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Application Of Five Forces Framework In Public Agencies And Its Outcomes In Kenya

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Abstract
This study explores the application of Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework to Public Agency Strategic Analysis (PASA) in Kenya. It examines the competitive dynamics of public agencies and how they influence organizational performance, outcomes, and strategies. The analysis is premised on the account that Kenya's governance reforms driven by the Constitution of Kenya 2010, Vision 2030, and global development goals have brought changes in public agencies strategic leadership practices due to pressures emerging from the external and internal environments. Utilizing a systematic literature review, the study analyzes the Five Forces, across different public sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and energy to demonstrate how they influence strategic leadership practice and service delivery. The findings lead to recommendations on the need for strategic agility, inter-agency collaboration, and public-private partnerships to address inefficiencies and align with national priorities in the dynamic and competitive globalized and technology driven environment. By adapting a private-sector model to public administration, this research offers policymakers and stakeholders actionable insights to enhance policy implementation, foster transparency, and ensure resilience in Kenya's evolving public sector landscape.

Key Words: *Public Agency Strategic Analysis, Service Outcomes*

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I. Introduction

The Public Agency Strategic Analysis (PASA) is an effective strategic management technique applied by public sector organizations to respond to complex internal and external operating environments thereby making effective decisions and outcomes. The main purpose of implementing PASA is to achieve maximum efficiency and value in public service delivery (Vining, 2016). Vining, (2016) explains that PASA functions as a strategic method which supports multiple management tools that promote sustained optimization of public agencies. Public organizations gain enhanced capacity to handle economic and social and political constraints through the implementation of successful management tools which improve their ability to meet organizational objectives. The successful implementation of PASA together with other management tools requires organizations to concentrate on internal and external elements which affect performance outcomes. Bryson and George (2020) highlights such factors as multiple stakeholders that include other government bodies, civil societies, the private sector, and the citizens. Therefore, the integration of effective management tools in the application of PASA is integral to alleviate the challenges presented by multiple stakeholders and the environment in which public agencies operate.

Across the world, public agencies are the construct of governance systems and mechanisms through which governments transform policy objectives into services and products for the citizens. According to Igbokwe-Ibeto (2019), in Africa and other developing countries, public agencies are traditionally perceived as bureaucratic structures that are premised on Weberian ideologies that embrace procedural rigor and administrative hierarchy over competitive adaptability when compared to the private sector. While this conventional structure of public agencies fostered stability and uniformity, it is detrimental to the rising needs and interests in efficiency and responsiveness to the complex and dynamic internal and external pressures. Stephen (2017) notes that significant changes influencing governance systems such as globalization, economic liberalization, and emerging interests among citizens and other stakeholders in the national and international levels have altered the conventional perceptions concerning how public agencies should operate. Consequently, public agencies across the world are increasingly being compelled to embrace strategic management approaches that are typical to those that drive success in the private sectors.

Recent reforms in the Kenyan public sector have been highly influenced by the promulgated Constitution of Kenya, 2010 coupled with strategic global and national initiatives such as the United Nations' Strategic Development Goals and Kenya's Vision 2030. According to Mensi-Klarbach et al. (2013) and Hope (2015), the recent developments that are increasingly changing the Kenyan public sector service delivery can be attributed to changes emerging among the stakeholders involved and global trends. In this context, Kenya's public sector is geared towards enhancing efficiency, accountability, and consumer expectations. This can be attributed to the deliberate move in the eradication of bureaucracy and corruption in the public sector, while aligning organizational operations with strategies that foster agility in responding to the dynamic and complex environment and markets the agencies operate. Notably, World Bank (2022) demonstrates that the consumer expectations in Kenya are increasingly changing with a large youthful population that is learned and aligned to global changes. Additionally, Ong'era and Musili (2019)argues that changes in how the Kenyan public sector operates are necessary due to influences emerging from advancements in the private sector, shifting regulatory frameworks, and heightened public demand for equitable and high-quality services from the government.

This study adopts Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework (1980) to determine how this model can be integrated in PASA across the Kenyan public agencies for increased efficiency and performance. The proposed framework is a well-established management tool that was primarily designed for evaluation of competitive dynamics in businesses. The framework analyzes five key dimensions: the threat of new entrants, the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers, the threat of substitute offerings, and the intensity of industry rivalry. The use of Porter's sector contexts particularly in developing countries like Kenya still remains underexplored (Onyango & Wanyoike, 2021).

The framework is flexible and can be used in different contexts including public organizations. A review by Rosenberg Hansen and Ferlie(2014) shows that using Porter's model in public administration can be very useful in how competitive forces influence strategic choices and policy effectiveness in governance. From this perspective, the use of this framework can help to how to enhance public services and how to address challenges related to political complexities, resource limitations, and the complexities of devolution in Kenya (Opere & Mwanzia, 2024; Momanyi et al.,2018).

II. Methodology Of The Study

The researcher used systematic literature review (SLR) which is a qualitative research method that enables the collection and analysis of secondary data from previous publications related to the research interests and objectives (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021). The SLR approach enabled a critical and in-depth synthesis of existing knowledge on PASA in Kenyan public agencies and analysis through Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework.

Theoretical Framework

The constructs of Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework are: The Threat of New Entrants, the Bargaining Power of Suppliers, the Bargaining Power of Buyers, the Threat of Substitutes, and Industry Rivalry (Porter, 1980). According to Grundy (2018) these forces can be analyzed to organizations to develop an understanding of the external factors that influence the environment they operate in, which is crucial in the adoption and enhancement of strategies that can enhance their market standing and performance. The framework is designed as a structured approach for developing knowledge on how competition influences organizational outcomes and strategic decision-making across diverse industries. This justifies its diversity and applicability with different domains of the public sector (Onyango & Wanyoike, 2021).

Threat of New Entrants

The Threat of New Entrants entails analyzing the potential for new entities entering a particular market and the impact their competitiveness might have on the existing players in an industry or an organization. According to Dobbs (2014), this force hinges on assessing the external environment where an organization operates by focusing on factors such as investment capital requirements, the economies of scale, supply chains, and policy frameworks. Kohnová and Salajová (2023) argues that in environments where the entry barriers are high the existing organizations have a competitive advantage and new entrants face challenges that compound to a protection against competition for organizations that have market dominance. However, when barriers are low, new entrants can easily join the market, which heightens competition and challenges the dominance of established firms. Kohnová and Salajová (2023)note that this force prompts organizations to evaluate entry risks and reinforce their defenses to maintain a competitive edge.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

The Bargaining Power of Suppliers entails analyzing the impact players in the supply chains have on the organizational strategies such as production, marketing, and pricing (Porter, 2008). According to Magretta (2012), the suppliers' bargaining power intensifies where there is a limited number player in the supply chain offering core input materials or services for the production of goods or services offered in a particular market. The supplier's bargaining power also increases in industries or markets where there are limited substitutes for the inputs required. Subsequently, a strong supplier influence can elevate costs or restrict access to critical materials, which concurrently limits the organizational operational flexibility and performance outcomes. Parviziomran and Elliot (2023) states that firms that experience high supplier bargaining power tend to broaden their supplier options and explore alternative resources to increase substitutes and operational sustainability.

Bargaining Power of Buyers

The Bargaining Power of Buyers focuses entails analyzing how consumers shape the operations and performance of organizations or a particular industry (Porter, 2008). According to Parviziomran and Elliot (2023), the influence buyers have on outcomes is more significant in contexts where they are knowledgeable about their options and there are a different alternative they can access with ease. Consequently, in contexts where there is high bargaining power for the buyers, organizations are challenged to gain competitive advantage through strategic measures such as improving quality, lowering prices, and enhancing customer experiences. Sudirjo (2023) notes that recognizing buyer power is vital for maintaining competitiveness and customer satisfaction.

Threat of Substitutes

The Threat of Substitutes entails analyzing the competitive edge by determining the challenge posed by alternatives and substitutes available to the target customer base (Porter, 1980). The availability and access to alternatives and substitutes can impact the market share and pricing strategies adopted by an organization. A strong substitute presence pushes firms to differentiate their offerings and add value to remain attractive to the target consumers. Browder et al. (2023) note that monitoring this force helps organizations to anticipate shifts in demand and adapt proactively.

Industry Rivalry

Industry Rivalry captures the level of competition among existing firms within a market. This force escalates with a high number of players, diverse product offerings, and where there is stagnant industry growth. Intense rivalry often sparks aggressive competition strategies such as price cuts and heightened marketing efforts (Porter, 2008). According to Farida and Setiawan (2022), industry rivalry also fuels rapid innovation as firms vie for dominance. These insights imply that organizations in such environments must continually refine their strategies to secure a competitive edge and maintain resilience.

III. Application Of Porter's Theory In Kenyan Public Agencies

Threat of New Entrants

Kenyan public agencies, once dominant in their respective sectors, are increasingly challenged by new entrants as privatization, decentralization, foreign investment, and technological advancements have limited the traditional barriers such as government regulations and bureaucratic processes. In the education sector, private universities like Strathmore and the United States International University (USIU) leverage advanced infrastructure, flexible curricula, and robust job placement networks to compete with established public institutions like the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, drawing students and forcing these public giants to rethink their offerings (Olelo, 2022). Similarly, the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB), a long-standing financier of tertiary education, faces competition from private scholarships and affordable online courses on platforms like Coursera, which offer students alternative pathways to education (Oketch, 2016). In kenya's health sector, the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) faces competition from private insurers such as Jubilee and Britam that have entered the market with competitive solutions that include tailored packages. The new entrants also have a competitive edge with faster claims processing and international coverage offers. Resultantly, NHIF has been pushed to implementing reforms and innovating to retain its customers (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019).

The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) which has been a long-time financier of tertiary education is also faced with competition from private scholarships and affordable online courses on platforms like Coursera that offer students other ways of accessing education (Oketch, 2016). In kenya's health sector, the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) has competition from private insurers such as Jubilee and Britam that have come into the market with their own packages. The new entrants also have a competitive advantage with faster claims processing and international coverage offers. As a result, NHIF has been compelled to implement reforms and innovate in order to retain its customers (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019). In the same way, the Kenya Medical

Supplies Authority (KEMSA) also has to deal with new entrants that include private hospitals and international pharmaceutical companies that are more efficient and offer better quality medical supplies.

Given its historical inefficient systems coupled with corruption cases, KEMSA has been compelled to implement reforms that can foster a competitive edge (Yadav, 2014). In infrastructure, the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) is competing with foreign firms like China Road and Bridge Corporation which have changed KeNHA's role from primary builder to project overseer, while the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) is competing with private garages offering rapid vehicle inspections that challenge its monopoly on safety certifications (Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020).In the energy sector, the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) and Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) encounter independent power producers and renewable energy firms like M-KOPA, whose off-grid solar solutions reduce household reliance on KPLC's grid (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021). The competitive environment where these national agencies operate is increasingly compelling them to adapt as they risk obsolescence as efficiency and productivity improves in the private sectors that have more effective management practices.

Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Suppliers exert considerable influence over Kenyan public agencies by controlling the cost, quality, and availability of critical resources, which often leads to procurement challenges and service disruptions when their power intensifies. In education, the Ministry of Education relies heavily on publishers like Longhorn for textbooks, and any price hikes or supply shortages from these firms can delay the distribution of learning materials, affecting educational outcomes (Mule, 2025). The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) depends on banks like Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) for loan disbursements, exposing it to delays and additional costs, while the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) counts on universities to produce teachers, facing potential shortages if supply falters (King'ori, 2022). In healthcare, KEMSA is at the mercy of global pharmaceutical giants, whose pricing power is compounded by KEMSA's procurement scandals, necessitating stronger negotiation strategies (Yadav, 2014). The NHIF also grapples with private health providers that charge premium rates for specialized services, inflating costs and underscoring the need for local production to reduce supplier leverage (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019). In infrastructure, KeNHA presents cases of escalating costs in road construction that are attributed to reliance on foreign contractors like the China Road and Bridge Corporation. In the energy sector KPLC and KenGen are reliant on fuel and renewable energy suppliers whose terms fluctuate with global markets. Consequently, agencies in the energy sector face financial constraints and demands that often impact on operations and organizational outcomes (Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020; Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021).

Bargaining Power of Buyers

Buyers comprising citizens, businesses, and organizations are increasingly assertive in the Kenyan market. This increases pressure on public agencies to deliver services and products of higher quality that are affordable and with efficiency, despite the agencies' historical monopolistic advantages. In the Kenyan education system, there is growing demand from different stakeholders for improved quality of education and learning environments. These requirements have led to policy shifts affecting the role of the Ministry of Education as exemplified in the recent adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) (Mule, 2025). The Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) roles and policies have also been under scrutiny that is highlighted by students staging demonstrations over loan disbursement delays. This has prompted the organization to explore alternative funding solutions that are yet to meet stakeholder satisfaction (Oketch (2016). In the health sector, the NHIF responded to stakeholder demands for broader coverage with offerings such as the Linda Mama initiative for maternal healthcare. In transportation KeNHA and NTSA have enhanced services through developments in infrastructure and digitization to meet citizens' demand and satisfaction (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019; Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020). Actions in the energy sector influenced by buyers include efforts by KPLC to adjusts tariffs amid consumer backlash over high costs and unreliable service (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021).

Threat of Substitutes

Substitutes present a growing challenge to public agencies by offering superior and more cost-effective alternatives that undermine reliance on traditional services. In education, private schools and e-learning platforms like Eneza Education attract students with smaller class sizes and flexible, technology-driven learning, while HELB competes with bank loans from institutions like Equity and KCB, which provide more favorable repayment terms (Olelo, 2022; Oketch, 2016). In healthcare, private hospitals and telemedicine services such as MyDawa offer faster, higher-quality care, bypassing the NHIF and KEMSA services, which has pushed these agencies to improve their offerings (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019; Yadav, 2014). In transport, toll roads like the Nairobi Expressway and ride-hailing services like Uber provide alternatives to congested public infrastructure and unreliable matatus, challenging KeNHA and NTSA to enhance efficiency (Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020). In energy, solar firms like M-KOPA offer off-grid solutions that free households from KPLC's frequent blackouts and high tariffs, forcing the agency to integrate renewable options to stay relevant in a shifting market (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021).

Industry Rivalry

Rivalry among and within public agencies manifests as a struggle for resources, authority, and public trust, which often leads to overlaps and inefficiencies that hinder progress. In education, the Ministry of Education and TSC compete over teacher management, with disagreements on hiring and promotions slowing reforms like the Competency-Based Curriculum's rollout (Mule, 2025). Another case is that of the NHIF in the health sector, where private players offer insurance covers that are more attractive to customers coupled with faster claims processing. Similarly, KEMSA has been losing its market share to private suppliers, whose efficiency exposes the weaknesses in the public agency (Muthaka & Mwai, 2019; Yadav, 2014). In the transport sector, there are cases that show KeNHA and Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) experience conflict for control over road projects that is highlighted by duplication of responsibilities and wastage of resources. In the energy sector, KPLC faces off against independent power producers and solar innovators. Resultantly, the agency is increasingly pivoting towards the integration and diversification of renewable to maintain its market position (Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020; Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021). These rivalries in the different domains where the public agencies operate have the potential to spur innovation but can also increase the risk fragmentation in policy and governance where different public factions lack coordinated efforts to optimize performance and stakeholder satisfaction.

IV. Discussions

Applying Porter's Five Forces Framework to PASA in Kenyan public agencies offers a comprehensive analytical tool for policymakers, leaders, managers, researchers, and other stakeholders who wish to enhance services and products in a dynamic and competitive environment. This study reveals the competitive dynamics that influence public agencies and the considerations that must be adopted in reforms and changes that can improve service delivery and policy implementation. The following are the key themes emerging from the review:

Enhancing Public Sector Efficiency and Performance

An application of Potter's framework in how PASA has been exercised in Kenyan public agencies reveals that there are inefficiencies arising from the overlapping mandates, bureaucratic delays and institutional rivalries. As indicated by Onyango and Wanyoike (2021), Opere and Mwanzia (2024) and Momanyi et al. (2018), Kenyan public entities are often in competition for budgetary allocations and jurisdictional control in their respective areas of operation. Such actions therefore affect policy formulation and implementation that may result in duplication of responsibilities and wastage of public resources. For instance, the rivalry between the Ministry of Education and the TSC on the management of teachers has created operational friction that has resulted in delays in educational reforms in the implementation of the CBC (Mule, 2025). Recognizing such dynamics in the operation of public agencies is vital in enabling policymakers to define roles and jurisdiction in policy formulation. This can reduce on redundancies and enhance inter-agency collaboration to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency.

Strengthening Policy Formulation and Implementation

The review has established that although public agencies are vital in the process of translating policies into actual results, their effectiveness is vulnerable to external and internal pressures that arise from the environments in which they operate and the various groups of stakeholders that are involved. In this light, Porter's framework show how competitive forces and strategies can be used to inform evidence-based policy design. For example, the threat from private universities has forced HELB to change its funding model to stay competitive in the changing education sector (Olelo, 2022). Similarly, KEMSA procurement weaknesses highlighted by the competitiveness of suppliers has necessitated transparency reforms to bolster public healthcare and curtail corruption (Yadav, 2014). These findings enable policymakers to develop strategies that reduce competitive pressures and align agency mandates with national priorities.

Supporting Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Porter's framework shows that the success of public agencies is contingent upon PASA strategies that take advantage of developments in the private sector. This implies that the increasing influence of private-sector players in areas such as healthcare, education, and energy that have historically been the domain of public agencies makes a strong case for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). By examining the bargaining power of suppliers, buyers and substitutes, the review shows that strategic regulatory frameworks can promote improved collaboration with the private sector. For example, KPLC can gain from the involvement of Independent Power Producers (IPPs) when the policy framework is designed in a way that takes into consideration the interests of all the stakeholders (Odhiambo & Kamau, 2021). Policy reforms that support the involvement of PPPs can also be structured to improve cooperation between intergovernmental agencies such as KeNHA and KURA in infrastructure planning to optimize resources and align their organizational objectives with the overall national development goals (Kiptoo & Mwangi, 2020).

Encouraging Accountability and Transparency

Using Porter's framework, it is established that there is competition within the public sector, which has been instrumental in reforms by uncovering corruption and inefficiency. Furthermore, the competition in meeting citizens' demands and expectations has also increased accountability. Moreover, Mensi-Klarbach et al. (2013) shows that accountability and transparency in the public sector has improved as the civil society and media engage as watchdogs in public services and in roles played by agencies like the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC). This means that public pressure has led to reforms in the agencies which means that citizens as buyers of services can trigger governance improvements.

Adapting Public Agencies to Technological and Economic Changes

Public agencies in Kenya must synchronize their PASA activities with the global and technological developments which Porter's framework identifies as competitive factors. Public agencies gain better capabilities to satisfy citizens and stakeholders through their understanding of global competitive advantages and technological developments. Such developments open possibilities for public agencies to strengthen their collaboration efforts with private sector entities alongside NGOs and foreign governments (Nguyen et al., 2024).

V. Conclusion And Recommendations

Michael Porter's Five Forces Framework reveals how multiple competitive elements affect the leadership and management and performance of Kenyan public agencies. Public agencies encounter multiple shifting competitive forces consisting of new market entrants and forceful suppliers and vocal citizens along with substitute options and internal agency competition which require agile strategic approaches. The analysis reveals important factors that will enable PASA implementation to enhance operational performance and accountability and service delivery across all agencies while achieving Kenya's development targets. Foreign contractors have transformed KeNHA operations through their entry into the market which creates a Threat of New Entrants challenge. Suppliers maintain strong market power because KEMSA faces obstacles from private sector involvement and international pharmaceutical companies and KPLC faces operational and customer satisfaction risks from global fuel market changes. State agencies including NHIF and NTSA face customer power as citizens who demand better services which leads to agency reform and innovation. Public agencies need to innovate because private universities and renewable innovations have substituted their traditional functions. The competitive rivalry between the Ministry of Education and TSC shows why public institutions need to maintain unity through resolving overlapping authority issues. All Kenyan public agencies need to use strategic action to enhance policy implementation success while navigating their competitive environment. Public sector entities must focus on process optimization through technology adoption and partnership development and service diversification and citizen trust restoration to maintain their position in an evolving public sector. The insights demonstrate the necessity for public agencies to develop new strategies that establish a governance framework which responds to current needs while ensuring transparency.

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