was less than the crucial value produced from a 2-tailed test at the same significance level. This model's computed F was higher than the F critical (at 5 158, F critical= 2.44). This was an indication of the model's overall importance. As a result, the study established that there was a substantial link between organizational capability and competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi County. The importance of the regression model, which was determined to be statistically significant, was demonstrated by these findings. Any fluctuation in the variables was negligible, and any adjustment would not result in a substantial difference. The model was therefore relied upon to explain the effect of financial capability,

human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability on competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi County.

**Table 4.3: ANOVA (Model Significance)**

	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	2.013	5	0.4025	3.228	.010(a)
Residual	1.452	158	0.00919		
Total	3.465	163			

Dependent Variable: Competitive advantage

Predictors: (Constant), financial capability, human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability

The study incorporated the regression coefficients to demonstrate how changes in the independent variable can impact the variation observed in the dependent variable. The regression model was

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$$

The optimal model of the study became-

$$Y=1.378 +0.756X_1+ 0.964X_2+0.853X_3+0.794 X_4+0.883 X_5$$

Substituting the dummy variables with the study variables culminates to the following equation:

$$\text{Competitive advantage of IT service firms} = 1.378 + 0.756 \text{ Financial capability} + 0.964 \text{ Human resource capability} + 0.853 \text{ Technological capability} + 0.794 \text{ Marketing capability} + 0.883 \text{ Process capability}$$

The model indicates that, holding the predictor variables constant, the competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi County would be 1.378. The results from the regression analysis revealed that there were beta coefficients of 0.756, 0.964, 0.853, 0.794 and 0.883 for financial capability, human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability respectively. The corresponding t and p values for financial capability (t=2.0377 p=0.034), human resource capability (t=2.1048 p=0.018), technological capability (t= 2.0654 p=0.024), marketing capability (t= 2.0464; p= 0.029) and process capability (t=2.1749, p=0.021) which are statistically significant, because p values were less than 0.05.

From the results it can be concluded that a one unit increase in the studied organizational capability aspects the competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi County improved as a result. This demonstrates that each organizational capability aspect has a positive and significant effect on the competitive advantage of IT service firms in Nairobi. These results conform with those of Supriharyanti and Badri (2022); Mladenova (2022) who demonstrated that financial capability, human resource capability, technological capability, marketing capability and process capability enhance investment in IT service firms with a view to obtain capital appreciation mainly through equity transfer after the IT service firms become relatively efficient in their operations hence contributing significantly to the competitive advantage of IT firms.

**Table 4.4: Model Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.378	0.623		2.2119	0.012
Financial capability	0.756	0.371	0.274	2.0377	0.034
Human resource capability	0.964	0.458	0.396	2.1048	0.018
Technological capability	0.853	0.413	0.361	2.0654	0.024
Marketing capability	0.794	0.388	0.348	2.0464	0.029
Process capability	0.883	0.406	0.359	2.1749	0.021

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The study concludes that IT service firms had a relatively good financial capability to cope with the operating competitive environment. From the results, positive financial constructs ratings positively impact the financial capability of firms. This means that financial capability has a great influence on the competitive advantage of IT service firms. The study further deduces that maintaining adequate cash balance and maintaining sound assets balance, are vital to better performance of the institutions. As such, financial capability enables the organization to understand the financing options. From these insights, links with financial capabilities will ensure that business organizations are aware of what the best financing options are and their consequences as well as the opportunities of each option. Enhancing financial capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT service firms.

The study concludes that IT service firms have invested in human resource capability to enable them realize competitiveness in their operations. From the study, human resource capability is positively related to employee behavior based on shared knowledge (unique) that develops through time. The study further deduces that there has been a great level of influence of human resource capability on the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. As such, human resource capability is valuable, scarce, incomparable, and difficult to imitate, making it critical for creating creative advantage. Accordingly, Human resource capability leads to efficient internal processes and smooth organizational operations by ensuring low turnover, effective recruitment, and timely deployment of workers. Further, human resource capabilities like training and development, skills, innovation with the help of adoption of latest technology can enhance the organizational performance. Enhancing human resource capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the firms.

The study concludes that technological capability culminated to the adoption of modern communication, the enhancement of information management systems, and improved decision

management systems which contribute to the positive rating of technological capability in the IT service firms. It is an undeniable fact that technological capability is essential for the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. The discerning discoveries reveal an irrefutable verity that technological capability has allowed firms to create valuable products and services that enhance their performance and relationship with customers. Technological innovations provide a framework on which to develop key elements of our products and services, these Firms invest in technological innovations for innovativeness and creativity, acquisition of technology and knowledge has increased the market share and that innovation of products in the firm has attracted new customers. IT capability plays an important role as an enabler of organizational development. Through adoption of ICT capabilities and use of ICT technological investments, public organizations derive many opportunities which facilitate increment in the ability to deliver quality services, generate incomes, gather learning benefits, enhance development and improve basic human development. Enhancing technological capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT firms.

The study deduces that marketing capability in the firms is developed which facilitates their performance on their basic marketing activities to enable them realize competitiveness in their operations. The study concludes that marketing capability enables organizations to satisfy their customers' needs and build strong relations with suppliers, distributors, and other customers thus improving the overall business performance. According to the study, marketing capabilities have a significant impact on the competitive advantage of the IT service firms. As such, dynamic marketing capabilities have significant impacts on firm performance. The study astutely deduces dynamic marketing capabilities are critical in the reinforcing and reconfiguration of operational marketing capabilities and this can lead to enhanced organizational performance. Hence, it can be unequivocally posited that that promotional support and product, pricing and promotional support, differentiation advantage, and low-cost advantage have great impacts on performance of firms. Enhancing marketing capability results to enhanced competitive advantage of the IT firms to significant levels.

The study concludes that process capability is crucial for a manufacturer's success, highlighting several key results that underscore its significance. Among these are the ability to predict and enhance product quality, estimate non-conformance rates accurately, and furnish customers with solid evidence of consistent and reliable production practices. Furthermore, process capability emerges as an essential factor for gaining a competitive advantage, particularly within IT service firms. The findings indicate that process capability analysis serves as a powerful tool for identifying specific areas that require improvement. This can be achieved through optimizing equipment usage, revising existing specifications, or implementing effective quality control measures. Moreover, process capability has played an invaluable role in expanding market share for IT service firms. The methodologies applied within this analysis routinely yield results that not only meet but often exceed client specifications, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction across these organizations. It is evident that the advanced processes established through rigorous analysis provide a robust framework upon which key products and services are developed, enabling companies to respond effectively to evolving customer needs and market trends.

## **Recommendations**

From the study findings and conclusions, financial capability was found to have a great influence on competitive advantage of IT service firms in Kenya. As such, the study recommends enhancing the levels of financial capability towards efficient utilization of financial resources to enhance service delivery and hence competitive advantage. This can be achieved through resource dedication practices such as allocating sufficient financial resources in the financial planning and budgeting process, sufficiently managing the allocated resources, preparing list of expected activities and converting them into money values, taking into consideration that firm capacity is one of the most important ingredient to in the financial capability success, ensuring that the available financial capability is relevant for implementing changes and setting up appropriate frameworks for competitive gains.

The study also recommends that all the employees working in the IT service firms and across the different cadres should be equipped with continuous training, coaching and mentoring in order to enhance their skills, competency and quality professional development which will in turn lead to more professionalism, professional expertise in their work and build the necessary capabilities to carry out the IT service firms' activities. In addition, the IT service firms need to re-orient their employees to align their values with those of the organizations. This can be achieved through training, team building, and harmonization of organizational policies. This would not only make the employees feel proud about themselves and their organizations but it would also boost their morale and productivity.

The study revealed that the IT service firms have human capability development systems that encourage creativity among staff. This study therefore recommends that the management should support human capability to enable improve the organizations' productivity, improve efficiency in service delivery, create new partnerships and relationships, improve customer satisfaction, enable problem solving and provide creative insight that allow the management to look at things from a different perspective. In addition, the firms should develop efficient human capability systems to guide them in making decisions that are consistent with their philosophies and stated objectives. The study suggests that independent commissions employ dynamic ICT management capability models that take into account transformative public organizations and emerging technological capabilities. In addition, in order to achieve the desired performance targets, the IT service firms in Kenya ought to enhance the improvement of ICT management capabilities by adapting cutting-edge communication, enhancing information management systems, and enhancing decision management systems. This will help cut down on service time, improve service quality, and increase service effectiveness.

The research findings unveiled that marketing capability enables organizations to satisfy their customers' needs and build strong relations with suppliers, distributors, and other customers thus improving the overall business performance. As such, this study recommends that IT service firms should use marketing positioning to attract customers in engaging with the services and products. This study recommends that pricing and promotion strategies should be used by IT service firms in accessing new markets as well as customers to enhance their

competitiveness. In addition, the study recommends that IT service firms should deploy product differentiation, integrated marketing strategy, promotion pricing, and diversification strategies with the aim of spreading their services in the long-term.

The study recommends the IT service firms to advance process capabilities that emphasizes the importance of specific prerequisites, correct index usage, and a commitment to continuous improvement instead of depending solely on a single metric. This multifaceted perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of performance and quality. Additionally, process capability should be viewed as a continual endeavor rather than a one-time assessment. It ought to be woven into the fabric of ongoing quality management initiatives, such as Six Sigma in the IT service firms. By integrating this analysis into daily operations, organizations can effectively identify opportunities for improvement and continuously monitor the effectiveness of changes over time, ensuring that processes remain efficient and aligned with business objectives. This ongoing evaluation not only fosters a culture of quality but also enables teams to adapt to evolving challenges and customer demands, ultimately leading to sustained success..

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