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Influence of Technology Endowment on the Adoption of Transient Competitive Advantage by Private Hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

In the advent of technological growth that is rapid, firms need to continually keep abreast with the innovations in order to maintain their transient advantage. In the paradigm where transient competitive advantage and the frequency of technological endowment grow exponentially, institutions must be able to obtain an advantage through the adoption of technologies that allow them to improve their products, services, strategies, or production processes, among others. This study seeks to establish the influence of technological endowment on the adoption of transient competitive advantage by private multi practice hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya. In support of the study's objective the researcher adopted resource advantage theory. This study is founded on the resource-based theory, which emphasizes heterogeneous requests and moving assets. This study adopted a quantitative research approach using a questionnaire. A descriptive correlational research design was used in this study to describe and test for the influence of independent variable (technological endowment) on the dependent variable (Transient Competitive Advantage Adoption). According to the study findings, it is concluded that technology resource endowment ($\beta = 0.176$) had statistically significant influence on transient competitive advantage among private multi-practice hospitals in Nairobi city County in Kenya. In line with this, the study recommends that the hospitals need to equip the administrative offices with better technology for effective record keeping and service delivery as well as update the laboratories with modern diagnostic machines. Given that the hospitals are in a global world, customers are pretty aware of where else to find the top-notch diagnosis and this poses a competition threat.

Key Words: *Technological Endowment, Multi Practice Hospitals, Transient Competitive Advantage*

Introduction

Hospitals play a significant role in a country's social and economic vibrancy across various regions. Healthcare is a crucial part of the growth and management of any economy. Improved health results in improved productivity, increased educational performance, improved quality of life, continued investment and savings, lower healthcare costs and debt expenditure (Kasbeya, 2018). Transient competitive advantage has been and remains under intense and close scrutiny from funders and stakeholders in private multi practice hospitals (Aluvanze & Senaji, 2017). Likewise, citizens are increasingly demanding the health institutions to be more efficient and performance - oriented.

With the continuing digital revolution ushered by the Internet, institutions are moving towards IT Integration (ITI) in order to reduce their operating costs, increase productivity and performance, and respond quickly to the needs of their customers and other partner organizations (Jardim-Goncalves, Popplewell & Grilo, 2022; Soto-Acosta, Popa & Palacios-Marqués, 2016). Marshall (2015), and Song and Tucker (2016), noted that health infrastructure, education, incomes, and opportunities around the globe have improved steadily due to advent of technology. The health gap between first, second and third world nations has broadened, perhaps because of imbalance in the technological endowment and additionally unequal circulation of new and re-rising medical issues.

Hospitals are essential in ensuring the better well-being of the citizens as well as that of nations (World Health Organization - WHO, 2024). Not only do underperforming hospitals hamper social and economic development, they can also have unfavorable effect on the economic prospects of countries (WHO, 2024). The use of IT such as medical record automation, electronic appointment scheduling, Internet use for communication purposes, and the use of magnetic cards in hospitals has been adopted by developed and third world countries.

The Kenyan government acknowledged the issues facing the public hospitals and underlined healthcare as one of the elements of the social pillar of Kenya's Vision 2030 blueprint (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Healthcare has been devolved to get closer to the people in the wake of the new 2010 constitution. Both national and county governments shall provide the highest affordable standard of inclusive and affordable healthcare for people. Improved health care is projected to play an important role in boosting economic growth, alleviating poverty and achieving social goals (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Kenya’s Vision 2030 outlines provision of healthcare as key to improving the quality of life for all Kenyans (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Universal health coverage has also been identified as one of the pillars in the big four agenda to be achieved by the government by the year 2022 (Republic of Kenya, 2018). Towards this, most health institutions have initiated several reforms to improve healthcare service delivery including introduction of Managed Equipment Services (MES) where the supply, installation, training and lifecycle management of healthcare technology is outsourced and managed by Original Equipment Manufacturers of the technology over an agreed long-term contract period (Republic of Kenya, 2018).

The health sector is constantly searching for opportunities to cut costs and the use of technology holds great promise in this respect as it increases the efficiency of its processes, both internally and between trading partners in the value chain (Mukuna, 2016). There have been incidences of missing files in hospitals leading to the delay of treatment for patients. There have also been cases where the hospitals have incurred losses through fraud brought about by poor record

keeping (Kangu, 2021). Hospitals have also incurred heavy expenses as a result of documentation and record keeping which could otherwise have been reduced by the adoption

of technology. Training of health officials has not been effective and this may have been as a result of failure to apply ICT in learning (Ogudo & Singh, 2021).

The study argues that hospitals can take advantage of technology to enhance their competitive advantage and reduce some of the performance problems they are facing as far as fraud, poor communication, poor record keeping and lack of training is concerned. This argument is in line with other studies that found that ICT impacts positively on the performance of firms. e.g (Koellinger, 2008; Gera and Gu, 2004; Rambol Management, 2008). Conversely, none of the studies reviewed concentrated on the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of temporary competitive advantage. The study therefore wishes to bridge this gap by attempting to establish the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of temporary competitive advantage in private multi practice hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of transient competitive advantage in private multi practice hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The association between technological endowment and its influence on transient competitive advantage is founded on the resource advantage theory. Conner (1991) proposed that organizations should be able to clarify the variables that compel them as well as the reasons for their presence. This viewpoint is founded on the resource-based hypothesis, which emphasizes heterogeneous requests and moving assets. Resource advantage can clarify important organizational strategies such as resource-based strategy, industrial-based strategy competency-based strategy, brand equity strategy, market segmentation strategy, market-oriented strategy and relational marketing strategy. (Hunt, Arnett, & Madhavaram, 2016)

Resource Advantage Theory is a modern theoretical framework that underscores the importance of resources in the acquisition and maintenance of a competitive advantage. R-A Theory, which was developed by Shelby D. Hunt and Robert M. Morgan in the mid-1990s, posits that firms accomplish superior performance by acquiring, developing, and leveraging unique resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). This theory explains how firms establish and maintain competitive advantages in dynamic markets by incorporating concepts from evolutionary economics, institutional theory, and resource-based perspectives on the firm (Hunt, Arnett & Madhavaram, 2016).

The fundamental concept of Resource Advantage Theory is that competition is a dynamic process that involves the pursuit of superior resources and capabilities that can give a firm a competitive advantage. Resource Advantage Theory, in contrast to the static, equilibrium-focused perspectives of conventional economic theories, emphasizes the significance of strategic flexibility and innovation in markets that are constantly evolving. Hunt, Arnett and Madhavaram, (2016) posits that the success of firms is contingent upon their capacity to adjust to evolving market conditions through the acquisition of new resources and the continuous improvement of existing ones.

The significance of knowledge and learning in maintaining a competitive advantage is also underscored by Resource Advantage Theory. Organizations that are proficient in the identification, acquisition, and integration of knowledge resources are more effectively equipped to adapt to market fluctuations and innovate. This dynamic capability enables

organizations to not only leverage their current assets, but also to investigate new opportunities and reorganize their resource base in order to preserve a competitive advantage. Resource

Advantage Theory is consistent with other strategic management frameworks that prioritize intellectual capital and organizational learning, as evidenced by its emphasis on knowledge as a critical resource (Hunt, Arnett & Madhavaram, 2016).

Technological resources, including electronic health records (EHR) systems, advanced medical instruments, and telemedicine capabilities, are essential for establishing temporary competitive advantages in the healthcare sector. Adaptability to changing healthcare demands, operational efficiency, and patient care can all be enhanced by multi-practice hospitals that effectively maximize these technological resources. Hospital managers can more effectively comprehend how to acquire and maintain competitive advantages in a healthcare environment that is swiftly evolving by concentrating on the acquisition and strategic deployment of technological endowments. The theory promotes the development of long-term success by encouraging hospitals to invest in capabilities that increase their agility and innovation potential (Hunt, Arnett, & Madhavaram, 2016).

Empirical Literature

It is imperative that institutions ensure that they are in touch with changes in the environment and make tactical decisions to outwit competition. Mangal and Karmarkar (2016) argued that some of the major benefits of technological endowment in the health sector Comprehensive EHR systems that support interoperability, infrastructure for teleconsultations, advanced therapeutic, diagnostic services, innovation and research capabilities. According to Kuncoro and Suriani (2017), institutions that have technological endowment have experienced continued growth and diversification.

A study by Khalaji (2014) on analysis of technological capabilities in Sugar cane industry in India indicated that technology promote global firms' competitive advantage. The study also showed that technology play a role in the maintenance on competitive advantage and in improving company's competitiveness and profitability.

Additionally, Njogu (2023) based her study on the SME's in Nairobi where she sought to establish whether Technological Innovation have an effect on the competitive advantage of these firms. She established that indeed technological innovation particularly in product, processes and marketing significantly impacted positively to the competitive advantage of SMEs. On the other hand, Gakure, et al. (2023) who carried out a study on the Kenya Electrical and manufacturing enterprises to relationship between technological adoption and a business competitiveness. Aziz and Samad (2016) also studied how competitive advantage was achieved food manufacturing SMEs in Malaysia by innovating. They discovered that technological innovation attributed to about 73.5% competitive advantage after analyzing the data from these firms. Najib (2011) studied Indonesian food processing companies establish the sources realized internally to increase competiveness in small and medium Enterprises (SMEs). Rojas et al. (2013) also conducted a similar study on in Mexico where they analyzed the linkage between competitiveness and innovation through the measurement of operational activities. These studies showed that little had been done to show the correlation between technological endowment and transient competitive advantage and more so in the health sector.

From the reviewed theories and empirical studies, this study hypothesizes the relationship between study variables as depicted in Figure 1.

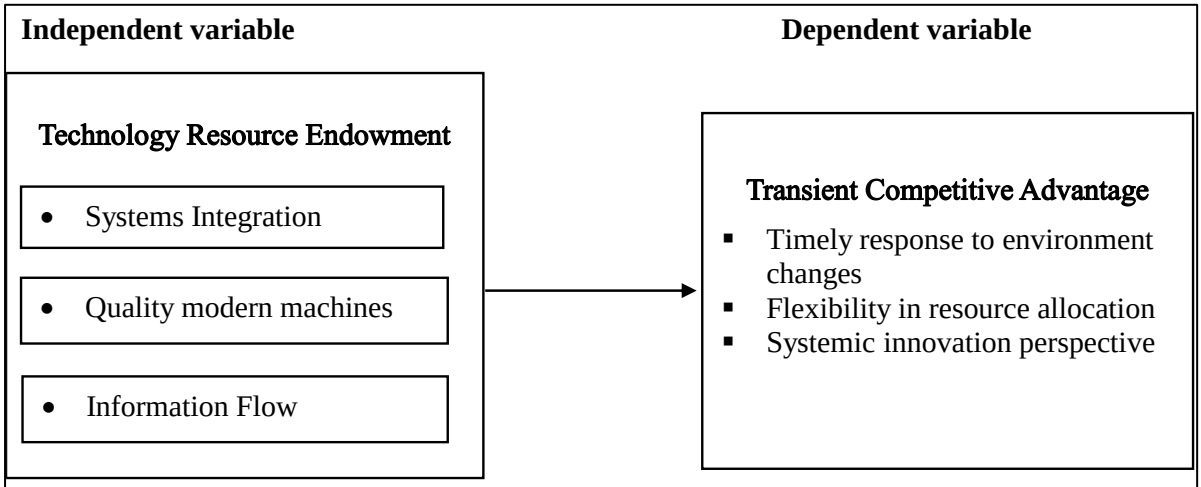

Figure 1: Influence of Technology Endowment on Transient Competitive advantage

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design because the data was collected at the same time frame, allowing for reasonable comparison and, ultimately, generalization of the findings to the population. A descriptive correlational research design was used in this study to describe and test for the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The target population was 400 private hospital administrators from 80 private hospitals in Nairobi Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board list of 2021), for which a sample size of 200 was calculated and chosen using purposive and random sampling method. The study used a questionnaire that gave the study a first-hand information tailored specifically for this study objective which was to establish the influence of technological endowment on transient competitive advantage in multi practice hospitals. The study used descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis).

Results

The study targeted 200 hospital administrators, however, the research managed to collect data from 176 respondents out of the targeted a total sample of 200. This represented 88% response rate which was considered adequate for representing the population. The finding shows that there were more males than females who participated in the study, however it is apreciable that both gender were represented in sharing of their opinions.This is supported by Bruower et al in 2017 who purported that inclusion of both gender in research is necessary to promote better health outcomes and address health disparities that may affect specific populations. The demographic analysis also showed that majority of the respondents were of Age 32-37 years and above, an age bracket that signifies maturity meaning balanced responses to required information. This kind of respondent mix is important to effect response accuracy

Descriptive Statistics

On a scale of 1 to 5 where an average score of 1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means neutral, 4 means agree and 5 means strongly agree. The respondents averagely rated the following statements testing the Technology endowment with mean of 3.5 and below; In our hospital, we have installed enterprise resource management system (Mean=3.24, SD=

1.106), All our activities are interconnected using management systems (Mean=2.89, SD=1.156), their patient records can be accessed from every office (Mean=2.81, SD=1.333), their hospital has invested in modern diagnosis machines such as scanners and x-rays (Mean=3.06,SD=1.142), Our administrative offices have modern computers, printers and scanners (Mean=2.80, SD= 1.102), their laboratories are equipped with modern diagnostic machines (Mean=2.48, SD=1.053), in their hospital, we have integrated information management system (Mean=2.82, SD=1.191), in their hospital, information sharing within ethical realms is encouraged (Mean=3.20, SD=1.137), and My hospital has enhanced communication systems through internet and intranets (Mean=3.09,SD=1.304). The results are as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1
Technology Endowment

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our hospital, we have installed enterprise resource management system	176	3.24	1.106
All our activities are interconnected using management systems	176	2.89	1.156
Our patient records can be accessed from every office	176	2.81	1.333
Our hospital has invested in modern diagnosis machines such as scanners and x-rays	176	3.06	1.142
Our administrative offices have modern computers, printers and scanners	176	2.80	1.102
Our laboratories are equipped with modern diagnostic machines	176	2.48	1.053
In my hospital, we have integrated information management system	176	2.82	1.191
In my hospital, information sharing within ethical realms is encouraged	176	3.20	1.137
My hospital has enhanced communication systems through internet and intranets	176	3.09	1.304

Inferential Statistics

The results of the ANOVA test of linearity showed that the significance value regarding the deviation from linearity for all the independent variable with the dependent variable (Transient Competitive Advantage) was greater than 0.05. therefore, this confirms linear relationships (constant slope) between technological endowment and transient competitive advantage.

Correlation Analysis

In this study, a bivariate correlation analysis was carried out to determine whether there were significant associations between technology endowment and transient competitive advantage. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to explore relationships between the variables, the direction and their strength. It was important to assess the nature of relationships existing between the variables before carrying out further analysis.

Table 2
Pearson's Correlation Matrix

		Y: Transient Competitive advantage Adoption	X: Technology Resource Endowment
Y: Transient Competitive advantage Adoption	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
X_3: Technology Resource Endowment	Pearson Correlation	.377*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	176	176

Further results showed that there was a positive and a significant relationship between Transient completive advantage adoption and Technology Resource Endowment ($r=0.377$, $p<0.005$). Earlier studies (Teece, 2017; Chen et al, 2010; Verma & Sethi, 2020) concur that there is a relationship between technology endowment and adoption of transient competitive advantage. Al-Sharafi et al. (2020) studied the relationship between technological adoption and competitive advantage in Yemen and found out that technological adoption was positively associated with competitive advantage.

Linear Regression Between Technology Endowment and Adoption of Transient Competitive Advantage

The results from the model summary showed that R-square=0.142 indicating that technology endowment predicts 14.2 % of the adoption of transient competitive advantage as shown in the table 3.

Table 3
Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.377[a]	.142	.140	.38034

a. Predictors: (Constant), Technology resource endowment

ANOVA Table for Linear Regression Between Technology Endowment and Adoption of Transient Competitive Advantage

The ANOVA table 4 showed that the linear regression model of $Y = \beta0 + \beta1X1$ is significantly linear at ($F=1.030$, $p=0.00$). In this model Y is the Transient competitive advantage adoption Choice, X1 is the Technology resource endowment, $\beta0$ is a constant, and $\beta1$ is the coefficient of X1 in the model

Table 4
ANOVA

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.347	1	.347	1.030	.012[b]
	Residual	58.602	174	.337		
	Total	58.949	175			

a. Dependent Variable: Transient Competitive Advantage Adoption

b. Predictors: (Constant), Technology resource endowment

Coefficients for Linear Regression Between Technology Endowment and Adoption of Transient Competitive Advantage

The coefficients table 5 indicate that the linear regression model $Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1$ is $Y=2.881+0.053X1$. This means that, when other factors are held constant, an improvement in the customer orientation by 1%, improves Transient Competitive Advantage Adoption Choice by 17.6%. Hence Technology resource endowment has statistically significant influence on transient competitive advantage but at minimal extent ($\beta = 0.176$).

Table 5
Coefficients for Technology Endowment and Transient Competitive Advantage

Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.881	.159		18.108	.000
	Technology resource endowment	.053	.052	.176	1.015	.0312

a. Dependent Variable: Transient Competitive Advantage

Comparing these results and those earlier studies (Teece, 2010; Cheng et al, 2017; Verma& Sethi, 2020) there is convergence that there is a relationship between technology endowment and adoption of transient competitive advantage in the lenses of technology endowment as a dynamic capability. From Africa's perspective, Agyapong et al. (2023) explored the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) adoption on firm competitiveness in Ghana and found out that firms that adopted ICTs had higher levels of competitiveness than those that did not adopt ICTs. In Kenya, more studies (Mutuku et al. 2019; Osano & Muturi 2020; Kirui & Maru 2020) reflected on the adoption of information technology by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya. The study discovered that SMEs that adopted mobile technology and ICT which had higher levels of innovation and competitiveness positively influenced competitive advantage

Discussions

This study found a statistically significant influence of technology resource endowment on transient competitive advantage. Considerably, technology endowment which refers to the resources and capabilities that a firm has in terms of technology, such as expertise, patents, or infrastructure, can indeed play a key role in the adoption of transient competitive advantage, as firms that have strong technological capabilities may be better able to innovate and adapt to changing market conditions. Seemingly, earlier studies (Teece, 2010; Cheng et al, 2017; Verma& Sethi, 2020) concur that there is a relationship between technology endowment and adoption of transient competitive advantage in the lenses of technology endowment as a dynamic capability.

Even though there is paucity of research on the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of transient competitive advantage studies in Kenya, there are indeed some studies that have explored the broader relationship between technology adoption and competitive advantage in developing countries. For instance, Agyapong et al. (2019) explored the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) adoption on firm competitiveness in Ghana and found out that firms that adopted ICTs had higher levels of competitiveness than those that did not adopt ICTs. Al-Sharafi et al. (2020) studied the relationship between e-commerce adoption and competitive advantage in Yemen and found out that e-commerce adoption was positively associated with competitive advantage. More studies (Mutuku et al. 2019; Osano & Muturi 2020; Kirui & Maru 2020) reflected on the adoption of information technology by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya. The study discovered that SMEs that adopted mobile technology and ICT which had higher levels of innovation and competitiveness and thus positively influenced competitive advantage.

In summary, all these studies suggest that technology adoption, including ICT and IT, has a positive impact on the competitive advantage in Kenyan firms. By extrapolation, these findings support the idea that technology endowment can influence the adoption of transient competitive advantage not only in other parts of the world but also in Kenyan context.

Conclusions

The study aimed to determine the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of temporary competitive advantage by private multi-practice hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The research question addressed was, "What is the influence of technology endowment on the adoption of transient competitive advantage among private multi-practice hospitals in Nairobi City, Kenya?" To statistically test this, a null hypothesis stating that technology resource endowment has no significant influence on transient competitive advantage was evaluated. The study concluded that technology resource endowment (β= 0.176) significantly influences transient competitive advantage among these hospitals. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming the alternative hypothesis that technology resource endowment significantly influences transient competitive advantage.

Recommendations

Results from the descriptive analysis indicate that respondents generally agree that hospitals have implemented technology resources. For example, statements about the installation of enterprise resource management systems (Mean=3.24, SD=1.106), interconnection of activities using management systems (Mean=2.89, SD=1.156), and investment in modern diagnostic machines such as scanners and x-rays (Mean=3.06, SD=1.142) received moderate agreement. However, there was less agreement on statements regarding modern administrative equipment (Mean=2.80, SD=1.102), accessibility of patient records from every office (Mean=2.81, SD=1.333), and the equipping of laboratories with modern diagnostic machines (Mean=2.48, SD=1.053).

The study recommends that hospitals should improve administrative office technology for better record-keeping and service delivery and update laboratory diagnostic machines. Given the global competition, customers are aware of where to find top-notch diagnostics, posing a competitive threat.

Regression tests revealed that technology resource endowment had the least influence on competitive advantage. This is theoretically sensible since the focus is more on tangible technology resources than on the capabilities to use them effectively. Therefore, the study suggests enhancing technology use capabilities in hospitals to positively impact transient competitive advantage.

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