STRATEGIC AGILITY AND SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF LICENSED TELEVISION STATIONS IN KENYA: THE MODERATING ROLE OF DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of disruptive innovation on the association between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage of licensed television stations in Kenya. A comprehensive scrutiny of literature revealed that the effect of disruptive innovation on the nexus between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage had not been been empirically tested within the context of licensed television stations in Kenya. The study was anchored on the positivist philosophy and adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design. 210 television stations that were in operation at the time of the study were surveyed. Research hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM), and the findings confirmed that disruptive innovation moderated the relationship between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage of licensed television stations in Kenya. While strategic agility had a significant and direct positive influence on sustainable competitive advantage, disruptive innovation enhanced that relationship. The results of this study contribute to literature on strategic agility and some of the contingency conditions necessary for sustainable competitive advantage. The findings have also enhanced the understanding of the competitive forces at play within the television sub sector of the media industry in Kenya. It is recommended that licensed television stations in Kenya pay keen attention to disruptive technologies and strategies such as entry into new markets, acquisition/partnerships with digital start-ups, focusing on underserved or overshot market segments, and experimentation with new business models.

Keywords: Strategic Agility, Disruptive Innovation, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Licensed Television Stations, Kenya, Structural Equation Modelling.

I. Introduction

Organisations around the world are experiencing challenges aligning the disruptive forces in the market with their strategies and sustainable competitive advantage or other organisational outcomes. Increasingly dynamic market contexts and ever evolving consumer behaviour, driven by rapidly evolving technological innovations have made it both necessary and urgent for firms to explore new approaches to attain sustainable competitive advantage. Only firms that can swiftly reallocate resources, acquire or adopt new capabilities, design new strategies, find creative and adaptable ways to generate value for customers, will gain competitive advantage over the long term (Majumdar, Banerji, & Chakrabarti, 2018). A significant and positive linkage between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage suggests that agility in strategy could be a key source of durable competitiveness for firms (Clauss, Abebe, Tangpong, & Hock, 2019). An organisation achieves competitive advantage when it secures a superior market position by excelling in executing certain activities, or by possessing a valuable set of resources that competitors desire but cannot acquire easily (Azeem, Ahmed, Haider, & Sajjad, 2021; Passemard & Kleiner, 2000;

Strandskov, 2006). Sustainable competitive advantage as a business concept can be traced back to the early 1980s. Porter (1985) argued that a firm could outperform rivals by delivering the same benefits at a lower cost or by offering differentiated products and services, or doing both. This study examined sustainable competitive advantage from the perspective of the resource-based view and dynamic capabilities theories. It assessed the firm-specific resources of licensed television stations in Kenya, evaluating their rarity, inimitability, value, and non-substitutability. The study also examined the responsiveness of these firms to competitive forces and their ability to capture value for both their customers and themselves.

II. Literature Review

Strategic agility and its influence on organisational outcomes has been widely studied, with scholars emphasising its crucial role in enhancing competitiveness. Lungu (2020) explored the impact of strategic agility on firm performance within Romania's information technology sector and found a significant and positive relationship. The study also identified organisational transformation as a key predictor of strategic agility in information technology firms in Romania. Similarly, Khoshnood and Nematizadeh (2017) examined strategic agility from two dimensions; knowledge management and responsiveness. The scholars looked at strategic agility as an organisation's ability to swiftly detect and respond to environmental changes, either by exploiting opportunities presented by change or mitigating threats. Arokodare, Asikkhia, and Makinde (2019) found that organisational culture moderated the linkage of strategic agility with firm performance. The scholars argue that organisations must match their culture with strategy in order to succeed and remain competitive in uncertain business environments. Yildiz and Aykanat (2021) in a study of organizational innovation, strategic agility and firm performance, found that strategic agility positively influenced firm performance, with organisational innovation serving as a partial mediator in the relationship. Several other scholars (Clauss et al., 2021; Deshati, 2023; Reed, 2020) have explored the connection between strategic agility and competitiveness in organisations, confirming that strategic agility was a significant predictor of performance.

Ahammad, Basu, Munjal, Clegg, and Shoham (2021) found that in competitive markets in India, strategic agility improved the international performance of Indian firms. These studies all focused on industries other than media and did not account for disruptive innovation as a contingent factor that is likely to impact the nexus between strategic agility and business outcomes in organisations, especially in the media industry. Disruptive technologies are low-level innovations that appear in the market, often unnoticed because they are perceived or deemed to be inferior to existing ones. Over time, these technologies are refined and upgraded; eventually matching or even surpassing the capabilities of established ones (Terry, 2020). In adopting the term 'disruptive innovation' Christensen and Raynor (2003) sought to extend the concept of disruption beyond just technologies deemed to be disruptive but also include business models and strategic approaches (Kostoff, Boylan, & Simons, 2004). C. Christensen (1997) and Christensen (2020) suggest that while disruptive innovation approaches do not guarantee success in the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage for organisations, they increase the odds of such an advantage.

Xu, Liu, and Lin (2022) investigated the effect of government green development policies on disruptive innovation among 170 Chinese manufacturing firms. The study revealed that entrepreneurs in regions with green or sustainable development policies were more likely to engage in disruptive innovation. This effect was found to be more pronounced in larger companies. Omoge, Gala, and Horky (2022) suggested that with higher technology usage, there is a significant and positive impact on consumer buying behaviour through customer satisfaction. The study by Omoge et al. (2022) examined adoption of artificial intelligence; a disruptive innovation in customer relationship management in banks in Nigeria. The study revealed that technology usage has a direct and positive impact on consumer buying behaviour, quality of service, and customer satisfaction. Technology

downtime moderated the relationship between technology usage, consumer buying behaviour, and customer satisfaction within the Nigerian banking sector. However, the study found that service quality did not affect consumer buying behaviour.

Pang and Wang (2023) revealed that digital transformation in entrepreneurial companies significantly enhanced disruptive innovation. This relationship was mediated by inter-organisational collaboration. The scholars further established that dynamic capabilities moderated the indirect impact of digital transformation on disruptive innovation. Clauss et al. (2021) in a study on organisational ambidexterity and competitive advantage found that exploration orientation (experimentation) had a significant and positive impact on the competitive advantage of firms. Odhiambo and Mang'ana (2022) established that adopting innovative technologies within commercial banks in Kenya impacted competitive advantage in a positive and significant way. Brougham and Haar (2020) also studied disruptive technologies and their effect on employment in New Zealand, Australia and the USA. The study established that employee awareness of technology influenced how they viewed job insecurity; if they perceive technology as a threat to that their jobs, they were likely to exit. Owuor (2018) looked at the effect of disruptive innovation on performance within Kenya's insurance industry. The findings indicated that disruptive technologies impacted performance of insurance firms in Kenya in a significant and positive manner.

Studies on sustainable competitive advantage suggest that organisations can gain long-term leverage over competitors by building capabilities such as strategic agility, adaptability to environmental changes, and rapid responsiveness to threats and opportunities. Strategic agility is a business approach that not only emphasises swift action in dynamic market conditions but also focuses on strategic elements, allowing the organisation to anticipate change and respond accordingly (Mahyar & Ali, 2023). Strategic agility creates the capability to adapt and adjust promptly an organisation's strategy in response to changes in the market and disruptions occasioned by uncertainties in the operating environment (Weber & Tarba, 2014). This study assessed strategic agility from the perspective of the dynamic capabilities theory as expounded by Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997). The ability to sense changes in the operating environment seize the opportunities presented by change and transform the organisation are key components of the theory of dynamic capabilities in organisational transformation (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016).

While evidence suggests that strategic agility is a strong predictor of performance in organisations, several contingency factors affect the linkage between strategic agility and firm competitiveness. One such contingency factor is disruptive innovation. Several studies have shown that disruptive innovations and technologies have a positive and significant influence on the ability of firms to innovate and therefore attain sustainable competitive advantage (Omoge et al., 2022; Si, Zahra, Wu, & Jeng, 2020; Wan, Williamson, & Yin, 2015). The main challenge facing top business management teams is how to effectively discern potentially disruptive business models and technologies and therefore design appropriate responses in order to maintain competitiveness (Sganzerla, Seixas, & Conti, 2016). The theory of disruptive innovation (Christensen, 1997) was used to assess how television stations licensed to operate in Kenya were responding to disruptive forces in the market and how disruption affected the capacity of the firms to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through strategic agility. Sustainable competitive advantage was operationalized through a blend of the resource-based view (Barney, 1991) and dynamic capabilities theories. The study assessed the extent to which the resources of licensed television firms were valuable, rare, and inimitable, as well as the organization's ability to respond to change and capture value for both customers and itself (Rothaermel, 2020).

Most of the empirical investigations reviewed in this study did not account for strategic agility under contingency conditions that are likely to affect the state of play in a dynamic business environment. Consequently, this study sought to introduce another variable by exploring the moderating effect of disruptive innovation on the relationship between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage among licensed television

stations in Kenya. The study was concerned about the long-term impact of strategic agility and disruptive innovation on firm competitiveness, therefore tested two hypotheses:

H01. Strategic agility does not influence sustainable competitive advantage of licensed televisions stations in Kenya.

H02: disruptive innovation does not moderate the relationship between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage of licensed television stations in Kenya.

To conceptualise the research question, a diagram illustrating the relationship between strategic agility, disruptive innovation, and sustainable competitive advantage is presented in the following conceptual framework.

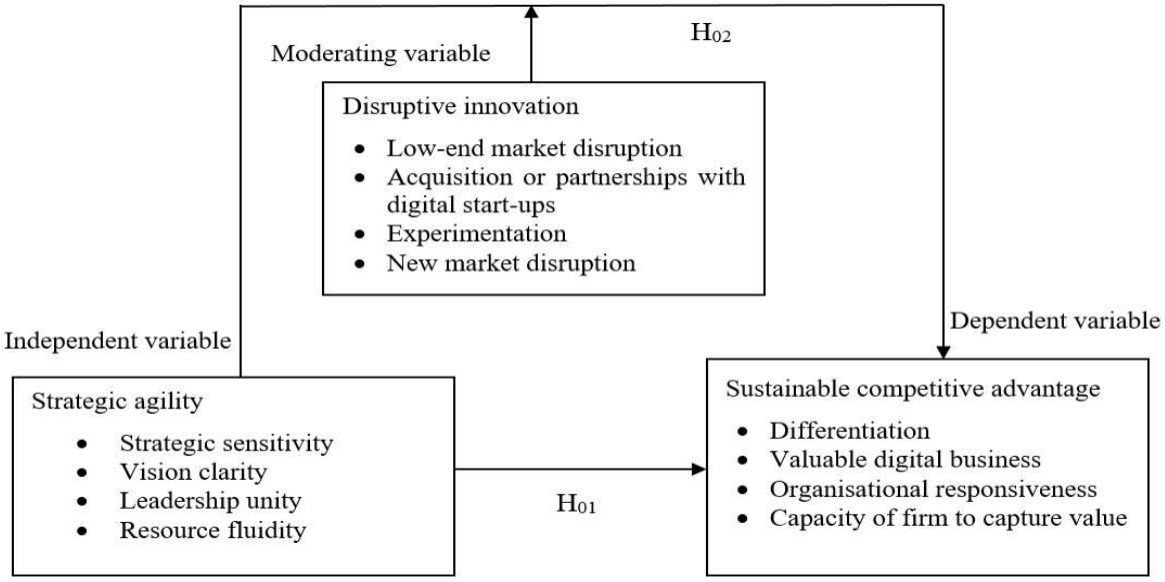

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Figure 1. illustrates the conceptualised relationship between strategic agility, disruptive innovation and sustainable competitive advantage.

III. Research Methodology

The study was guided by the positivist philosophy. Kalelioğlu (2020) states that positivism is grounded on the belief of being objective and stable. It is characterised by generalisability, objectivity, replicability, rigour and is testable for validity. This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive design. There were 245 licensed television stations in Kenya, 210 of which were in operation at the time of the study. A a semi- structured questionnaire was designed on a likert scale of 1 to 5 to collect data.

Measurement of Variables

The three variables were operationalised as follows; strategic agility was defined according to Doz and Kosonen (2008); Doz and Kosonen (2010) and Long (2000) specifically as follows; leadership unity, resource fluidity, vision clarity and strategic sensitivity. Thirty eight items/statements were constructed to measure this variable. Disruptive innovation was operationalised according to Christensen (1997); Christensen and Overdorf (2000); Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald (2015) and Anthony, Gilbert, and Johnson (2017) as low-end market disruption, acquisition/ partnerships with digital start- ups, experimentation and new market disruptions. Forty items/statements were constructed and used to measure disruptive innovation.

Sustainable competitive advantage was operationalised according to Barney (1991); Peteraf and Barney (2003) and Rothaermel (2020) as follows; valuable digital business, firm capacity to capture value, firm responsiveness, and differentiation. Moderation was tested using the stepwise SEM analysis method at 5 percent significance level, as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). The data was analysed using inferential statistics, with structural

equation modelling (SEM) used to test the hypotheses. SEM was selected due to its capability to analyse multiple latent variables and their relationships in a single run.

Study Findings and Discussions

The study findings and discussions are presented in three parts, that is, the preliminary results (reliability tests, validity tests and confirmatory factor analysis) hypothesis testing and discussion of the test results. The dependent variable (strategic agility) was operationalised using four indicators; vision clarity, strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity and leadership unity, as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Strategic agility.

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Strategic sensitivity	3.27	1.13	34.43
Vision clarity	3.51	0.95	27.17
Leadership unity	3.69	0.97	26.35
Resource fluidity	3.41	1.07	31.52
Strategic agility aggregate score	3.47	1.40	40.41

Respondents agreed with the statements on vision clarity and leadership unity (mean=3.51, and 3.69), but were neutral on strategic sensitivity and resource fluidity (mean=3.27, and 3.41 respectively). The indicators for disruptive innovation included low-end market disruptive, acquisition or partnerships with digital start-ups, experimentation, and new market disruption. The indicators were evaluated using mean and standard deviation as well as coefficient of variation, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Disruptive innovation.

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variation
Low-end market disruptive	2.93	1.16	39.50
Acquisition or partnerships with digital start-ups	2.81	1.15	41.02
Experimentation	2.88	1.21	41.87
New market disruption	3.13	1.08	34.41
Disruptive innovation aggregate score	2.94	1.42	48.25

The results above indicate that the respondents were neutral on the statements regarding disruptive innovation, that is; low-end market disruption, acquisition/partnerships with digital start-ups, experimentation, and new market disruption (mean=2.93, 2.81, 2.88, and 3.13 respectively). Sustainable competitive advantage was evaluated using four indicators as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Sustainable competitive advantage.

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variatio
Differentiation	3.73	0.98	26.29
Valuable digital business	3.58	1.13	31.64
Organisational responsiveness	3.58	1.01	28.30
Capacity of firm to capture value	3.44	1.08	31.43
Sustainable competitive advantage aggregate score	3.57	1.42	39.67

The results in Table 3 depict that respondents were generally in agreement with the statements on differentiation (mean=3.73), valuable digital business (mean=3.58), and organisational responsiveness (mean=3.58). However, regarding the statement on 'capacity of firm to capture value', respondents were neutral (mean=3.44).

Preliminary Results

Preliminary tests carried out included reliability, validity and confirmatory factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha test was used to measure reliability. Findings indicated that the questionnaire was reliable, that is, strategic agility had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83>0.7, disruptive innovation 0.860>0.7 and sustainable competitive advantage 0.87>0.7 – see Table 4.

Table 4. Reliability tests.

Variable	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	Number of items
Strategic agility	0.83	38
Disruptive innovation	0.86	40
Sustainable competitive advantage	0.87	50

In terms of validity, the questionnaire items were harmonised with the conceptual framework. Further, pilot tests were conducted using 30 randomly selected respondents and the results obtained were used to refine and modify the questionnaire before it was used for final data collection.

To evaluate the model measurements, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. This allowed the researcher to determine how effectively the observed variables explained the key factors. The adequacy of the sample, determined by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, were summarised in Table 5.

Table 5. Confirmatory factor analysis.

Constructs	Sub-construct	KMO	Overall KMO
Strategic agility (SA)	Strategic sensitivity (SSe)	0.84	0.69
	Vision clarity (VCe)	0.65	
	Leadership unity (LUe)	0.71	
	Resource fluidity (RFe)	0.53	
Disruptive innovation (DI)	Low end market disruption (LEM)	0.66	0.75
	Partnerships or acquisition of digital start-ups (AP)	0.77	
	Experimentation (EX)	0.83	
	New market disruption (NMD)	0.73	
Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA)	Differentiation and innovation (DAe)	0.75	0.73
	Valuable digital business (VDe)	0.8	
	Organisational responsiveness (ORe)	0.73	
	Capacity of firms to capture value (CFe)	0.64	

Hypotheses Tests

The study tested the following hypotheses:

H01. Strategic agility does not influence sustainable competitive advantage of licensed televisions stations in Kenya.

H02: Disruptive innovation does not moderate the association between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage of licensed television stations in Kenya.

To test the hypotheses, the three-step process outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) for stepwise SEM analysis was employed. Moderation is considered confirmed when all three conditions are met. The first condition is that strategic agility must be significantly related to sustainable competitive advantage (p-value<0.05). Second condition is that strategic agility and disruptive innovation must be individually significantly related to sustainable competitive advantage (p-value<0.05). The third condition is that the interaction term (strategic agility*disruptive innovation) must be significant (p-value<0.05). The first step, tests the first hypothesis while the second and third steps evaluate the second hypothesis, as presented in Figures 2, 3 and 4.

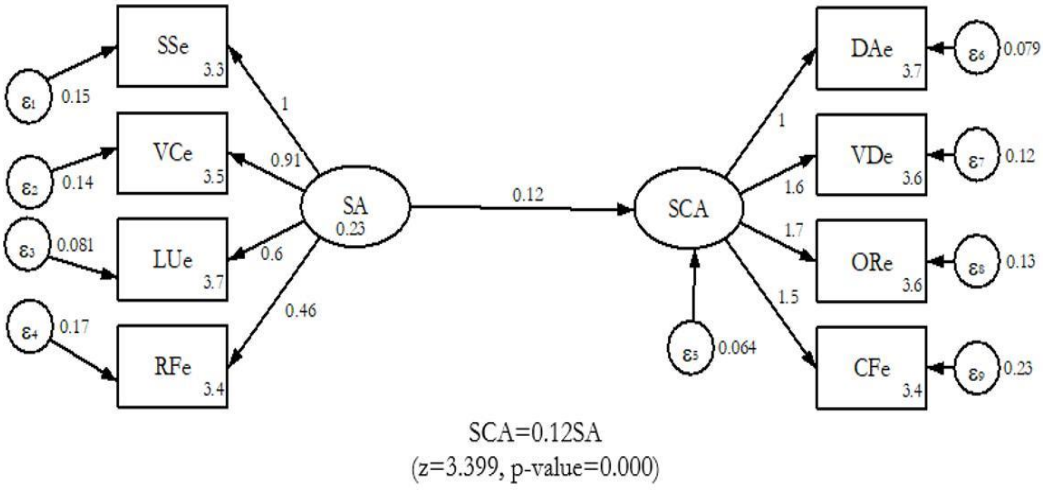

Figure 2. Strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage.

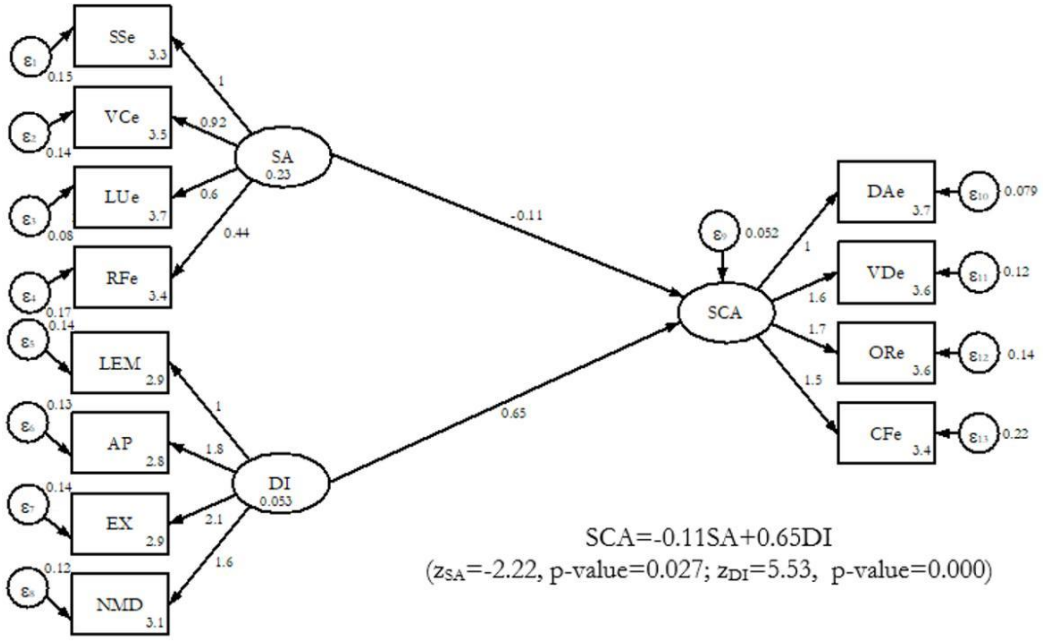

Figure 3. Strategic agility, disruptive innovation and sustainable competitive advantage.

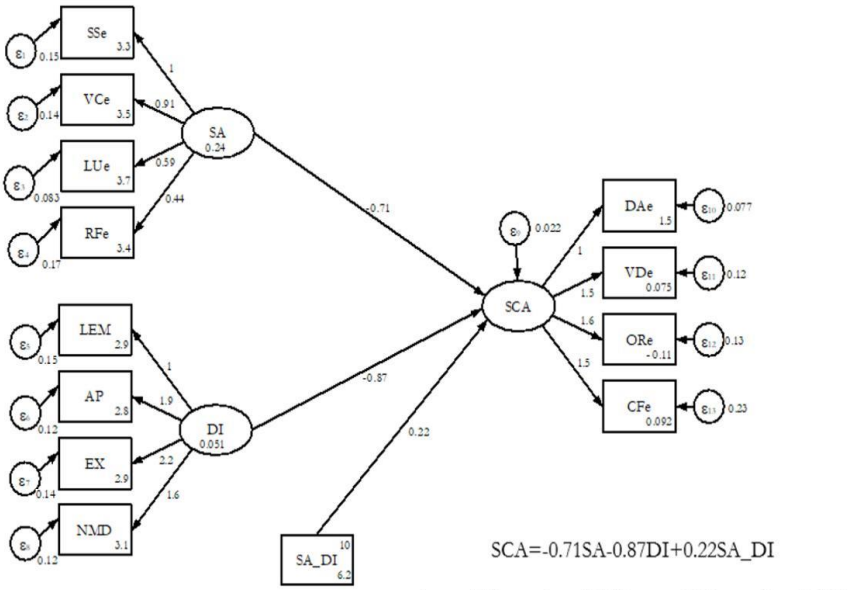

Figure 4. Strategic agility, disruptive innovation and sustainable competitive advantage.

Summary of the findings from the stepwise SEM models are as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Critical ratios for latent variables in the moderator model.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Unstandardized path (β)	Critical ratio (z-stat)	p- values
SCA	Strategic agility	0.120	3.37	0.001
SCA	Strategic agility	-0.112	-2.28	0.022
	Disruptive innovation	0.652	5.45	0.000
SCA	Strategic agility	-0.720	-5.52	0.000
	Disruptive innovation	-0.859	-2.88	0.004
	Strategic agility*disruptive innovation	0.219	5.21	0.000
Model/Step 1 fitness statistics -	2(19) =876.761, p-value = 0.0001, RMSEA = 0.022, CFI = 0.996			
Model/Step 2 fitness statistics -	2(52) = 354.77, p = 0.000, RMSEA = 0.026, CFI = 0.814			
Model/Step 3 fitness statistics -	2(63) = 2148.311, p = .000, RMSEA = 0.003, CFI = 0.934			

Findings in Table 6 indicate that in step one, overall, the model was significant (RMSEA = 0.022, p-value = .0001< .05), leading to the rejection of the first hypothesis that strategic agility does not influence sustainable competitive advantage of licensed televisions stations in Kenya.

The predictive model was:

SCA = 0.12 SA.

Where;

SCA = Sustainable Competitive Advantage.

SA = Strategic Agility.

The condition for moderation in step one was met, hence, the analysis moved to step two. In this step, disruptive innovation was introduced.

Sustainable competitive advantage was regressed on strategic agility and disruptive innovation. The findings revealed goodness of fit/overall model was significant (RMSEA = 0.026, p-value = 0.000<0.005).

Predictive model was as follows:
SCA = -.11 SA + .65 DI.
Where;
SCA = Sustainable Competitive Advantage.
SA = Strategic Agility.
DI = Disruptive Innovation.

The predictive model showed that by introducing disruptive innovation, the impact of strategic agility weakened. Further, both strategic agility and disruptive innovation, individually, influenced sustainable competitive advantage in a significant manner (p-value<0.05). The conditions for moderation in step two were satisfied, thus, the analysis proceeded to step three. In step three, an interaction term was introduced. The model was also significant (RMSEA 0.003, p-value =.000< .05). The predictive model was as follows:
SCA = -0.72 SA – 0.86 DI + 0.22 SA*DI
Where;
SCA= Sustainable competitive advantage. SA= Strategic Agility.
DI= Disruptive innovation.

The interaction term (SA*DI) was statistically significant (p-value<0.05). Coefficients for strategic agility and disruptive innovation were negative when the interaction term was introduced into the model. This means that by introducing the interaction term, the effects of strategic agility and disruptive innovation on sustainable competitive advantage weakened.

Furthermore, the coefficient of the interaction term was positive, implying that an increase in both strategic agility and disruptive innovation causes an increase in interaction term and subsequently an increase in sustainable competitive advantage. The interaction term was significant, thus, the hypothesis that disruptive innovation does not moderate the association between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage of licensed television stations in Kenya was rejected. This implied that disruptive innovation moderates the effect of strategic agility on sustainable competitive advantage amongst television stations that are licensed to operate in Kenya.

IV. Discussion of the Results

The findings imply that the linkage between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage depends on the level of innovations of a disruptive nature in the industry. In industries with low levels of disruption, companies can often maintain sustainable competitive advantage by executing incremental or sustaining innovations. On the other hand, in industries or sectors with high levels of change and disruption, companies need to be more agile and proactive to maintain their competitive advantages. Results suggest that in the presence of disruptive innovation, strategic agility had a negative influence on sustainable competitive advantage. This implies that in markets disrupted by innovations (e.g. smart devices, 5G networks, blockchain technologies, robots, artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality) agility in strategy would impact firms negatively if handled in isolation. The positive interaction term (strategic agility*disruptive innovation) indicates that for firms to deploy strategic agility successfully to gain sustainable competitive advantage in a disrupted market, they have to align agility in strategy with the firm's disruptive innovation strategies. The results of the first hypothesis suggest that strategic agility is a significant predictor of sustainable competitive advantage and align with the findings of previous studies on the effect of strategic agility on organisational outcomes (Ahammad et al., 2021; Arokodare et al., 2019; Clauss et al., 2021; Deshati, 2023; Reed, 2020). Results on the moderating role of disruptive innovation on the linkage between strategic agility and sustainable competitive advantage support the theory of disruption advanced by Christensen (1997). The theory suggests that organisations that ignore disruptive forces in the market are likely to be upended.

V. Conclusion

On the basis of the hypotheses that were formulated and tested, the study concluded that strategic agility is a significant predictor of sustainable competitive advantage but cannot be viewed in isolation. To leverage for competitiveness, agility in strategy must be aligned with disruptive innovation approaches. The findings imply that although strategic agility can drive competitiveness, in disrupted markets such as the media, agility in strategy alone is inadequate in positioning organisations for sustainable competitive advantage for firms. Firms must have a clear vision of the strategic direction; be nimble in sensing threats and opportunities, realign resources to exploit opportunities and mitigate threats and have a leadership team that is united in its commitment to the strategic objectives of the organisation. While these elements improve the chances of success, the findings of this empirical investigation indicate that such competences must be combined with appropriate disruption strategies to win.

Firms need to embrace both agility in strategy and disruptive strategies to win in discontinuous markets. Strategic manoeuvres have to be ambidextrous, balancing the tensions of current business models with explorative approaches to outwit rival firms. This means that firms must align strategic agility with disruptive innovation strategies such as new market disruptions, low- end market entry strategies, experimentation and acquisition or partnerships with digital start-ups that are disrupting the media and the television sub sector in particular. Television stations should take advantage of disruptive forces to thrive.

Implications

Results suggest that while strategic agility is important, it cannot be considered the sole predictor of long-term competitiveness for licensed television stations. They should also give consideration to other factors, such as disruptive innovations expected to influence the media industry in the coming years. The research supports the fundamental ideas of the theory of disruption, emphasising that companies should actively seek growth opportunities by identifying both underserved and overshot customer segments within their markets. To capitalise on these opportunities, firms can explore partnerships or acquisitions of digital start-ups and engage in experimentation with novel business models and innovative strategies. The study's findings can be valuable for policymakers in shaping technology-related policies and establishing strong regulatory frameworks to oversee industry competition. Consequently, businesses need to actively monitor the market for emerging technologies within the country and engage in shaping policies that influence the country’s technological trajectory, as this directly impacts the competitiveness of companies. Additionally, the results can help policymakers in assessing best practices within the study's context, enabling firms to learn from one another. Moreover, these findings serve as a guide for policymakers and academic institutions in designing curricula for media schools, ensuring that they offer the required knowledge for future media professionals.

VI. Recommendations

The study was limited to a descriptive cross-sectional design which allowed for collection of data at one point in time. A longitudinal investigation would reveal a more wholistic picture of the impact of disruptive technologies and innovations on television businesses over time. Use of a semi-structured questionnaire as a tool of data collection also limited the information respondents would provide. It is therefore recommended that ethnographic methods of data collection be used in future studies. It would also be insightful to test the same constructs in other sub sectors of the media such as radio and print, in Kenya and across the African continent. In view of the findings, the study recommended that top manament teams in the television sun sector of the media in Kenya need to be nimble in their strategies; stay focused and flexible while responding to the opportunities or threats presented by disruptive innovation. An alignment of the firm’s agile strategies with disruptive innovation approaches was further recommended to drive sustainable competitive advantage in firms. The study suggested further research to investigate why most managers

in the television sub sector of the media in Kenya were neutral to issues of disruption yet disruptive innovations continue to erode the foundations of competitiveness in the sector, or why innovation approaches amongst television firms in Kenya did not place a premium on experimentation.

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