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**Strategic Management Practices and Sustainable Competitive
Advantage in the Manufacturing Industries: Case of Inyange
Industries Ltd, Rwanda**

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Abstract

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of strategic management practices and sustainable competitive advantage and more specifically seeks to examine the effect of strategic planning practices, procurement management practices, corporate governance, and cost management practices on the performance. The study's population were the 90 senior managers of Inyange. Descriptive research design, correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to assess the data using SPSS version 24. Findings revealed that Strategic Planning Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.839** and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Strategic Procurement Management Practices has Positive moderate correlation with Sustainable Competitive Advantage (0.612 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage. This suggests that improved Strategic Procurement Management Practices help to improve Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Results of correlation analysis showed that Corporate Governance Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.773 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage of inyange industries. Results of correlation analysis showed that Strategic Cost Management Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.715 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage of inyange industries. The study concluded that there is significant and positive effect of Strategic Management Practices on the Sustainable Competitive Advantage of inyange industries. The study recommends that Inyange industries may emphasize in involving junior staff in the future planning of the company, as they are the future managers of the company.

Keywords: Strategic Planning Practice, Strategic Procurement Management Practices, Corporate Governance Practices and Strategic Cost Management Practices

1.0 Introduction

Sustained competitive advantage is obtained when a company creates or acquires a collection of attributes (or actions) that allow it to perform its competitors more effectively. Competition arises in any industry because of similarity in products or services aimed at the same group of customers (Barney, 1997). Sustained competitive advantages allow the organization to exploit opportunities and reduce risks to the environment (Kimberly, 2019). Competition is a tool for coordinating resource use to attain public policy goals. It is often used to enhance efficiency by allocating resources where they are likely to be of greatest value. The environment in which organizations function is never constant and given its configuration and forces therein, it presents exceptional encounters to organizations and their management and hence the need for crafting of appropriate and sustainable changes to deal with competition. Organizations are faced with challenges that force them to adjust or change (Burnes, 2004). More often, many organizations come up with new initiatives and strategies to cope with and manage changing environmental dynamics. The implications of change processes are regularly under-estimated by senior management and not managed adequately.

According to Daudi and Mbugua(2018) strategic management refers to the formulation and execution of major organizational goals while taking into consideration the resources available in the firm and the business environment in which it operates. On the other hand, Ncurai, Ng'ong'a, and Odero (2019) view the strategic management practices as set of decisions and actions undertaken in order to achieve the organizational mandates. Finally, Muse(2019) view the strategic management as the process of making decisions of organizational objectives, crafting action plans for those organizational objectives and allocating resources for the actualization of those plans. There are several components of the strategic management including strategic planning practices, strategic procurement management practices, corporate governance, and strategic cost management practices (Kaplan, & Norton, 2008).

1.2 Statement of the problem

The dynamism of industries in Rwanda following the liberalization of the industry, and the changes in the environment brought about by technological developments and adaptations have threatened the very survival of most industries. Most Industries have since ventured into the same line of production, thereby creating stiff competition. However, there has been growing concern the sustainability of these institutions due to intense competition witnessed both locally and globally as the industry become saturated.

Past studies on the influence of strategic management practice and sustainable competitive advantage are scarce. Most studies have focused on performance. Gasangwa (2018) conducted a study on competitive strategies. The study revealed that the industries employed competent staff, adopted quicker and cheaper transaction processing and offered unique and quality products and services. Umutoni (2019) investigated the influence of strategic management strategies with the findings indicating that cost leadership and differentiation strategies influence the customer base. Mukashema (2019) examined the factors influencing the sustainability of, and revealed that quality of service delivered, network, trained staff and cost of capital influenced sustainability. Wangure (2012) examined the influence of product differentiation in achieving a sustained competitive advantage using a survey design. The study found that assorted products and focused on the low-end market to outperform their competition. It is evident that limited attention has been placed on examining the influence of strategic management practices and sustainable competitive advantage

in the manufacturing industries. Previous studies have focused on other areas such as profitability and in other industries. This current study sought to bridge this gap.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of Strategic Management Practices and Sustainable Competitive Advantage: Case of Inyange Industries

1.3.1 Specific objective

- i. To assess the effect strategic planning practice on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries
- ii. To determine the effect of strategic procurement management practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries
- iii. To find out the effect of corporate governance practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries
- iv. To establish the effect of strategic cost management practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

H₀₁: There is no statistical significant effect of strategic planning practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange industries

H₀₂: There is no statistical significant effect of procurement management practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange industries

H₀₃: There is no statistical significant effect of corporate governance practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange industries

H₀₄: There is no statistical significant effect of cost management on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange industries

2.1 Literature Review

2.2 Theoretical Framework; Dynamic Capabilities Theory

David Teece, Gary Pisano and Amy Shuen developed the dynamic capabilities theory in 1997. Maingi, Awino., K`Obonyo and Pokhariya (2019) noted that the dynamic capabilities theory is an extension of the Resource Based Theory (RBT), which indicated that the firms gained competitive advantages due to the uniqueness of their resources. The dynamic capabilities theory is based on the dynamic capabilities which is the gaining of competitive advantage in the firm's area of operations through use of organizational resources and adjusting the use of these organizational resources to gain new advantages(Oladimeji, Amida, & Essien, 2020). In explaining the facets of dynamic capabilities theory, Maingi *et al.*, (2019) noted that the dynamic capabilities is composed of two terms that is dynamic and capabilities. In this context, the dynamic in dynamics theory relates to the ability of the firm to renew its competences and skills in response to the changing environment in which they operate. On the other hand, Maingi *et al.*, (2019) noted that the capabilities refers to the adaption, integration and redesigning of the internal and external organizational skills, resources and practical competencies to the changing environment. The foundation of the dynamic capabilities theory is the hyper competition that is present in the business world and the fast changing aspects in the operational environment (Kavita & Kimutai,

2018). Namada, Bagire, Aosa, and Awino (2017) argues that the contribution of the dynamic capabilities theory to the sustained competitive advantage is the explanation on why firms succeed or fail depending on their ability to strategically plan based on the changing environment.

The dynamic capabilities theory is utilized in this study in order to illustrate the link between strategic planning practices and sustained competitive advantage aspects. The strategic planning in respect to resources mobilization and usage, human resources mobilization and deployment, and intellectual properties is key to the sustained competitive advantage of firms through gaining of competitive advantages in firm operations.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Diverse studies have examined the link between strategic planning practices and sustained competitive advantage. In a study based in Kenya, Namada, Bagire, Aosa, & Awino, (2017) examined the link between strategic planning and sustained competitive advantage of export processing zones. The study examined the strategic planning in terms of alignment with the environment in which it operates from. The study used a sample size of 84 export processing firms and collected data using structured questionnaires. Namada *et al.*, (2017) found that strategic planning practices of resources planning, management participation in strategic planning and strategic planning tools had statistically significant influence on the sustained competitive advantage of the firms in export processing zones. These findings were consistent with those of Kiende, Mukulu, and Odhiambo (2019) who noted the importance of strategic aligning on the firm's resources with the existing economic opportunities in order to drive sustained competitive advantage further linked the strategic utilization of the human resources on the sustained competitive advantage of firms.

Based on the state corporations in Kenya, Mwangi, Kariuki, & Muturi, (2020) examined the association between strategic planning and sustained competitive advantage. In this study, the strategic planning was conceptualized as the decision-making in respect to organizational mission and vision as well as resource allocation to achieve those goals. The study adopted a cross sectional research design and utilized a target population of 200 state corporations. The study found that the strategic plan development had a statistically significant influence on the sustained competitive advantage. Amongst the aspects of strategic plan development that the study found to impact on the sustained competitive advantage include stakeholder engagement and involvement in the strategic plan formulation. These findings on the importance of stakeholder engagement is consistent with that of Okoth (2016) who had also noted the importance of stakeholder engagement in sustained competitive advantage aspects.

The strategic procurement management practices have been examined in respect to their influence on the sustained competitive advantage. Amongst the scholars that have sought to link influence of procurement management practices to sustained competitive advantage include (Basweti & Achuora, 2020), (Mahuwi & Panga, 2020), and (Gatobu, 2020) amongst others. According to Basweti and Achuora(2018) procurement management relates to the creation of alignment and consistent actions in establishment of the long term objectives and mandates of the procurement function.

Focusing on the state corporations in Kenya, Basweti and Achuora(2020) undertook a study that sought to link procurement management and sustained competitive advantage of the state corporations. The study utilized the descriptive research design and collected quantitative data using the structured questionnaires. The study found that various procurement management

practices influences sustained competitive advantage including supplier optimization aspects, supplier development, and strategic alliances practices that were found to improve on the sustained competitive advantage indicators of profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction. Basweti and Achuora (2020) further found that the procurement practices of just in time sourcing, vendor managed systems, and economic order quantity system plays a critical role in the sustained competitive advantage indicators of market share expansion, profitability, and customer satisfaction aspects.

The theme of supplier development that was linked to sustained competitive advantage by Basweti and Achuora (2020) is consistent with findings by Nabiliki, Wanyoike, and Mbeche(2019) in a study focusing on performance of food and beverages manufacturing firms, and Tindi and Kibet(2018) in respect to the performance of the Kenya Pipeline Company. Nabiliki *et al.*, (2019) found that the supplier development lead to improved sustained competitive advantage through improvement of the supplier performance capacity in terms of cost, quality, lead time, managerial capacity and financial capacity aspects. Tindi and Kibet (2018) study further found that the supplier development practices in terms of financial support, and supplier training had an influence on the sustained competitive advantage of Kenya Pipeline Company in terms of profitability and market performance.

The role of internal controls as a best corporate governance mechanisms on the sustained competitive advantage of organizations has been examined by diverse scholars. Mwangi and Muturi(2018) in a study focusing on the supermarkets in Kenya sought to examine the link between internal controls mechanisms and financial performance of those supermarkets. The study collected data from 184 licensed supermarkets and used structured questionnaires for data collection. Mwangi and Muturi (2018) found that there was statistically significant relationship between internal controls components and sustained competitive advantage. Mwangi and Muturi (2018) found that the corporate governance aspects linked to sustained competitive advantage included segregation of duties, prudent authorizations and approvals of financial resources, verifications and reconciliations of financial records, and internal auditing components. The findings by Mwangi and Muturi(2018) in regards to corporate governance are consistent with those of other scholars in the field of sustained competitive advantage. The theme of segregation of duties between staff has also been found by Kisanyanya and Omagwa(2018) who found segregation of duties between finance and accounts departments impacting on sustained competitive advantage; (Mwichigi & Atheru, 2019) and (Ahmed & Nganga, 2019) who also documented the importance of segregation of duties in sustained competitive advantage.

The cost management is a critical component of strategic management practices. According to Al-Rawi and Al-Hafiz(2018) the cost management as the collection of actual cost data, comparing with budget data, and then taking appropriate corrective action. Al-Rawi and Al-Hafiz (2018) noted that amongst the activities associated with the cost management included resource planning, cost estimate, cost balancing, and cost control activities.

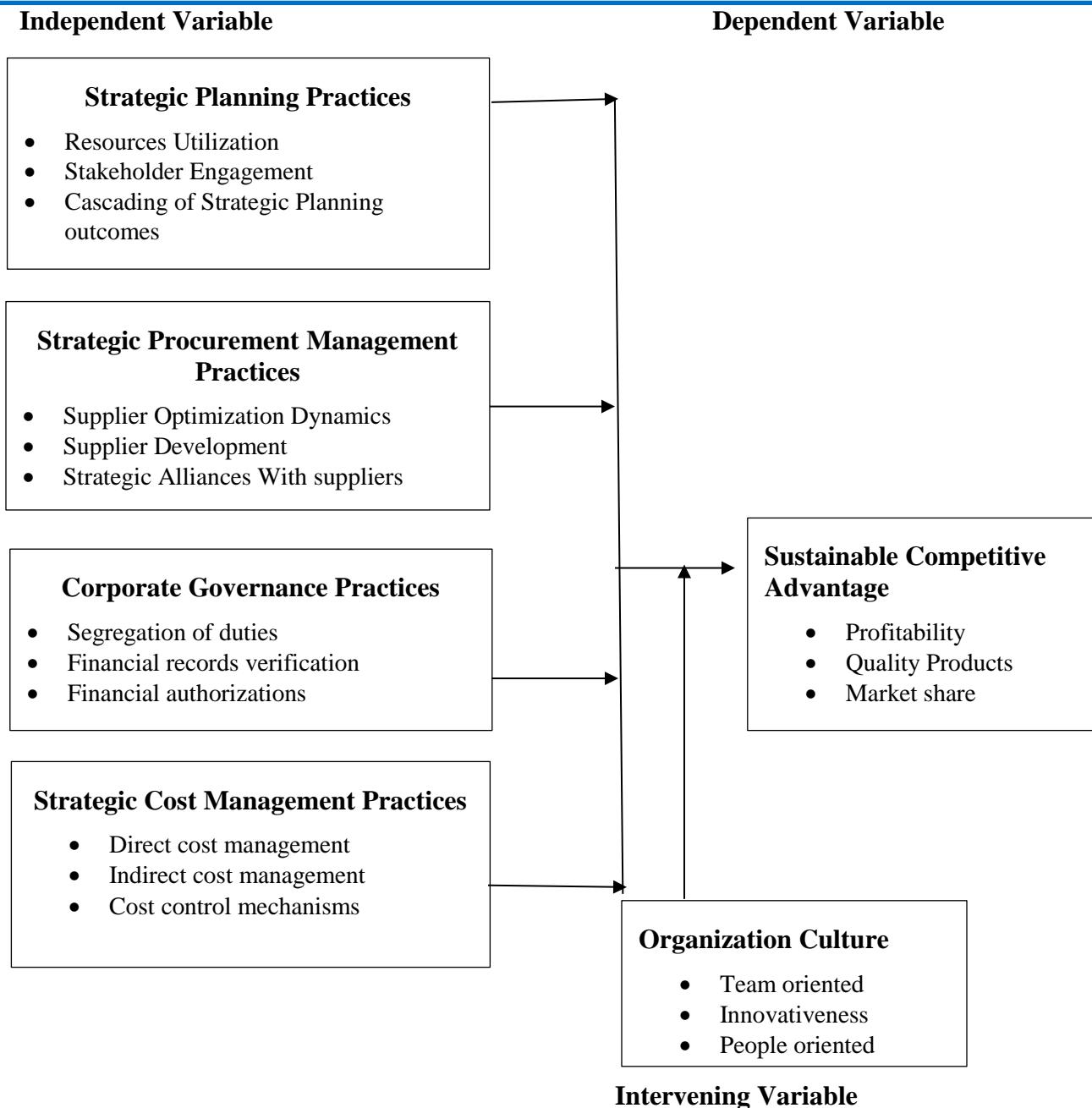
Diverse scholars have examined the role of the strategic cost management practices on sustained competitive advantage. Gitau (2019) undertook a study that sought to examine the influence of cost management on the financial performance as proxy for sustained competitive advantage in agribusiness enterprises in Kenya. The study utilized financial stewardship theory and panel descriptive research design for the research methodology components. The study conceptualized the cost management as the management of the direct and indirect costs of an organization. Gitau

(2019) found the cost management as a statistically significant predictor of the sustained competitive advantage. Amongst the aspects that were found to be of statistically significant influence to the sustained competitive advantage included the management of direct overhead costs and total costs of production. In examination of sustained competitive advantage of Kenya airways, Mungai and Orwa Bula (2018) examined the cost management in terms of cost reduction strategy on the performance of the Kenya airways. Using descriptive research design, the study found that reduction of direct costs was associated with improved sustained competitive advantage aspects.

In a study focusing on the manufacturing firms in Iraq, Al-Naser and Mohamed(2017) examined the role of strategic cost management on the sustained competitive advantage of those firms. The study viewed the strategic cost management in terms of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Balanced Scorecard (BSC). The study found that the strategic cost management drives the sustained competitive advantage in terms of customer satisfaction, financial perspective, innovation and business processes dynamics.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Effective practice of strategic management practices could positively influence sustained competitive advantage. The management of a firm applies strategic management practices when they decide on how to utilize the resources they have, engage their stakeholders in making plans and pass the strategic plan outcomes to their juniors to motivate them and improve the performance of the firms. In addition, strategic procurement management practices in firms lead to completion of projects in a timely manner within a set budget and the required quality which in turns transforms to profits and customer satisfaction. Corporate governance which are the systems and process through which entities are directed lead to mitigation of risks such as financial risks and stakeholder management thus improved performance in the firms. Strategic cost management is prudent in firms since there are a lot of finances that go into the purchase of materials or paying for other resources needed to run the firm. Management of these costs led to increased profits thus growth in the firm. Firm management should pay attention to how these strategic management practices are adopted to be able to improve the performance of firms.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

3.1 Research methodology

This study utilized correlational research design. The population of the study refers to the set of people or items that are information rich in the research phenomenon aspects and are thus in a position to shed light in respect to the research phenomenon. The target population here will be Inyange industries managers and supervisors. The target population in respect to the study was 90 managers of the Inyange Industries. Census technique was employed where all the managers will be involved in the study. The proposed research employed questionnaires in data collection.

Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires in the study. Quantitative data was analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27. There are two broad types of statistics that were used in the study, that is the descriptive statistics and the inferential statistics. The study used the frequency distributions, means and standard deviations for the purposes of the summarizing the information present in the collected questionnaire. The researcher utilized the multiple linear regression analysis for making inferences to the study. The regression analysis model that was used for the study is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \text{ where}$$

Y is the sustainable competitive Advantage

X_1 is strategic planning practice,

X_2 is strategic procurement management practices,

X_3 is corporate governance practices,

X_4 is strategic cost management practices, and

ε is the 5% margin of error

4.1 Findings and Discussion

The size of the sample of this study was composed by 90 managers and supervisors who were selected using census technique. All 90 questionnaires distributed were returned and they were effectively filled giving a response rate of 100%.

4.2 Correlations analysis

The linear correlation coefficient was determined using the Pearson coefficient of correlation to ascertain the strength and direction of the association between the research variables. The Pearson's coefficient of correlation is between +1 and -1. There will be no correlation between the two variables if the coefficient is zero. A positive correlation between the variables is indicated by a coefficient value greater than 0, therefore an increase in one variable will lead to an increase in the other and vice versa. If one variable's value is larger than 0 and the other variable's value is lower, there is a negative correlation between the two variables (Lohrey, 2014).

Finding the relationship between the independent variable Strategic Management Practices (measured by Strategic Planning Practices, Strategic Procurement Management Practices, Corporate Governance Practices and strategic cost management practices) and the dependent variable Sustainable Competitive Advantage (measured by Profitability, Quality Products, and Market share) and the was the aim of the study. To assess the degree of connection between the study variables and the outcomes, the Pearson's coefficient of correlation was applied to the survey data (r). The study's findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients

	Sustainable Competitive Advantage	X1	X2	X3	X4
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	1	0.839**	0.612**	0.773**	
Strategic Planning Practices	Pearson correlation	0.839**	1	0.847	0.464
Strategic Procurement Management Practices	Pearson correlation	0.612**	0.847**	1	0.635
Corporate Governance Practices	Pearson correlation	0.773**	0.464**	0.635	1
Strategic Cost Management Practices	Pearson correlation	0.715**	0.511**	0.819**	1
	N	90	90	90	90
					1

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

The study results presented in Table 1 shows that correlation between Strategic Management Practices of inyange industries, whereas Strategic Planning Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.839** and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage. This suggests that improved Strategic Planning Practices help to improve Sustainable Competitive Advantage. These findings are in line with Namada *et al.*, (2017) who found that strategic planning practices had statistically significant influence on the sustained competitive advantage of the firms in export processing zones in Kenya.

Strategic Procurement Management Practices has Positive moderate correlation with Sustainable Competitive Advantage (0.612 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage. This suggests that improved Strategic Procurement Management Practices help to improve Sustainable Competitive Advantage. These findings concur with those of Basweti and Achuora(2020) who discovered that various procurement management practices influences sustained competitive advantage including supplier optimization aspects, supplier development, and strategic alliances practices that were found to improve on the sustained competitive advantage indicators of profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction.

Corporate Governance Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.773 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Inyange industries. These findings are in line with those made by Mwangi and Muturi (2018), who found that the corporate governance aspects linked to sustained competitive advantage included segregation of duties, prudent authorizations and approvals of financial resources, verifications and reconciliations of financial records, and internal auditing components.

Strategic Cost Management Practices has Positive strong correlation (0.715 and P value =0.00) with Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Inyange industries. These findings are in line with those made by Gitau (2019), who found that cost management is a statistically significant predictor of the sustained competitive advantage

4.3 Multiple linear regression on the influence of Strategic Management Practices and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The study sought to identify the effect of Strategic Management Practices on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in manufacturing companies in Rwanda by using multiple linear regression model to determine the effect of independent sub-variables on each dependent variable in Inyange Industries. The regression models were run to test whether the model is significant or not. The statistical significance was verified by the Coefficient (β), t-statistic and Prob. In additional, statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable from the model were accepted at 5% significance level. The analysis applied the Statistical Product & Service Solutions (SPSS) version 24 to compute the measurements of the multiple regressions for the study. Model relationship with Strategic Management practices these variables can be arranged in a function or equation as follows:

$$\text{Sustainable Competitive Advantage} = Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon, \text{ Model 1}$$

X_1 = strategic planning practice (SPP), $=X_2$ = strategic procurement management practices (SPMP), X_3 = corporate governance practices (CGP), X_4 = strategic cost management practices (SCMP), ε = error term

Table 2: Model summary on effect of SMP on Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std Error of the estimate
1	.861a	.741	.724		0.38038

a. Predictors: (Constant): SPP, SPMP, CGP, and SCMP

The results from the above table 2 shows the multiple correlation coefficient (R) between the observed and predicted values is large (0.861) indicating a stronger relationship. The coefficient of determination - R Square stood at 0.741 which indicates that 74.1% of variations in the Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries was explained by variation in the independent variables namely strategic planning practice, strategic procurement management practices, corporate governance practices, and strategic cost management practices. A test to check the fitness of the model by reducing the number of predictors yielded a reduction in value of adjusted R square, implying the current model performs better than the alternatives. This means that other factors not included in this model influence the Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries at only 25.9% level, and SMP influence it at 74.1%.

Table 3: ANOVA between SMP on Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.654	4	6.414	44.326	.000a
	Residual	8.971	85	0.145		
Total		34.625	89			

a. Predictors: (Constant): SPP, SPMP, CGP, and SCMP

b. Dependent variable: Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The findings in the table 3, indicate that the overall model was significant shown by F statistic of 44.326 and p-value calculated =0.000 is less than Critical p-value =0.05 level of significant. Therefore, this implies that jointly the variables strategic planning practice, strategic procurement management practices, corporate governance practices, and strategic cost management practices had significant influence to the variation of Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries. Therefore, it can be concluded that the R and R2 between strategic management practices and Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries is statistically significant.

Table 4: Regression coefficients between SMP on Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.678	0.377		4.451	0.000
	SPP	0.313	0.21	0.24	1.487	0.042
	SPMP	1.269	0.318	0.964	3.992	0.002
	CGP	0.816	0.122	0.781	6.696	0.000
	SCMP	0.811	0.229	0.528	7.911	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable Competitive Advantage

The findings in table 4, indicate the resulting regression equation as:

$$Y = 1.678 + 0.313X1 + 1.269X2 + 0.816X3 + 0.811X4$$

The regression equation indicates that given all variables at zero value, Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries will be at 1.678 units. The equation further shows that when all other variables are held constant at zero, a unit increase in strategic planning practice yields a 0.313 increase in Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries. These findings agree with the study by Mwangi, Kariuki, and Muturi (2020) who examined the association between strategic planning and sustained competitive advantage in state corporations in Kenya. The study found that the strategic plan development had a statistically significant influence on the sustained competitive advantage.

In addition, considering all other variables constant at zero, a unit increase in strategic procurement management practices leads to 1.269 increase in Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries. These findings align with positions taken by previous researchers such as Abbey and Ong'anya (2019) who found that the procurement has positive and statistically significant influence on the profitability of the Foam Mattress Manufacturing Firms in Uganda.

Similarly, a unit increase on corporate governance practices leads to 0.816 increase in Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries. These findings support Mwangi and Muturi(2018) who found that there was statistically significant relationship between internal controls components and sustained competitive advantage in the supermarkets in Kenya.

Lastly, while holding other predictors constant at zero a unit increase in the strategic cost management practices leads to 0.811 increase in Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries. These findings agree with Gitau(2019) undertook a study that sought to examine the

influence of cost management on the financial performance as proxy for sustained competitive advantage in agribusiness enterprises in Kenya, and found that cost management was a statistically significant predictor of the sustained competitive advantage.

Based on regression statistics, all regression coefficients were found to have a positive and significance effect on the Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Inyange Industries at 5% level of significance. This led to the rejection of all the null hypotheses.

5.1 Conclusion

On the basis of findings from chapter 4, the study concluded that there is significant and positive effect of Strategic Management Practices on the Sustainable Competitive Advantage of inyange industries. Therefore based on the result showed from the test of hypotheses in table 4.12, all null hypotheses were rejected at 5% level of significance due to the fact that the results indicated that the variables: Strategic Planning Practices, Strategic Procurement Management Practices, Corporate Governance Practices and strategic cost management practices had significant effects to the variation of Sustainable Competitive Advantage in inyange industries measured in terms of Profitability, Quality Products, and Market share. Therefore, objectives of this research were so achieved very well.

6.1 Recommendations

The findings showed that respondents disagreed with a statement stating that In their firm the future plans of the company are communicated to the junior staff efficiently as indicated with a low mean= 2.97 and heterogeneity standard deviation of 0.82 implying that the respondents have dissimilar views upon the statement. Hence, the study recommends that Inyange industries may emphasize in involving Junior staff in the future planning of the company, as they are the future managers of the company.

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