



STRATEGIES AND GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN NAIROBI COUNTY

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Abstract

Small and medium enterprises are meant not only to maximize shareholders wealth but also growth of enterprises. To achieve growth of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County. They should adopt strategic methods. Consequently, the current study examined strategies and growth of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County. Specific objectives were to examine the effect of marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies on growth of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County. The study was anchored on resources-based theory. Descriptive research design was adopted and primary data collected through administration of questionnaires. Data was analyzed through use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Study findings indicated positive and significant effect of marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies on growth of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County. It was recommended that there is need for adoption of measures aimed at enhancing growth and survival of small and medium enterprises in Nairobi County.

Introduction

Small business enterprises have significant contribution on economic development in developing economies (IFC, 2011). Small and medium enterprises are pursued in service and goods sector and they provide quality and reliable services since they can direct services with their respective customers (Gajanayake, 2010). According to IFC (2011) if Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are accorded favourable operating environment they may stimulate economic development through development of competitive industries, creation of employment and reduction of poverty. Moreover, SMEs sector is perceived to the key strategic cog for economic

development. Makate (2014) accredits economic disruption and development in developed economies to incorporation of SMEs in different sectors of the economy.

SMEs are defined as independent owner/managed business organization which operates in specific sector and has at most 100 employees. According Awan and Hashmi (2014) these firms are innovative and creative in provision of goods and services since they may have limited resources allocation that ought to be deployed in pursuance of their business endeavor. Contingent to their sizes and organization structure they may make swift decision as compared to large corporations that should hold annual general meetings to ratify crucial policies. To stimulate SMEs growth there is need for consideration of impetus such as marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies that would enhance growth and development.

Strategies are methods adopted by an organization to focus its resource and energies and ultimately enhances profitability, market share and turnover in a specific accounting cycle. Strategies are effective if they develop integrated approach seeks to engage customers, competitors and prospects in the market arena (Mata & Aliyu, 2014). According to Kimani (2014) strategic approach in a business enterprise may lead to optimal allocation of resources and opportunities with the primary purpose of enhancing competitive advantage and increase market share. Further, Kimani asserted that there is need for development of short term and long-term approaches that are contingent to organization goals and objectives. According to Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) organization strategic approach of business would aid in understanding of market in line to competitors and customers. SMEs may adopt structured or unstructured strategic approach that should incorporate measures aimed at marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies that ought to be deployed to stimulate growth. Ardjouman and Asma (2015) argues that adoption of strategic approach in management of SMEs would enhance

their growth and sustainability in sporadic operating environment. Consequently, the current study sought:

- ✓ To determine the effect of marketing strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County.
- ✓ To establish the effect of management strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County.
- ✓ To examine the effect of strategic planning strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County.
- ✓ To evaluate the effect of information technology capabilities on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County.

Literature Review

Resources Based View Theory

Resources based view (RBV) was developed by Barney (1991). The theory argues that organization have unique resources that can be deployed to enhance distinctive operational criterion. Through allocation of organization resources firms can easily achieve competitive advantages and survival in turbulent operating business environment. According to Barney (1991) all organizations have strategic resources that can be easily allocated in firms as there pursue specific market niches. Spillan and Parnell (2006) argues that organization resources include system and processes that include functional, marketing, governance structure, culture and physical resources that are applied in achievement of organization core objectives.

According to Grant (1991) resources are inputs that are deployed in production process and should be guided by organization goals and objectives. Resources optimal management should be adopted since they are higher odds of missing targets due to non-optimal resources allocation criterion. For a firm to achieve competitive advantage then it ought value chain approach in implementation of measures aimed at optimizing achievement of competitive advantage. Hence,

there is need for SMEs to evaluate their strategies in line with growth objectives and targets. Effectiveness of marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies would lead to growth of SMEs in Nairobi City County.

Empirical Review

Omari and Kineene (2015) studied the effect of marketing strategies on performance of SMEs in Kisii County. Descriptive research design was adopted and primary data collected through issue of 150 questionnaires. Descriptive statistics analyzed the data. Study findings indicated that marketing strategies such as promotion, advertising, social media and direct selling has effect on performance of SMEs in Kisii town. This effect was significantly moderated by adoption of information communication and technology.

Anyanga and Nyamita (2016) studied major growth strategies of small and medium enterprises in Kisumu County. Descriptive research design was adopted and primary data collected through administration of questionnaires. Data was analyzed through use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Study findings indicated that growth strategies adopted by SMEs were market penetration strategies, product development strategies, innovation strategy, diversification strategy and market development strategies. The study should have adopted weighted average to estimate scores of growth strategies prior to regression analysis.

Nyongesa, Makokha and Namusonge (2017) studied the influence of strategic management practices on performance of Kenya power and lighting companies. Descriptive research design was applied and primary data gathered among 133 respondents hailing from KPLC Kitale branch. Descriptive statistics, Product moment correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression were used for data analysis. Study findings indicated that performance of KPLC was positively and significantly affected by strategic management practices adopted. The findings may not be replicated in SMEs context since KPLC is meant to promote social economic objective while SMEs are profit maximizing enterprises.

Samad, Rasha and Abad (2018) studied the effect of strategic management and organization culture on organization performance. Cross sectional research design was applied and primary data collected among 291 respondents through administration of questionnaires. Study findings indicated that there was significant effect of organization culture, dimension strategy and organization performance in government offices in Malaysian. The study fitted structural equation model though it did not report on its fitness statistics. Hence, there were higher odds of drawing biased conclusion.

Kasera (2017) studied the effect of strategic management on organization performance of health institutions in Nairobi County. Cross sectional research design was applied and primary data gathered through issue of questionnaires. Study findings indicated that health care performance was significantly influenced by strategic thinking, strategic planning and strategic management. These results may not be generalized in SMEs in Nairobi county since there are drawn different business sectors.

Ogega and Muturi (2017) studied factors influencing growth of small and medium enterprises in Kisii County. Through cross sectional design the study evaluated the effect of entrepreneurial training, technology innovation, product and service quality on growth of small and medium enterprises. Primary data was gathered through administration of questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Study findings indicated that there was a significant effect of entrepreneurial training, technology innovation, product and service quality on growth of small and medium enterprises in Kisii County. It was appropriate for the study to carry out diagnostic tests prior to regression modelling.

Mbugua, Mbugua, Wangoi, Ogada and Kariuki (2013) studied factors affecting growth of tailoring and dress making small and medium enterprises in Eldoret. Descriptive research design was applied and primary data collected through administration of questionnaires. Descriptive and regression analysis analyzed the data. Study findings indicated that growth of small and medium

enterprises was affected by access to finance, business management and entrepreneurial attributes. The study should have reported diagnostic tests that guided the choice of regression so as to minimize the likelihood of drawing biased conclusions.

Nyangarika (2016) studied the effect of networking on performance of small and medium enterprises in Tanzania. Cross sectional research design was applied and primary data gathered through administration of questionnaires. Univariate and multivariate techniques analyzed the data. Study findings indicates that networking through use of information and communication technology platforms enhanced access market and distribution of corporate goods and services. The findings may not be replicated in Kenya since business environment in Kenya differs from Tanzania and level of ICT regulations may have influence on its adoption by respective business enterprises.

Agwu (2018) studied the effect of strategic management practices on performance of SMEs in Nigeria. Cross sectional research design was applied and primary data gathered among 120 respondents through administration of questionnaires. Univariate and multivariate techniques analyzed the data. The study findings indicated that there was positive and significant effect of competitive advantage and business strategies on performance of SMEs in Nigeria. The study findings may not be a replica of Kenyan situation since the two economies have different demographic characteristics and economic environment that may have influence of performance of SMEs.

Wambugu and Waiganjo (2015) studied the effect of strategic management practices on organization performance of construction companies in Nairobi City County. Cross sectional research design was applied and primary data gathered through administration of questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistics analyzed the data. Study findings indicated that there was a positive and significant effect of strategic customer relationship management and strategic technical skills on performance of construction companies in Nairobi County. The study may

have considered carrying out diagnostic tests prior to regression modelling. This may have minimized the odds of fitting spurious model.

The conceptual framework for the study was as shown in Figure 2.1. Marketing, management, strategic and information technology capabilities have effect on growth of SMEs in Nairobi County.

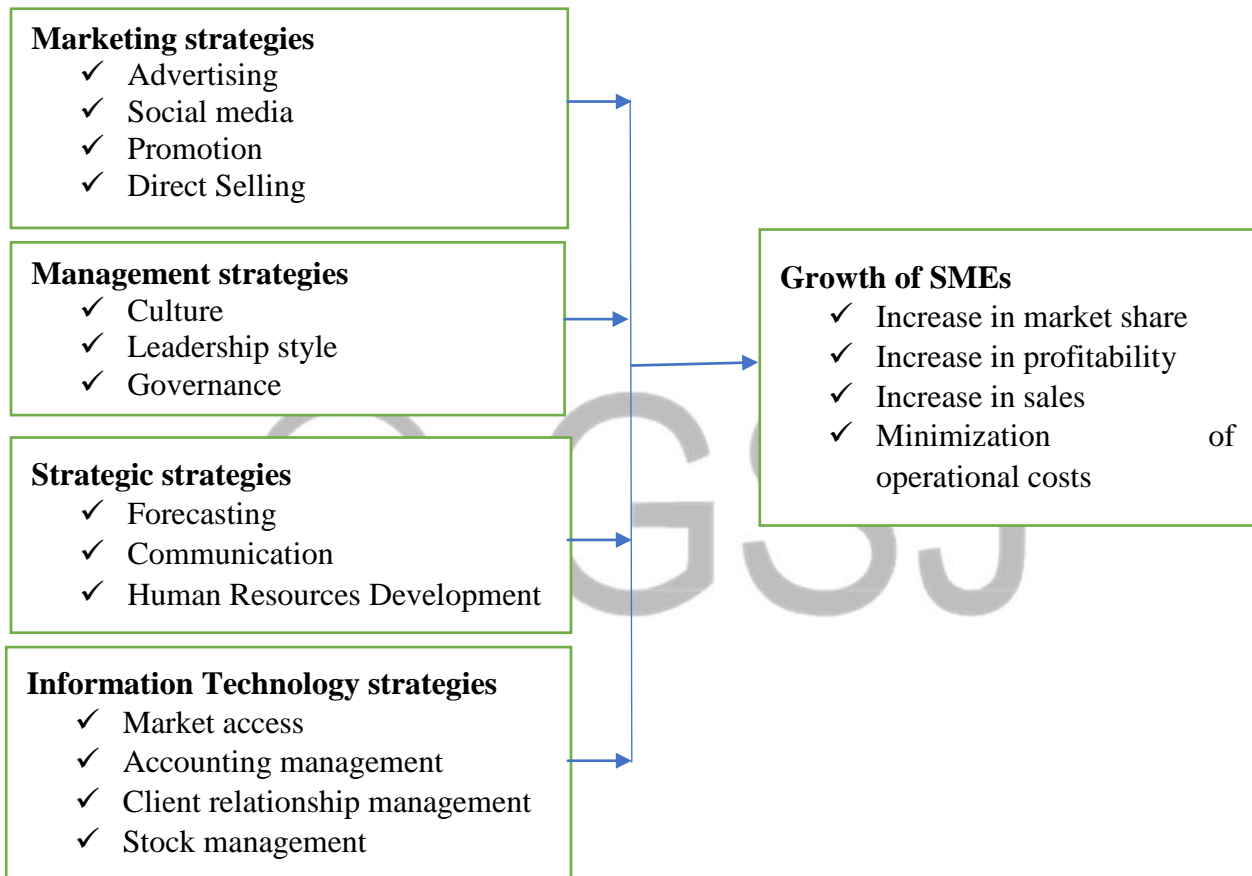


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The study applied descriptive research design. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) descriptive research design is applied whenever the research aims at responding to questions on who, when, how and why in regard to items of research interests. In this study, descriptive research design was appropriate since the research aimed at evaluating strategies adopted by SMEs in Nairobi County to enhance their performance.

The target population for a study is a complete enumeration of all elements under considerations (Oso & Onen, 2009). Target population in the current study comprised of 90 chemical and allied firms, 204 food and beverage firms, 100 textile and apparels firms, 120 metal and allied firms and 20 foot wear and leather firms. The population is as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Target Population

| Sector | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Chemical and Allied | 90 | 12.3 |
| Food and Beverage | 204 | 27.8 |
| Textile and Apparels | 100 | 13.6 |
| Metal and Allied | 120 | 16.3 |
| Footwear and Leather | 20 | 2.7 |
| Retail and Whole sale shops | 200 | 27.2 |
| Total | 734 | 100 |

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset from the population to be a true representative of variables under examination (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2014) sampling process can be probabilistic or non-probabilistic. Studies that adopt probabilistic accords all respondents' equal chances of being considered while in non-probabilistic approach there is a clearly defined rule for inclusion and exclusion. In this study simple and stratified sampling were adopted in selection of respondents. Kothari (2011) asserts that stratified sampling procedures is adopted so as to have proportionate selection of respondents in the specific study. The sample size was determined using Yamane (1976) formula. The sample was 88 and stratified as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Sample Size

| Sector | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Chemical and Allied | 11 | 12.3 |
| Food and Beverage | 24 | 27.8 |
| Textile and Apparels | 12 | 13.6 |
| Metal and Allied | 14 | 16.3 |
| Footwear and Leather | 2 | 2.7 |
| Retail and Whole sale shops | 24 | 27.2 |
| Total | 88 | 100 |

The main tool for data collection was a questionnaire. The choice of the questionnaires was based on its advantages such as easy to administer, can be easily issued online, can be dropped and picked later (Kothari, 2014). The questionnaire sought information in five-point Likert scale and was subdivided on marketing strategies, management strategies, strategic strategies, information technology strategies and performance of SMEs.

Data collected was analyzed through use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics used in the study were mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation. Inferential statistics included Product moment correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression. Study findings are presented in figures and tables. The multiple regression model was of the form:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \mu$$

Where Y = Performance

X_1 = Marketing strategies, X_2 = Management strategies, X_3 = Strategic Strategies, X_4 = Information technology strategies, α = constant term, $\beta_{1..4}$ = Slope coefficients for $X_{1..4}$, μ = Error term.

Findings and Discussions

The first objective of the study examined the effect of marketing strategies on performance of SMEs. To achieve this the respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data was analyzed through use of mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation as shown in Table 4.1. Study findings indicates that majority agreed that marketing strategies have effect on performance of SMEs. Majority (mean = 3.9) agreed that the promotion approaches that they have deployed aids in achievement of their organization objectives. There was an agreement that (mean = 4.2) that use of social media platform enhances creation of client traffic or it has lowered marketing cost.

Further, there was an agreement that innovative advertisement stimulates growth of market share (mean = 4.1). It was reported that direct selling aids in management of market share (mean = 3.9).

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics on Marketing Strategies

| | Mean | Std. Dev | CV |
|--|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Promotion approaches deployed aids in achievement of organization objectives | 3.9 | 0.7 | 5.6 |
| Innovative advertisement stimulates growth of market share | 4.1 | 0.6 | 6.8 |
| Use of social media platform enhances creation of client traffic | 4.2 | 0.9 | 4.7 |
| Direct selling aids in management of market share | 3.9 | 1.1 | 3.5 |
| Social media has lowered marketing cost | 4.2 | 0.9 | 4.7 |
| Overall average | 4.1 | 0.8 | 5.1 |

The second objective of the study determined the effect of management strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County. The respondents rating was sought on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Study findings in Table 4.2 indicates that majority agreed that management strategies have effect on performance of SMEs. There was an agreement (mean = 4.4) that governance system among SMEs have clear succession plan. This may optimize performance of SMEs and increase their likelihood of survival even after exit of its founders. Majority agreed that leadership styles adopted by SMEs optimizes internal resources allocation. Optimal resources allocation would minimize their spillage and enhance organization performance. There was an agreement that there are clear procedures on how organizations can seek external resources (mean = 4.1). This would enhance optimization of cost associated with seeking for external resources to enhance performance of SMEs. Further, there was an agreement that SMEs management culture promoted innovation and creativity (mean = 3.9). Innovative approaches would enhance performance of SMEs since they may develop production and distribution models that would minimize operational costs.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics on Management Strategies

| | Mean | Std. Dev | CV |
|--|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| We have management culture that promotes innovation and creativity | 3.9 | 0.9 | 4.3 |
| Our leadership style aims at optimization of internal resources | 4.3 | 1.1 | 3.9 |
| Our governance structure has clear succession plan in place | 4.4 | 1.2 | 3.7 |
| Our planning procedures optimizes resources allocation | 3.8 | 0.8 | 4.8 |
| In our SMEs we mentor employees to take up responsibilities | 3.7 | 1.1 | 3.4 |
| We have clear procedures on how our firm can seek resources externally | 4.1 | 1.1 | 3.7 |
| Overall average | 4.0 | 1.0 | 4.0 |

The third objective of the study examined the effect of strategic strategies and performance of SMEs in Nairobi County. The respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on five-point scale. Study findings in Table 4.3 indicate that there was an agreement that strategic strategies adopted by SMEs have effect on performance of SMEs (mean = 3.9). Majority (mean = 4.2) agreed that there is a clear approach on management of human capital needs. Clear procedures for managing human resources would ensure that SMEs can plan on how to acquire and develop human capital in response to their needs. Majority (mean = 4.1) indicate that they have clear down up and top down communication model. Clear communication platforms adopted by SMEs would enhance clarity of communication and minimize conflicts among different stakeholders. Majority agreed (mean = 3.8) that either they have clear mean of communicating with customers or they have clear internal and external conflict management.

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics on Strategic Strategies

| | Mean | Std. Dev | CV |
|---|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| We have clear demand forecasting approach | 3.9 | 1.1 | 3.5 |
| We have clear down up and top down communication model | 4.1 | 0.9 | 4.6 |
| We have clear means of communicating with our customers ' | 3.8 | 0.8 | 4.8 |
| We have developed measures for recruiting strategic skills that would enhance performance | 3.7 | 1.2 | 3.1 |
| We have clear internal and external conflict management | 3.8 | 0.8 | 4.8 |
| We have clear approach on management of human capital needs | 4.2 | 0.7 | 6.0 |
| Overall average | 3.9 | 0.9 | 4.4 |

The fourth objective of the study examined the effect of information technology strategies and performance of SMEs in Nairobi County. The respondents were requested to indicate the level of agreement on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Findings in Table 4.4 indicate that majority agreed that information technology strategies have effect on information technology strategies and performance of SMEs in Nairobi County. There was an agreement that information technology aids in management of stock (mean = 4.3). Secondly, majority agreed that information technology enhances SMEs image (mean = 4.2). Thirdly, majority agreed that through technology they are able to reach out to current and potential customers (mean = 4.1). There was an agreement that information technology platforms enhance creation of content and its dissemination (mean = 3.9). Finally, majority agreed that information technology aids in management of financial records (mean = 3.8).

Table 4.4 Descriptive Statistics on Information Technology Strategies

| | Mean | Std. Dev | CV |
|---|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| Through technology we are able to reach out to current and potential customers | 4.1 | 0.9 | 4.6 |
| Information technology enhances SMEs image | 4.2 | 0.8 | 5.3 |
| Information technology platforms enhances creation of content and its dissemination | 3.9 | 0.7 | 5.6 |
| Information technology aids in management of financial records. | 3.8 | 0.6 | 6.3 |
| Information technology aids in management of stock | 4.3 | 1 | 4.3 |
| Overall average | 4.1 | 0.8 | 5.2 |

Further the study evaluated the level of agreement on several aspects of performance among SMEs. The findings in Table 4.5 indicates that majority agreed (mean = 4.1) agreed that the number of their customers has increased in the last five years or quality of their firm produce have improved. There was an agreement that the level of firm's profitability have improved over

the last five years (mean = 4.4). Further, there was an agreement that the firm revenues have been increasing over a period of time (mean = 4.3).

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics on Performance of SMEs

| | Mean | Std. Dev | CV |
|---|-------------|-----------------|------------|
| The number of customers has increased in the last five years | 4.1 | 1.3 | 3.2 |
| The firm's product range has increased in the last five years | 3.9 | 1.1 | 3.5 |
| The revenues of the firm have been increasing over the period | 4.3 | 1.0 | 4.3 |
| The firm has increased its value addition process | 3.8 | 1.1 | 3.5 |
| The firm's profitability position has improved over the last five years | 4.4 | 1.2 | 3.7 |
| The quality of the firm's products has improved | 4.1 | 1.2 | 3.4 |
| Overall average | 4.1 | 1.2 | 3.6 |

Product moment correlation coefficient was applied in examination of the strength of marketing strategies, management strategies, strategic strategies and information technology strategies on performance of SMEs. Findings in Table 4.6 there was a positive and significant effect of marketing strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County ($\rho = 0.738$, p value < 0.05). Management strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs ($\rho = 0.721$, p value < 0.05). Strategic strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs ($\rho = 0.787$, p value < 0.05). Information technology strategies have positive effect on performance of SMEs ($\rho = 0.860$, p value < 0.05).

Table 4.6 Correlation Analysis

| | | Performance | Marketing strategies | Management strategies | Strategic strategies | Information technology strategies |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Performance | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .738** | .721** | .787** | .860** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | N | | 80 | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Marketing strategies | Pearson Correlation | | 1 | .091** | .178** | .306** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|----|--------|--------|
| | N | | | 80 | 80 | 80 |
| Management strategies | Pearson Correlation | | | 1 | .378** | .429** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | N | | | | 80 | 80 |
| Strategic strategies | Pearson Correlation | | | | 1 | .219** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | 0.00 |
| | N | | | | | 80 |
| Information technology strategies | Pearson Correlation | | | | | 1 |

Multiple regression analysis was used to establish the nature of the effect of marketing strategies, management strategies, strategic strategies and information technology strategies on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County. Findings in Table 4.7 indicates has an R squared of 84.3% that shows that 84.3% of changes in performance of SMEs in Nairobi county can be accounted for by marketing, management, information technology and strategic strategies. The remaining portion can be explained by extraneous variables not in the model. Analysis of variance statistics indicates that there was significant relationship between strategies adopted by SMEs and performance ($F = 40.602$, $p \text{ value} < 0.05$).

Marketing strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County ($\beta = 0.247$, $p \text{ value} < 0.05$). This indicates that unit increase in marketing strategies increases SMEs performance by 0.247 units while holding constant management, strategic and information technology strategies.

Management strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County ($\beta = 0.305$, $p \text{ value} < 0.05$). This indicates that unit increase in management strategies increases performance of SMEs by 0.305 units while holding constant marketing, strategic and information technology strategies constant.

Strategic strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County ($\beta = 0.359$, p value < 0.05). This indicates that unit increase in strategic strategies increases performance of SMEs by 0.359 units while holding constant marketing, management and information technology strategies constant.

Information technology strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs in Nairobi County ($\beta = 0.236$, p value < 0.05). This indicates that unit increase in information technology strategies increases performance of SMEs by 0.236 units while holding constant marketing, management and strategic strategies constant.

Table 4.7 Multiple Regression Analysis

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| (Constant) | 0.62 | 0.87 | | 0.71 | 0.482 |
| Marketing strategies | 0.247 | 0.113 | 0.237 | 2.191 | 0.044 |
| Management strategies | 0.305 | 0.104 | 0.005 | 2.935 | 0.03 |
| Strategic Strategies | 0.359 | 0.132 | 0.405 | 2.714 | 0.017 |
| Information technology strategies | 0.236 | 0.083 | 0.258 | 2.854 | 0.002 |
| R Squared | 0.843 | | | | |
| Adj R squared | 0.839 | | | | |
| F | 40.602 | | | | 0.000 |

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study findings it was found that marketing, management, strategic and information technology strategies have positive and significant effect on performance of SMEs respectively. It can be concluded that there is need for development of marketing strategies aimed at stimulating sales growth and performance and minimization of marketing related costs. There is need for development of management strategies that would enhance the odds of going concern and business survival.

SMEs operating in Nairobi county should be encouraged to develop strategic plans that would aid in understanding response approaches to their respective business operating environment. Information technology should be incorporated in management of organization so as to enhance the management of financial resources, clients and stock in respective SMEs.

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