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**THE INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES ON THE GROWTH
OF AGRIBUSINESS SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KIAMBU COUNTY**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MANAGEMENT IN AGRIBUSINESS OF STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY**

JUNE, 2023

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not been previously submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the dissertation itself.

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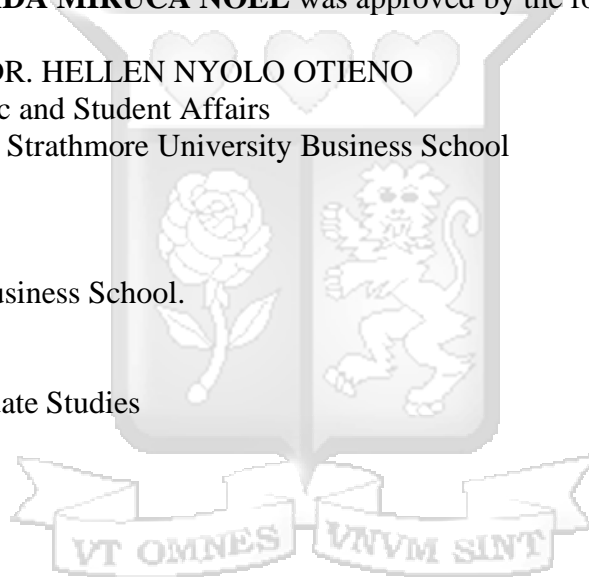
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I wish to express my sincere gratitude and warm appreciation to my supervisor and lecturer Dr Hellen Otieno who contributed significantly in helping me shape this valuable piece of work.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother who has continuously supported and prayed for me and for instilling the virtue of patience, hard work and discipline all of which were crucial in the completion of this thesis.



ABSTRACT

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the foundation of most economies. They provide a source of dynamism, economic growth, and flexibility in developed and developing countries. Despite the rising number of SMEs in these developing nations, gross domestic product (GDP) contribution is below 50%. Moreover, only 70% of SMEs pass the five years milestone. Therefore, this study sought to examine the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objective: To determine the influence of strategic competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County; To assess the effect of relationship competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County; To determine the influence of leadership competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County; To determine the influence of innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County. The study was guided by the entrepreneurial competency theory which emphasizes the necessity for a mix of skills to achieve entrepreneurial objectives. A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was adopted. 290 agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County made up the target population. The study used a census sampling technique where 290 entrepreneurs of the agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County were sampled. Data was collected from 290 SMEs through structured questionnaires, providing insights into the role of entrepreneurial competencies in the Kenyan agribusiness sector. A limitation faced during data collection was that some of the entrepreneurs were not willing to participate in the study, therefore, the researcher educated them on the study objectives and assured them that confidentiality would be maintained. The research employed a quantitative approach, using simple linear regression analysis to investigate the impact of these competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs. The results revealed that strategic, leadership and innovative competencies had a significant positive impact on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. However, relationship competencies were not found to have a significant influence on business growth. The findings suggested that fostering strategic, leadership and innovative competencies among entrepreneurs could contribute to the growth and success of agribusiness SMEs in the region. This study contributed to the understanding of entrepreneurial competencies in the context of agribusiness SMEs and provided valuable insights for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and educators to develop targeted interventions and training programs that enhanced the growth potential of SMEs in the agribusiness sector. Additionally, the research identified potential avenues for future investigation such as examining the impact of entrepreneurial competencies in different industries and use of robust research designs.

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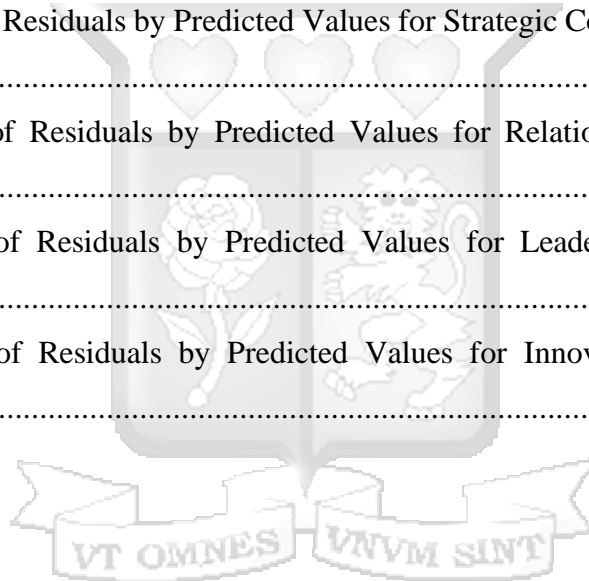
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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CGK:	County Government of Kiambu
KNBS:	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
SMEs:	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
OECD:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa



CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the foundation of most economies. They provide a source of dynamism, economic growth, and flexibility in developed and developing countries (Masira, 2014). According to Singh, Siddiqui, and Shukla (2021), SMEs employ 14.9 million people, of whom 12.1 million are employed in enterprises; however, the sector remains highly informal, as only 20% of the 7.4 million SMEs operate as licensed entities. The role of SMEs in terms of employment creation, income generation, economic diversification, and growth makes the sector an important factor in future industrial development for the country. In the developing world and in particular, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), SMEs are predominant; for instance, 95% of businesses in Nigeria are SMEs (Achetenghagen & Brundin, 2016) and contribute approximately 49% to the GDP and 84% of employment in the country (PWC, 2021). In South Africa, 99% of the businesses are SMEs, contributing 52% to the GDP and 29% to employment (PWC, 2021). Despite the rising number of SMEs in these developing nations, gross domestic product (GDP) contribution is below 50% as compared to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, where SMEs contribute approximately 60 - 70% to the GDP (OECD, 2020). Additionally, SMEs' employment in Asia is 74.4%, 62.1% in Latin American countries, and 73.1% in OECD nations (OECD, 2020). The SMEs sector primarily comprises - enterprises (98.3%) and contributes approximately 40% to the GDP (Singh, Siddiqui & Shukla, 2021). For instance, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2016) posits that SMEs in Kenya employ approximately 84% of the nation's workforce and contribute 33.8% of the GDP.

A report by the OECD (2020) indicates that only 70% of SMEs pass the five years milestone. This implies that a significant portion, 30%, of SMEs fail to achieve long-term success due to factors such as bankruptcy resulting from a deficiency in knowledge, skills, and experience necessary for penetrating new markets (Achetenghagen & Brundin, 2016). The absence of entrepreneurial competencies impedes SMEs in identifying and capitalizing on new market trends, developing effective business strategies, managing finances, and promoting products or services. Consequently, the SMEs experience stagnant growth, financial difficulties, and ultimately fail to survive in a competitive business environment (Al-Mamun, Nawi & Zainol, 2016). Therefore,

fostering and enhancing entrepreneurial competencies among entrepreneurs is crucial for improving the performance and longevity of SMEs.

1.1.1 Entrepreneurship Competence and Business Growth

Entrepreneurial competency has its foundation in competence and entrepreneurship (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). According to Vijay and Ajay (2011), competence is an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and superior performance in a job. According to Kimeu (2017), entrepreneurial competencies refer to the cognitive and non-cognitive skills needed in the different stages of a business. Cognitive skills refer to mental abilities related to thinking, reasoning, and perception, such as memory, attention, problem-solving, and decision-making. On the other hand, non-cognitive skills refer to personal attributes, behaviors, and traits that are not directly related to thinking and perception, such as motivation, persistence, emotional intelligence, social skills, and self-discipline. Cognitive and non-cognitive skills are identified by several constructs, including mobilizing resources, creativity, financial literacy, planning, teamwork, and managing ambiguity (Abdul, 2019).

Competency is a broader concept that includes the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills that help a person capable of transforming his ideas into realities with excellence in performance in a given context. It does not refer to those behaviors which do not demonstrate excellent performance. Finally, competencies are not work motives but include observable behaviors related to motive (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Each entrepreneur exhibits different competencies essential to maximizing opportunities within the business environment (Kimeu, 2017). Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) observe that influential entrepreneurs work beyond launching the business, sustaining the enterprise, and carrying it through the growth stage.

There are different areas of entrepreneurial competencies: strategic, leadership, innovative, relationship, operational opportunity, learning, human, and commitment (Abdul, 2019; Bavel, 2020). The study adopted Abdul's (2019) definition of entrepreneurial competencies as the specific abilities, skills, knowledge, and personal characteristics possessed by entrepreneurs that enable them to effectively identify and pursue business opportunities, manage risks, and achieve sustainable growth for their SMEs. This study focussed on Abdul's (2019) operationalization of entrepreneurial competencies into strategic, leadership, innovative, and relationship competencies.

This is because the four competencies enable entrepreneurs to make decisions as leaders and maximize their creativity while ensuring sustainable relations with all stakeholders. Moreover, the four entrepreneurial competencies are essential in ensuring that effective strategies are implemented, competent leaders develop relationships with stakeholders, and an organization embraces the latest innovations to remain competitive in the business environment.

Strategic competency was defined as the entrepreneur's ability to formulate and implement strategies based on the organization's goals/objectives (Hallyyev, 2019). Leadership competencies in this study are defined as the entrepreneur's ability to guide an organization toward attaining the set objectives and goals (Abdul, 2019). Duran et al. (2016) define innovative competency as the route by which firms create unique assets and achieve sustainable competitive advantage was adopted for the study. Relationship competencies in this study are the ability of small businesses to engage in relationship marketing. It can be part of social capital to provide opportunities to connect to various industries and the depth of closeness in relations (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). Kimeu (2017) explains that the skills of entrepreneurs are not static in that they keep on changing from each developmental stage of a business to the other. Therefore, entrepreneurs must understand the changes accompanying growth to adjust as needed for the next growth phase (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010).

Growth is described as a variation in size within a specific period (Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007). A venture's growth is due to increased demand for products and services (Janssen, 2009). Growth first results in advancement in sales, followed by investments in production to match the increase in demand. Different scholars have conceptualized growth differently. For instance, Achtenhagen et al. (2010) listed growth indicators as sales growth, increase in employees, profit, assets, and growth in the value of the venture and internal development. Brush et al. (2009) described growth as a geographical extension, growth in the venture's outlets and portfolio of products/services, acquisition of novel markets and customers, fusions, and acquisitions. This study adopted Yego's (2014) definition of growth as an increase in sales within a firm and is typically associated with increased output and resources. Moreover, in accordance with Pettersson (2013), operationalization of growth, this study measured growth using customer loyalty, repeat purchases and expansion plans.

Business growth is a precondition to the sustenance and survival of the business. An enterprise that does not show growth over time must be closed due to obsolete products/services (Abdul, 2019). According to Abdul (2019), the factors associated with growth differ from enterprise to enterprise. Growth is attained by an organization that can gain a competitive advantage, hence ensuring its survival in a competitive business environment. The sustainable growth of an enterprise is associated with its ability to identify its limitation and strengths. According to Yego (2014), growth is attained through effectively using capabilities and resources. An enterprise needs to leverage its competencies and resources in a turbulent business environment to record better performance. According to Mungai (2010), the growth of an enterprise is essential in attracting and maintaining a wide range of customers.

The focus on entrepreneurial competencies in the extant literature is due to the agreed concept that competent entrepreneurs can make the appropriate decisions that significantly impact growth. There is widespread acknowledgment that the success, performance, survival, and growth of an SME are heavily dependent on the competencies of the entrepreneur (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). Different scholars have focused on business growth by operationalizing entrepreneurial competencies differently. For instance, Kimeu (2017) evaluated the success of businesses as influenced by entrepreneurial competencies as measured by innovativeness, creativity, and risk-taking competencies. Hallyyev (2019) operationalized entrepreneurial competencies into strategic, commitment, conceptual, opportunity, organizing and leading, relationship, learning, personal, ethical, and social responsibility competencies to explain business success.

Moga (2021) looked at entrepreneurial competencies in terms of marketing, research and development, and human resource and financial resource competencies in explaining the success of businesses. The complexity of business operations in a continuously changing competitive business environment that results from fast technological advancements requires quick remedial action (Otieno, Bwisa & Kihoro, 2012). An entrepreneur is expected to interact with these environmental forces, which require him to be highly competent in intellectual, attitudinal, behavioral, technical, and managerial aspects (Penchev & Salopaju, 2011). Therefore, entrepreneurs are challenged to deploy competencies to grow in their entrepreneurial endeavors (Kochadai, 2012).

Endi, Suracham, Armanu, and Djumilah (2013) found that entrepreneurial competencies propel business growth; the higher the competence SME owners portray, the higher the likelihood of business growth. Business stagnation is due to SME owner-managers' incompetence, inadequacy, and inexperience in managing their business and taking quick remedial action in crises. Entrepreneurial competencies portfolio positively impacts business growth as such are positively related to entrepreneurial survival. Hallyyev (2019); Sarwoko (2016) found that strategic competencies positively impact business growth. Relationship and leadership competencies were also established to positively influence growth by Akinyemi (2017) and Tshwete (2020), respectively. Moga (2021); Minai et al. (2018) found a positive relationship between innovative competencies and business growth. However, other scholars such as Marmaya (2018); Frank, Kessler, and Fink (2010) found that entrepreneurial competencies hurt the survival of organizations. Based on the review of extant literature, mixed findings have been reported. Therefore, focusing on agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, this study assessed the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and growth.

1.1.2 Small and Medium Enterprises in the Agricultural Sector in Kiambu County

KIPPRA (2010) describes small and medium enterprises as businesses with fewer than 250 employees. In the last three decades, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of developing entrepreneurship and small business management in Kenya for sustained economic growth, rapid employment generation, and poverty eradication (Abdul, 2019). SMEs form one of the Kenyan economy's fastest-growing and most dynamic sectors. Kenyan SMEs comprise a combination of self-employment businesses that involve a wide range of activities in both urban and rural centers (Masira, 2014). The SMEs cut across all industries and sectors in the economy of Kenya and are a source of employment, facilitating generating income and eradicating poverty (Njenga, 2018). The SME sector is essential in the economy's transition by making available affordable and high-quality goods and services to a large population of people, especially those in rural settings. Moreover, SMEs offer employment to a large group of individuals without requiring that they possess specific training, large sums of capital, or even sophisticated technology skills.

In Kenya, Agriculture is a principal economic activity that is a source of income for 17.45% of the population (CGK, 2017). The agricultural sector is leading in ensuring food security, and employment, as a source of income and contributes to the socio-economic welfare of people. Many

people in Kenya rely on the agricultural sector to earn a living, with approximately 304,449 individuals employed in the agricultural sector, as espoused by the CGK (2017). Therefore, understanding the importance of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of SMEs in Kiambu County can be a foundation upon which to develop communication, support, and policy interventions (Taneja & Toombs, 2014). The acknowledgment that entrepreneurial competencies are essential to the success of a business, irrespective of size, is potent in ensuring the growth of SMEs (Abdul, 2019). This is because while SMEs in Kenya are increasing by approximately 30% still need to pass the five-year milestone and exhibit growth (OECD, 2020).

According to Mutira (2018), the Vision 2030 of Kenya identifies the agricultural sector as an essential element in attaining a 10% annual growth rate of the economy. The agribusiness sector has transformed from using the subsistence model to a commercially oriented, innovative, and competitive international and modern sector (Njenga, 2018). This transformation is motivated by agribusinesses, including all enterprises involved in producing, distributing, processing, marketing, and retail selling agricultural products. Kenya's Vision (2030) acknowledges agribusiness as a sleeping giant that can facilitate the growth of the agricultural sector. Kiambu County is a commercial hub for SMEs. Most owners of SMEs in Kiambu County invest primarily in agriculture and industries to sustain their economy (Njenga, 2018). There are 290 SMEs in the agricultural sector in the region (Kiambu Business Directory, 2019). Kiambu County is the region of study since the number of registered SMEs in the agricultural sector is higher than its neighbor Muranga County.

However, SMEs in Kiambu often face numerous challenges including limited access to capital, lack of market knowledge, inadequate technology adoption, and insufficient managerial skills (Wanjau, 2017). Moreover, there exist knowledge gaps that support the focus of the agricultural sector in Kiambu county. Scholars such as Abdul and Ngugi (2015) and Chomba (2019) assessed the application of entrepreneurial competencies in SMEs; the studies were situated in Nairobi County and Kirinyaga county, respectively. The study by Abdul and Ngugi (2015) though collected data from SMEs in Nairobi County, did not focus on any specific sector, such as the agribusiness sector, which is the focus of the current study. The study by Chomba (2019) in Kirinyaga County was not specific to the agricultural sector, presenting a research gap for further research on the business growth of SMEs in the agricultural sector. Moreover, the study by

Chomba (2019) was based in Kirinyaga County, while the present study was based in Kiambu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

SMEs are the lifeblood of the Kenyan economy as they constitute over 80% workforce and contribute over 30% of the country's GDP (KNBS, 2016). The Kenya Government development plans and policy documents, such as Sessional Paper No.2 of the 2005 Small Enterprises Act of 2012, have noted the importance of small enterprises in the economy as drivers of growth and employment. However, despite the importance of SMEs in providing employment and improving the economy, Musanga and Omboi (2015) found that the government rules that have been put in place have an impact on the majority of SMEs in Kiambu County. For struggling businesses, the cost of getting a business license is high since so many government agencies have developed various operational licenses, making the licenses excessively many and expensive to obtain. Due to the numerous procedures needed to register a firm, SMEs also need help operating as legal businesses. SMEs in Kiambu County face stiff competition from larger and established firms, which have more resources and can offer better prices (Wanjau, 2017). This competition can lead to lower profit margins and reduced market share.

Further, due to its strategic location next to Nairobi County, SMEs in Kiambu County often need help accessing markets beyond their immediate location. These challenges hinder the growth of SMEs in Kiambu County. Therefore, to counter these challenges, this research sought to understand the importance of entrepreneurial competencies as a driver of improving SMEs' growth.

Previous studies by Ahmad, Halim, and Zainal (2010) in Malaysia; Madatta (2011) in Tanzania; Ng and Kee (2013) in Malaysia; found a positive relationship between the existence of competencies and the growth of SMEs. The studies, though, revealed the direct relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and business growth were conducted over five years ago. Therefore, there is a need for similar up-to-date studies that accommodate the changes in economies over the years. Moreover, due to globalization, SMEs worldwide have embraced innovation and technology to promote growth. Therefore, an up-to-date study is essential considering the technological changes in SMEs. Wickramaratne, Kiminami, and Yagi (2014) in

Sri Lanka evaluated the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial orientation. Wickramaratne, Kiminami, and Yagi (2014) introduced the concepts of SMEs' survival and entrepreneurial orientation as the dependent variable. The current study assessed a different concept: business growth, a determinant of business survival. Studies by Tehseen and Ramayah (2015) in Malaysia; Sajilan, Tehseen, and Adeyinka-Ojo (2016) in India and China, though explained the concept of entrepreneurial competencies (measured by relationship competencies and leadership competencies, respectively), were based on secondary data. The current study collected both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the entrepreneurs, while secondary data was collected from published journals and reports.

In Kenya, Abdul and Ngugi (2015) and Chomba and Nyang'au (2019) defined entrepreneurial competencies as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes enabling an individual to start and grow a business successfully. Notably, Abdul and Ngugi (2015), while assessing the influence of these competencies on the growth of SMEs in Nairobi County, anchored their study on the resource-based theory, which holds that the growth of a firm depends on the resources it has at its disposal. On the other hand, Chomba and Nyang'au (2019), who focused on entrepreneurial competencies in the agricultural sector, anchored their study on the theory of planned behavior, which asserts that an individual's behavior is determined by their intention, which is, in turn, influenced by their attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The current study looked further into entrepreneurial competencies as the cognitive (mental abilities) and non-cognitive skills (personal attributes) needed in the different stages of a business. In light of this background, the study seeks to answer the research question: What is the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of SMEs in the agricultural sector of Kiambu County?

1.3 General Objective

The study's general objective was to determine the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County.

The following specific objectives guided the study.

- i. To determine the influence of strategic competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County.

- ii. To assess the effect of relationship competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County.
- iii. To determine the influence of leadership competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County.
- iv. To determine the influence of innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. What is the influence of strategic competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County?
- ii. What is the effect of relationship competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County?
- iii. What is the influence of leadership competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County?
- iv. What is the influence of innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in the Kiambu County?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study looked at the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on SMEs' growth in the agricultural sector in Kiambu County. The study focused on the strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies among the entrepreneurs of SMEs. SME entrepreneurs in Kiambu County's agricultural sector made up the study population. The study was limited to SME entrepreneurs operating in the agricultural sector. The study was guided by the entrepreneurial competencies theory to provide an understanding of the study variables (entrepreneurial competence and business growth). The data from the entrepreneurs of the agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County were collected in April 2023. The study collected quantitative data using a questionnaire which was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will benefit SME entrepreneurs by raising awareness of the need to acquire entrepreneurial competencies to ensure business growth. The entrepreneurs will be able to see the different forms of competencies they could adopt for the survival of their businesses. Entrepreneurs will use this study to implement strategies to ensure their businesses' growth. The study will also benefit scholars and researchers in the field of research. Future scholars will use this study to replicate similar research focusing on other sectors, such as the finance sector. Moreover, future scholars will use the study to identify conceptual gaps since the study only focused on four entrepreneurial competencies. Researchers will use the study as a foundation for assessing other entrepreneurial competencies, such as risk management and opportunity recognition that were not covered in this study.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The thesis is categorized into five chapters. Chapter one introduced the study by providing background, research problem, objectives, significance, limitations, scope, and organization. Chapter two focused on the study literature. It reviews the relevant literature on entrepreneurial competencies and business growth. Chapter three highlights the methods employed in conducting the study, from the design adopted, population and sample size, research instrument and procedure of gathering data, research instrument validity and reliability, and the analysis of the collected data. Chapter three ended by highlighting the ethical considerations that were adhered to throughout the study. Chapter four presents the empirical findings of the study. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the study's response rate, followed by a description of the sample characteristics and manifestation of study variables. The results are then discussed in relation to the research questions and objectives, with reference to relevant literature. Finally, chapter five summarizes the key findings of the study in relation to the research objectives and discusses the findings in relation to the extant literature. It also presents the conclusions drawn from the findings, emphasizing the implications and contributions of this research to the existing body of knowledge. Lastly, the chapter proposes recommendations based on the findings addressing the practical implications for stakeholders involved in the development and support of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, as well as identifying potential areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights extant literature on entrepreneurial competencies and business growth. The section covers the theories on which the study was anchored, followed by the empirical review of extant literature. The chapter ends with the conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section covers the theory anchoring the study. The entrepreneurial competencies theory was adopted for this study.

2.2.1 Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory

Bird's (1995) entrepreneurial competency theory emphasizes the necessity for a mix of skills to achieve entrepreneurial objectives. According to this view, competence is an entrepreneur's capacity to maintain a coordinated deployment of resources in such a way that the firm is aided in achieving its objectives. The approach emphasizes the importance of an entrepreneur's ability to improve his or her business. According to proponents of this theory, entrepreneurial competencies could contribute to company growth. According to Mwangi (2018), competencies are divided into natural and artificial categories. Natural competencies influence attitudes, personality, and self-image in the same way that any other attribute does. On the other hand, artificial competencies are adventurous, such as experience, skills, and knowledge (Barazandeh, Parvizian, Alizadeh, & Khosravi, 2015).

The entrepreneurial competencies theory is built on two assumptions; intentionality and goal directedness. The theory assumes that entrepreneurs engage in intentional actions, meaning that their behaviors are deliberate and purposeful. This intentionality is based on their aspirations, motivations, and vision for their entrepreneurial ventures (Bird, 1995). The theory further assumes that entrepreneurial behavior is goal-directed, meaning that entrepreneurs set specific objectives and work towards accomplishing them. However, the entrepreneurial competencies theory has been criticized by Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad (2014) for its limited focus on individual traits and skills. The authors argue that entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors, including environmental conditions, industry characteristics, and institutional

contexts. However, despite this criticism, the entrepreneurial competencies theory has been used by different scholars to provide a deeper understanding of entrepreneurial decision making.

Njiru and Njeru (2020) used the entrepreneurial competencies theory to explain that entrepreneurial abilities remarkably predict a business's performance, which leads to entrepreneurial success. Entrepreneurs can provide the appropriate external environment and opportunities due to their combination of abilities and maximize those opportunities for the business's success. Notably, all entrepreneurs exhibit crucial competencies; as a result, business success can be distinguished based on the competencies. In the same way, entrepreneurial competencies are linked to economic success; they can also help any entrepreneur grow their business.

The Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory was essential for this study since it plays a vital role in studying the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of SMEs in the agricultural sector of Kiambu County, as it provides a clear understanding of what factors are necessary for entrepreneurs to be successful. Furthermore, the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory provides a comprehensive and systematic approach to analyzing the key factors that impact SME growth, making it an invaluable tool for policymakers and practitioners seeking to support SMEs in the agricultural sector of Kiambu County. Ultimately, the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory played a critical role in helping researchers understand the key factors that drive SME growth and provides valuable insights that can be applied to support the growth and success of SMEs in the agricultural sector.

2.3 Empirical Review

This section covered up-to-date literature based on the specific objectives of the study. The sub-sections included in the empirical review are; strategic competencies and business growth, relationship competencies and business growth, leadership competencies and business growth, and innovative competencies and business growth.

2.3.1 Strategic Competencies and Business Growth

According to Hallyyev (2019) strategic competencies refer to the abilities and skills possessed by an entrepreneur to develop and execute effective strategies in alignment with the organization's goals and objectives. Candra and Soelaiman (2022) conducted a study to examine the impact of

four competencies - strategic competence, ethical competence, entrepreneurial orientation, and network competence - on the growth of culinary businesses in Belitung Island. The authors used structural equation modeling to analyze data collected from a sample of culinary business owners in Belitung Island. The results showed that all four competencies had a positive and significant impact on the growth of culinary businesses, with network competence having the most potent effect on business growth. The study focused on the short-term impact of competencies on business growth but does not explore the long-term impact. Further research could examine the long-term impact of competencies on business growth to understand the relationship between the two variables better. The study focused on the short-term impact of competencies on business growth but does not explore the long-term impact. This study looked at the long-term effect of entrepreneurial competencies on business growth.

Hallyyev (2019) investigated the influence of owner entrepreneurial competencies on business success and the relationship between demographic variables (training, experience, education) and entrepreneurial competencies. Entrepreneurial competencies were operationalized as strategic, commitment, conceptual, opportunity, organizing and leading, relationship, learning, personal, ethical, and social responsibility competencies. Primary data were gathered from businesses in Ankara, Turkey. The sample involves 44 private-sector business owners. Data were analyzed using a simple regression analysis method. The study established that strategic competencies in the form of organizational goals have a direct and significant relationship with business success. The study was based on a sample of businesses in Turkey, which may not represent businesses in other regions or countries such as Kenya. Entrepreneurial competencies were operationalized as strategic, commitment, conceptual, opportunity, organizing and leading, relationship, learning, personal, ethical, and social responsibility competencies. The study did not operationalize entrepreneurial competencies into innovative competencies, a critical component in driving the success of any business, especially in the current technologically advanced business environment. The current study addressed this conceptual gap by operationalizing entrepreneurial competencies into strategic, relationship, leadership and innovative competencies.

Sarwoko (2016) evaluated growth strategy as a mediating variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and performance. The author targeted 243 nurturing SMEs and adopted Structural Equation Modeling to undertake the analysis. According to the author, strategic

competencies exhibited by an entrepreneur allow professionals to develop a strategic vision which is essential in improving the performance of a business while at the same time driving growth. The study is critical to this study since it emphasizes the concept of entrepreneurial competencies in SMEs. Following, the conclusion is drawn by the author that strategic competencies, as measured by the business vision and goals, drive business growth; this study seeks to determine whether the same concept is applicable among SMEs within the agricultural sector in Kiambu County. The study relied on Structural Equation Modeling which is not based on raw data rather it is based on empirical covariance. This study relied on regression analysis which is based on raw data hence increasing the validity of the data

Sakib et al. (2022) sought to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on the performance of SMEs in Bangladesh, employing a structured questionnaire to collect data from 115 entrepreneurs. They used the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method to establish the causal relationships between various entrepreneurial competencies, including organizing and leading, learning, relationship, commitment, strategic, and opportunity competencies, and SME performance. Their findings deviated from commonly held views in the literature; while organizing and leading, learning, relationship, and commitment competencies were found to significantly influence SME performance, strategic and opportunity competencies did not exhibit any impact.

Vijay and Ajay (2011) studied entrepreneurial competency in SMEs in India. They developed a theoretical framework to link entrepreneurial competencies and business success by taking into consideration the various roles held by entrepreneurs in managing their own business but based upon the contention that calls researchers to focus on the contribution and ability of the business owners in generating successful ventures. The study posited that the competency model could shed some light on ways to increase the likelihood of business survival and success, especially in a developing country. The study concluded that the complexity of tasks undertaken by entrepreneurs dictates that they need business agenda that would ensure their survival and success in the industry. Their business vision and personal goals are also believed to affect how they run their organization. The study concluded that entrepreneurs should equip themselves with strategic competencies to develop a clear vision and objectives. This study adopted Vijay and Ajay's (2011) definition of strategic competencies as an entrepreneur's capacity to formulate and implement different

strategies to facilitate the attainment of business goals. The study was conducted in India, a country situated in Asia. Due to the differences in the economies of doing business in India versus Kenya, the study cannot be generalized for similar research in Kenya where the current study was located.

2.3.2 Relationship Competencies and Growth of SMEs

Relationship competences refer to a small business's ability to engage in relationship marketing, and they can be a form of social capital in that they provide possibilities to connect with people from various industries and a level of intimacy in relationships (Taneja, & Toombs, 2014). A study by Hallyyev (2019) on the influence of owner entrepreneurial competencies on business success collected primary data from 44 private-sector business owners. The study found that relationship abilities are strongly associated with a company's growth. However, while formal and informal networks are linked to SME survival, only formal networks are linked to growth. The study by Hallyyey (2019) provided insights into relationship competencies in streamlining operations; however, the study focused on private large organization while the focus of the current study was on SMEs, a sector that largely contributes to economies and, in particular, developing economies such as Kenya.

In the study by Tehseen, Qureshi, and Ramayah (2018), the authors examined the impact of network competence on the performance of firms owned by Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs. Relationship competence refers to the ability of an entrepreneur to network and build relationships with other individuals and organizations effectively. The study uses a multigroup analysis to compare the impact of relationship competence on the performance of firms owned by Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs. The results show that relationship competence positively impacts firm performance for both Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs. However, the strength of this impact may vary depending on cultural and contextual factors. The study was comparative. This study specifically focussed on one case study, the agribusiness SMEs in Kenya.

Focusing on SMEs in Finland, Akinyemi (2017) evaluated the role of entrepreneurial competencies in business. Qualitative data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with employees from 6 SMEs in Finland. The results indicated that relationship competencies concerning communication are essential in promoting business success. According to the author, communication in the business sector requires engaging the employees and the customers to build

solid and sustainable business relationships. The authors argued that through strong relationships and contacts with all stakeholders, an organization could grow at a sustainable pace. Similar to the study by Akinyemi (2017), this study seeks to establish whether relationship competencies play an essential role in promoting SME growth within the agricultural sector in Kiambu County. The study only collected data from 6 SMEs. This study collected data from a large population of 290 SMEs to ensure that adequate data is collected.

A study by Lee, Lee, and Shim (2016) assessed entrepreneurial characteristics. The study used secondary sources of data to assess entrepreneurial competencies. The results indicated that relationship competencies were essential for the survival of businesses. The authors argued that relationship competencies are developed by engaging in accessible communication among stakeholders and developing strong relationships with stakeholders. The empirical format used in obtaining study findings could have been more robust, requiring primary data to be collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial characteristics, particularly among SMEs.

The study conducted by Ibidunni, Ogundana & Okonwo (2021) investigated the role of entrepreneurial competencies in enhancing the innovative performance of SMEs in Nigeria's informal sector and their mitigating role in the face of environmental pressures. Through a survey of 296 entrepreneurs and using SEM-PLS multivariate analysis, the study concluded that competencies including organizing, conceptual, learning, strategic, opportunity, and risk-taking were integral to achieving higher innovation performance and could assist in navigating environmental pressures from operational turbulence and policy changes. Interestingly, the study found that relationship competencies, defined as the ability of SMEs to network with other firms, did not significantly influence the performance of these informal SMEs in Nigeria. This finding suggests that the impact of relationship competencies can vary based on specific socio-cultural and business environments. This research contributes to the literature by offering a guide on priority competence areas for investment by entrepreneurship stakeholders.

Omar (2015) researched the entrepreneurial competencies of Muslim women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The study was qualitative and targeted businesswomen in Johor, Malaysia. The study established that relationship competencies were critical in determining the growth of a business.

Moreover, the findings indicated that business networks are established during the startup and are used to run the business operation. Notably, the author argued that other networks with financial institutions, the government, and other entrepreneurs are formed during the developing phase of a business. Contrary to Kenya, where women entrepreneurs are not limited by their religion in business, in Malaysia, because a large portion of the population is Muslim, women entrepreneurs face the challenge of interacting with males and accessing finances. Therefore, the relationship competencies developed by Muslim women entrepreneurs become critical in starting and maintaining their SMEs. The study focused on businesses operated by Muslim women only. This study was biased and collected data from both men and women who own agribusiness SMEs irrespective of their religion.

2.3.3 Leadership Competencies and Growth of SMEs

A study by Tshwete (2020) assessed the growth strategies adopted by companies in South Africa. The focus of the study was on SMEs in the ICT industry. Interview guides were developed to gather primary data, which was analyzed using a thematic format. The study found that leadership competencies are essential in identifying and deploying capabilities required for business growth. The study observed that despite the benefits yielded from leadership competencies, the SME sector needed to improve in the implementation of such competencies. The author argued that entrepreneurs that leadership competencies in team building facilitate smooth and fast adoption of innovation, thus driving growth. Therefore, based on the conclusion drawn by Tshwete (2020), this study seeks to determine whether SMEs in Kiambu County are diligent in adopting leadership strategies for business growth. The study focused on the ICT sector, this presents a contextual gap for further research to focus on different sectors. To address the contextual gap, the current study focussed on agribusiness SMEs

Abdul (2019) sought to assess how entrepreneurial competencies impact SMEs' survival. The study adopted a descriptive research design. 400 was the sample size of SMEs used. Following the stratified random sampling technique, the study sample was 400 SMEs. The study indicated that risk-taking positively impacts SMEs' survival in Kenya, thereby increasing their chances of survival. The study established that leadership competencies (as measured by the leaders being results-driven, encouraging communication among staff, and encouraging teamwork) influence business survival. Therefore, the study indicated that entrepreneurs should be strategic in their

risk-taking for survival. The study is essential since it explains leadership competencies in driving business success. The study was based in Nairobi County, with a focus on SMEs in the manufacturing sector. The study collected data from Kiambu, a neighbouring county of Nairobi. Further, the focus of the study was on agribusiness SMEs. Therefore, concerning SMEs in Kiambu County, the researcher sought to assess whether the entrepreneurs within the agricultural sector employ leadership competencies (facilitating communication and team building) as strategies for business growth.

Sajilan, Tehseen, and Adeyinka-Ojo (2016) looked at a conceptual framework of the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on SMEs' performance in the Malaysian Hospitality and Tourism Industry (HTI). The study set out to achieve two objectives. The first is to identify the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on the business performance or success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Malaysian hospitality and tourism industry (HTI). The second objective was to develop a framework for the SME's entrepreneurial competencies and business performance indicators in the HTI. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was adopted to analyze the extant literature work reviewed. The findings showed that the SME's business performance depends significantly on internal and external factors, including financial and non-financial measures. Similarly, based on the combination of significant features such as (a) the leadership competencies; (b) the small firm's characteristics; and (c) the firm's development strategies, entrepreneurial competencies have an impact on the performance of SMEs within the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia. The study was specific to the hospitality and tourism sector; therefore, due to its differences with the agricultural sector, the study cannot be used to make accurate generalizations. This study focussed on agribusiness SMEs in Kenya.

Dola (2015) evaluated transformational leadership as an entrepreneurial competency and its impact on the performance of employees. The author argues that when some organizations seek efficient ways to outperform others, a longstanding approach is to focus on the effects of leadership. Entrepreneurial leaders are believed to be pivotal in shaping collective norms, helping teams cope with their environments, and coordinating collective action. This leader-centered perspective has provided a great understanding of the relationship between leadership style and team performance (Jing & Avery, 2011). According to the study, intangible assets such as leadership styles, culture, skill and competence, and motivation are seen increasingly as critical sources of strength in those

firms that can combine people and processes to improve performance. The study by Dola (2015) adopted employee performance as the dependent variable. Employee performance is essential for business growth since it is through the performance of employees that better performance is recorded, which ultimately indicates whether the organization has made profits or losses, indicators of growth. Therefore, this study argues that business growth is born from a ripple effect of different organizational outcomes, including profitability and employee performance.

Kehinde et al. (2014) assessed the influence of leadership competencies on the performance of employees in Nigeria. The authors argue that leadership is critical to the survival and effectiveness of an organization's performance. As organizations grow, the expectations about their performances increase, and the demand for good leadership tends to multiply. Leadership ability is a valuable skill, and those who possess it reap high rewards. They contend that, from every indication, there is a strong link between leadership strategies and the organization's survival. However, most leaders tend to learn more from failure than from success. The study focused on leadership competencies, which established that transformational leaders are vital in enhancing firm performance. The study argued that transformational leaders provide an environment for employees to exchange ideas and facilitate communication, which drives business growth. The focus of the study was on leadership competencies, presenting a gap for further studies to be conducted on different forms of competencies such as relationship, innovative and strategic competencies.

2.3.4 Innovative Competencies and Growth of SMEs

The study by Ayepa et al. (2019) examined the effects of innovativeness and firm resources on the growth of small enterprises in the South Municipality in Ghana. The researchers used a survey questionnaire to gather data from a sample of small enterprises in the area. The results showed that innovativeness and firm resources had a significant positive impact on the growth of small enterprises. The findings suggest that small enterprises in the Ga South Municipality can enhance their growth by investing in innovation and utilizing their resources effectively. The study emphasized the importance of innovativeness on growth; therefore, based on the findings, this study assessed how growth is influenced by innovativeness in SMEs. The study was based in the Ga South municipality of Ghana and targeted only small enterprises. The current study was based in Kenya and targeted both small and medium enterprises.

Kimeu (2017) evaluated how entrepreneurial competencies are acquired through risk-taking, innovation, and creativity and their influence on firm performance. The study sample was 150 entrepreneurs within the public transport sector. The study results indicated that creativity, risk-taking, and innovation competencies statistically and positively impact performance in the transport sector. A vital element of the study was that it was based on business performance rather than the individual entrepreneur's competency set. Future studies were therefore recommended to incorporate individual competencies into business performance. The study used subjective data in measuring business performance as all the respondents are from one area. This study was objective by collecting data from 290 SMEs hence having a clear understanding of the study variables. The study relied on an interview guide only to gather primary data. For an in-depth understanding of innovative competencies, the study should have applied different tools, including interview guides, questionnaires, and focus group discussions.

Abdilahi, Hassan, and Muhumed (2017) studied the impact of innovation on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The study used a sample of 150 SMEs and analyzed the data using regression analysis. The results showed that innovation had a positive and significant effect on the performance of SMEs. The study also found that various dimensions of innovation, including product innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation, were essential drivers of SME performance. The authors focus on measuring the effect of innovation on various dimensions of SME performance, including sales growth, market share, and profitability. The results of the study showed that innovation had a positive and significant effect on the performance of SMEs, which the authors interpreted as evidence of innovation's role in driving SMEs' growth and success. The study was, however, based in Somaliland, while the current study was based in Kenya.

Colombelli, Krafft, and Vivarelli (2016) evaluated the innovative competencies of entrepreneurs in SMEs in Italy. The study found that innovative startups survive longer than their non-innovative counterparts. According to Colombelli et al. (2016), more remarkable survival is achieved when startups engage successfully in both product innovation and process innovation, laying more emphasis on the latter. Process innovation rather than sole risky product innovation might assure higher chances of startup survival. The study was based in Milan in Italy, a developed country. Due to the differences in economies between Italy and Kenya, the current study mirrors the

research by Colombelli, Kraft, and Vivarelli (2016) to determine whether innovative competencies are a core component of day-to-day operations among SMEs in Kenya.

Aghion and Jaravel (2015) examined innovation as an entrepreneurial competency related to business growth. The authors argued that there is a positive impact of innovations on profits. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) pursuing an innovation strategy may benefit from reducing operational costs and speeding up production using different technologies. Since SMEs are nimbler than their larger counterparts, they can move faster and obtain these monopoly rents for a longer time. Introducing innovative products, services, processes, or business models tailored to attractive niches is an additional opportunity for SMEs to stand out. Serving attractive niches with innovative products is particularly advantageous for SMEs compared to large firms due to their limited size and greater nimbleness. The study relied on empirical data and thus needed to provide adequate and up-to-date data on innovation competencies.

2.4 Research Gap

The summary of the research gaps from the extant literature reviewed is presented on Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Summary of Research Gaps

Variable	Author	Title	Findings	Research Gap	Focus of the Study
Strategic Competencies	Candra and Soelaiman (2022)	The impact of four competencies - strategic competence, ethical competence, entrepreneurial orientation, and network competence - on the growth of culinary businesses in Belitung Island	All four competencies had a positive and significant impact on the growth of culinary businesses, with network competence having the most potent effect on business growth.	The study focuses on the short-term impact of competencies on business growth but does not explore the long-term impact	This study looked at the long-term effect of entrepreneurial competencies on business growth.
	Hallyyev (2019)	Influence of owner entrepreneurial	Strategic competencies in the form of organizational goals have	The study is based on a sample of	The study collected data from SMEs in

		competencies on business success	a direct and significant relationship with business success	businesses in Turkey, which may not represent businesses in other regions or countries such as Kenya	Kiambu County, Kenya
	Sarwoko (2016)	Growth strategy as a mediating variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and performance.	Strategic competencies exhibited by an entrepreneur allow professionals to develop a strategic vision which is essential in improving the performance of a business while at the same time driving growth	The study relied on Structural Equation Modeling which is not based on raw data rather it is based on empirical covariances	This study relied on regression analysis which is based on raw data hence increasing the validity of the data
	Vijay and Ajay (2011)	Entrepreneurial competency in SMEs in India.	The complexity of tasks undertaken by entrepreneurs dictates that they need business agenda that would ensure their survival and success in the industry	The study was conducted in India, a country situated in Asia	This study was based in Kenya.
Relationship Competencies	Tehseen, Qureshi, and Ramayah (2018)	Impact of network competence on the performance of firms owned by Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs	Relationship competence positively impacts firm performance for both Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs	The study was comparative assessing entrepreneurs in India and entrepreneurs in China	This study was specifically focus on the agribusiness SMEs in Kenya
	Akinyemi (2017)	The role of entrepreneurial competencies in business.	Through strong relationships and contacts with all stakeholders, an organization could grow at a sustainable pace.	The study only collected data from 6 SMEs	This study collected data from a large population of 290 SMEs to ensure that adequate data is collected
	Lee, Lee, and Shim (2016)	Entrepreneurial characteristics	Relationship competencies were essential for the survival of businesses.	The empirical format used in obtaining study findings could have been more	This study collected primary and secondary data to ensure

				robust, if primary data was collected	adequate data is available for the analysis
	Omar (2015)	Entrepreneurial competencies of Muslim Women entrepreneurs in Malaysia.	Business networks are established during the startup and are used to run the business operation.	The study focused on businesses operated by Muslim women only.	This study was not biased and collected data from both men and women who own agribusiness SMEs irrespective of their religion.
Leadership Competencies	Tshwete (2020)	Growth strategies adopted by companies in South Africa	Entrepreneurs with leadership competencies in team building facilitate smooth and fast adoption of innovation, thus driving growth	The study focused on the ICT sector, this presents a contextual gap for further research to focus on different sectors	To address the contextual gap, the current study focused on agribusiness SMEs
	Abdul (2019)	Entrepreneurial competencies impact on SMEs' survival	Leadership competencies (as measured by the leaders being results-driven, encouraging communication among staff, and encouraging teamwork) influence business survival.	The study was based in Nairobi County, with a focus on SMEs in the manufacturing sector.	This study collected data from agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu, a neighbouring county of Nairobi.
	Sajilan, Tehseen, and Adeyinka-Ojo (2016)	Impact of entrepreneurial competencies on SMEs' performance in the Malaysian Hospitality and Tourism Industry (HTI)	Based on the combination of significant features such as (a) the leadership competencies; (b) the small firm's characteristics; and (c) the firm's development strategies, entrepreneurial competencies have an impact on the performance of SMEs within the hospitality and	The study was specific to the hospitality and tourism sector; therefore, due to its differences with the agricultural sector, the study cannot be used to make accurate generalizations.	This study focused on agribusiness SMEs in Kenya.

			tourism industry in Malaysia.		
	Dola (2015)	Transformational leadership as an entrepreneurial competency and its impact on the performance of employees.	Intangible assets such as leadership styles, culture, skill and competence, and motivation are seen increasingly as critical sources of strength in those firms that can combine people and processes to improve performance.	The dependent variable of the study was performance	The depend variable of the current study was business growth
	Kehinde et al.(2014)	The influence of leadership competencies on the performance of employees in Nigeria.	Transformational leaders provide an environment for employees to exchange ideas and facilitate communication, which drives business growth.	The focus of the study was on leadership competencies, presenting a gap for further studies to be conducted on different forms of competencies	This study looked at four critical entrepreneurial competencies; strategic, leadership, innovative and relationship competencies
Innovative Competencies	Ayepa et al. (2019)	Effects of innovativeness and firm resources on the growth of small enterprises in the South Municipality in Ghana	Innovativeness and firm resources had a significant positive impact on the growth of small enterprises.	The study was based in the Ga South municipality of Ghana and targeted only small enterprises	The current study was based in Kenya and was targeted to both small and medium enterprises.
	Kimeu (2017)	How entrepreneurial competencies are acquired through risk-taking, innovation, and creativity and their influence on firm performance	Creativity, risk-taking, and innovation competencies statistically and positively impact performance in the transport sector.	The study used subjective data in measuring business performance as all the respondents are from one area	This study was objective by collecting data from 290 SMEs hence having a clear understanding of the study variables
	Abdilahi, Hassan, and Muhumed (2017)	Impact of innovation on the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Hargeisa, Somaliland	various dimensions of innovation, including product innovation, process innovation, and marketing innovation, were essential drivers of SME performance.	The study was, however, based in Somaliland.	The current study was based in Kenya.

	Colombelli, Krafft, and Vivarelli (2016)	Innovative competencies of entrepreneurs in SMEs in Italy	Innovative startups survive longer than their non-innovative counterparts.	The study was based in Milan in, Italy, a developed country.	This study was based in Kenya.
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2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework in a study portrays how variables flow and the measures to be used to assess the impacts of the variables in the study.

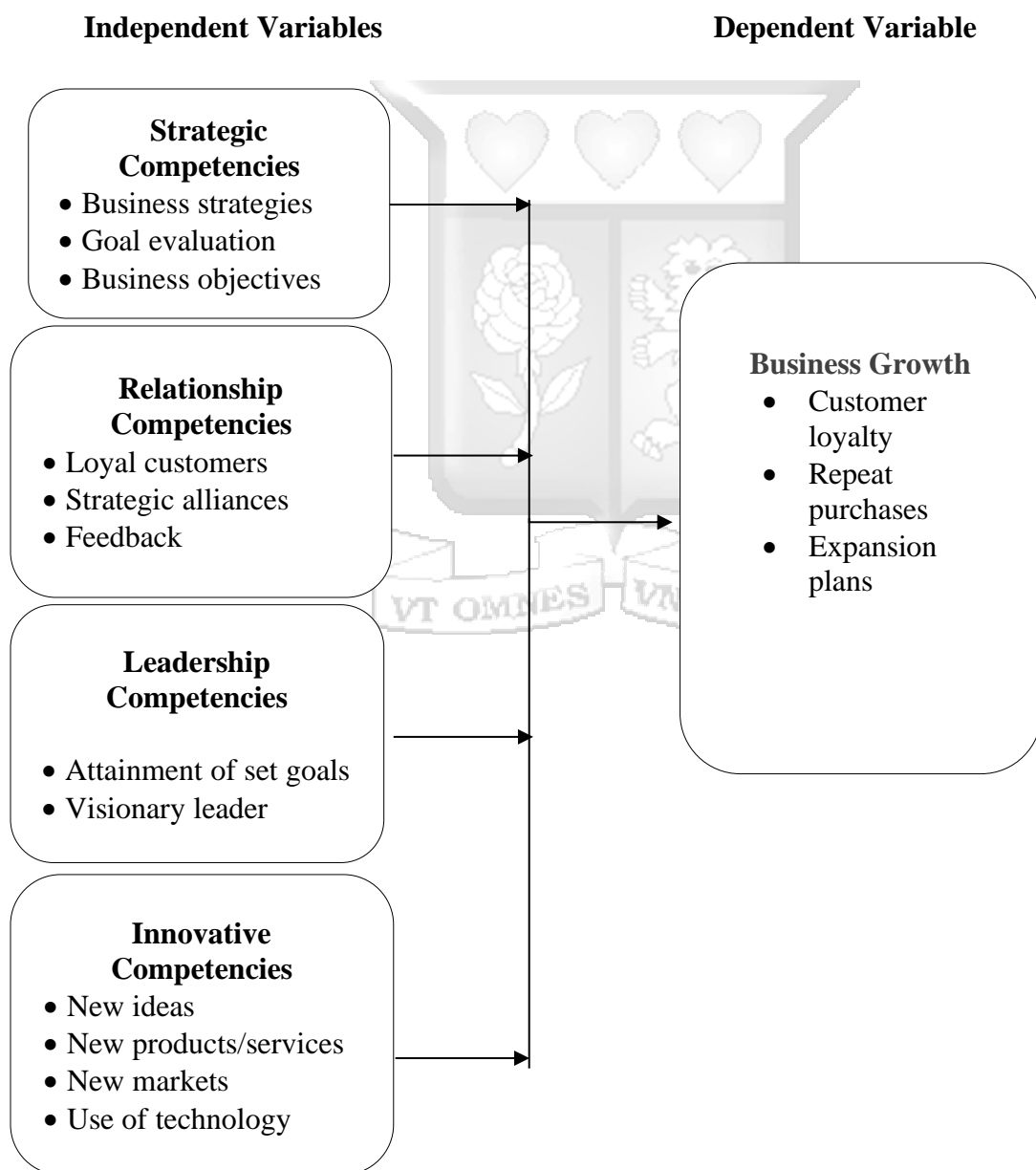


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2023)

The conceptual framework above indicates that the independent variable, entrepreneurial competencies measured by strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies has a direct impact on growth of SMEs.

2.6 Operational of the Study Variables

The operational framework of the study is presented in Figure 2.2 below. The operational framework shows how each variable was measured.

Table 2.2: Operational of the Study Variables

Variable	Nature of Variable	Operational definition	Measurement indicators	Measurement Scale	Supporting literature
Dependent Variable	Growth of SMEs	It is the number of sales within a firm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer loyalty • Repeat purchases • Expansion plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinal scale • Nominal scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yego, (2014) • Mitchelmore & Rowley, (2013) • Moga (2021)
Independent Variables	Strategic Competencies	An entrepreneur's ability to formulate and implement strategies based on the organization's goals/objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business strategies • Goal evaluation • Business objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinal scale • Nominal scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candra and Soelaiman (2022) • Hallyyev (2019) • Sarwoko (2016)
	Relationship competencies	The ability of small businesses to engage in relationship marketing and it can be part of social capital to provide opportunities to connect to various industries and the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyal customers • Strategic alliances • Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinal scale • Nominal scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taneja, & Toombs, (2014) • Hallyyey (2019) • Tehseen, Qureshi, and Ramayah (2018) • Akinyemi (2017)

Variable	Nature of Variable	Operational definition	Measurement indicators	Measurement Scale	Supporting literature
		depth of closeness in relations			
	Leadership competencies	An entrepreneur's ability to guide an organization towards attaining the set objectives and goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment of set goals • Visionary leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinal scale • Nominal scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kehinde et al. (2014) • Tshwete (2020) • Abdul (2019) • Sajilan, Tehseen, and Adeyinka-Ojo (2016)
	Innovative competencies	The approach by which firms create inimitable assets, and so achieve sustainable competitive advantage was adopted for the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ideas • New products/services • New markets • Use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinal scale • Nominal scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayepa et al. (2019) • Kimeu, (2017) • Abdilahi, Hassan, and Muhumed (2017)

2.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter two covered the literature review, the theoretical framework of the study that composed of the entrepreneurial competency theory provided an anchoring for studying entrepreneurial competencies and business growth. Further, the empirical review was composed of extant literature review that was based on the specific objectives of the study. Base on the extant literature it was determined that the entrepreneurial competencies under study; strategic, relationship, leadership and innovative competencies have an influence on business growth. The gaps identified from the empirical review are presented on Table 2.1. The chapter ends by showing the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable on the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter covers the methods that were used in research to meet the research objectives. The chapter outlines the research design, methods of collecting data, the research population, and the techniques for analyzing the data used for the research.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy involves developing knowledge and the perception of the world by people which can be with the perception of phenomenology (interpretivism), pragmatism, realism, positivism, objectivism, and idealism (Miller, & Tsang, 2011). Phenomenology is qualitative which involves an individual making sense of the environment they live in. Phenomenology is grounded on the concept that knowledge is subjective and pays attention to interpretations by individuals, personal, and immediate experiences. The pragmatism research philosophy uses qualitative and quantitative study techniques. Realism approach posits that reality is in existence despite the observations made in science and it is valid to acknowledge realities whether they can be proven or not.

The positivism approach guided this study. The positivism research philosophy was grounded on facts, and reasons collected through observation and empirical information that was analyzed using quantitative and statistical analysis. The positivism approach formulated variables and hypotheses with respect to the current theory under study. The positivism philosophy guided this research since it facilitated in making generalizations of the study findings.

3.3 Research Design

A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was adopted. As Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) espoused, descriptive surveys helped a researcher describe the variables' characteristics due to their suitability in gathering data and answering the study questions. A cross-sectional research design permitted a researcher to assess the possible differences. According to Wang and Cheng (2020), a cross-sectional design provides an overview of a particular phenomenon. It was suitable for detailing the current study population's characteristics, conditions, and views at a given time. This approach was appropriate for this research because it used a questionnaire as the instrument for

collecting data. The cross-sectional design was appropriate for the study since it facilitated the description of the study variables. The cross-sectional descriptive design facilitated the comprehensive description of the study variables. Since the study adopted descriptive and inferential statistics, the cross-sectional design was fit to describe the phenomenon and show the relationship between the study variables.

3.4 Target Population

A target population is an entire collection of items or people from which a researcher intends to study or collect data (Kothari, 2014). For this study, SMEs in the agricultural sector in Kiambu were the target population. According to the Kiambu Business Directory (2019), there are 290 SMEs in the agricultural sector in the region. Therefore, the sample of the study was the entire 290 entrepreneurs. The target population was fit since it comprised entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County. The study assumed that each of the 290 agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County was registered to different entrepreneurs. This assumption was based on the fact that a challenge that limits entrepreneurs from registering businesses is the high cost and the many procedures to be followed.

Since the target population was small (290) a census sampling approach was used. Therefore, the sample size for the study will be 290 entrepreneurs of agricultural SMEs in Kiambu County. The census sampling technique ensured that adequate data was collected for the study.

3.5 Data Collection Method

This study used a structured questionnaire for primary data collection. A five 5 Likert scale was employed where respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement about specific statements. According to Jones, Baxter, and Khanduja (2013), a questionnaire is the most appropriate tool for gathering data from a population since it was used to collect data from a large population within a short period. Moreover, a 5-point Likert scale facilitated more accessible quantitative data analysis since all the data gathered was numerical. Before collecting the data, the researcher trained two enumerators about the study and its objectives. The researcher educated the research assistants about the research and its objectives. Further, the researcher informed the research assistants of the data collection etiquette that was required of them. The researcher

together with the research assistants visited the SMEs premise where the entrepreneurs operated. This was aimed at ensuring that the entrepreneurs were comfortable to take part in the study. The researcher and the research assistants distributed the questionnaires to the agribusiness entrepreneurs in Kiambu County. The entrepreneurs took approximately 10-30 minutes to fill the questionnaires. The researcher and research assistants waited for the entrepreneurs to fill in the questionnaire. This ensured that the response rate was high. Moreover, the researcher and the research assistants were able to help the entrepreneurs understand the importance of the study by explaining to them the objectives of the research.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process began with the editing and cleaning of the survey data. In this step, the returned questionnaires were scrutinized to identify and correct errors, incompleteness, and information gaps as much as possible. This was an essential undertaking as it ensured that the collected data was complete and of good quality. The SPSS program was used to analyze the data gathered. Both descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were used in the study. Descriptive analysis provided a summary of the study's variables, while inferential analysis indicated the relationship between the variables. The central tendency was measured using the mean, while measures of dispersions were used to indicate how the information gathered was scattered and its actual average value. Tables were used to present the findings.

Simple linear regression models were adopted to show the relationship between each of the independent variables with the dependent variable. However, a weakness of the simple linear regression is that it assumes a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. If the relationship is nonlinear, simple regression may not accurately capture the nature of the association. Despite this assumption, the linear regression was appropriate in showcasing the relationship between the each of the independent variables and the depend variable. The four regression models that were used are illustrated below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where, Y= Business growth

β_0 = Constant

X1= Strategic Competencies

β_1 = Regression coefficient associated with strategic competencies

ε = Random error term

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Where, Y= Business growth

β_0 = Constant

X2= Relationship competencies

B2= Regression coefficient associated with relationship competencies

ε = Random error term

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

Where, Y= Business growth

β_0 = Constant

X3= Leadership competencies

B3= Regression coefficient associated with leadership competencies

ε = Random error term

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \quad (4)$$

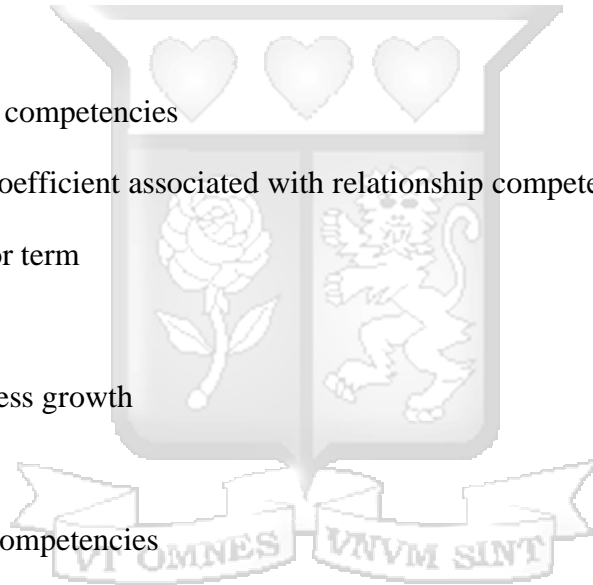
Where, Y= Business growth

β_0 = Constant

X4= Relationship competencies

B4= Regression coefficient associated with innovative competencies

ε = Random error term



In interpretation of the results, R^2 depicted the amount of variation in business growth explained by a particular independent variable. An F -ratio with an associated p -value less than 0.05 indicated that the regression model was significant. A t -test on a regression coefficient that yields a significant outcome ($p < 0.05$) pointed to a significant influence of the independent variable on business growth.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Pilot Test

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), a pilot study was conducted to ensure that the research instruments were error-free. Twenty-nine respondents (10% of the target population) were used to conduct the pilot test, as Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007) recommended. The pilot test focused on SMEs in the hospitality sector in Kiambu County. A test-retest approach was used in undertaking the pilot study. This was where the same research instruments were distributed to the pilot test respondents twice. The purpose of test-retest was to assess the reliability of the research instrument by determining the consistency of results over time. This method indicated how stable and consistent the results were and helped researchers determine whether the instrument was suitable for the main study. Ngechu (2004) agreed that a pilot test should be conducted by administering the research instruments at two different times. The feedback from the pilot tests was used to identify gaps in the research items. Corrections to the research items were made based on the pilot study feedback. The gaps identified were filled by focusing on the study's independent and dependent variable of the study. The final research instrument was developed based on the feedback from the pilot test.

3.7.2 Validity

Taherdoost (2016) describes validity as the ability of the research instruments to measure what they intended to assess. In this study, face and content validity were employed. Content validity sought ensure that all of the study variables are covered in the research instruments. The researcher ensured content validity by structuring the research instruments based on the specific objectives. This ensured that all the study variables were covered in the research instruments. Face validity was measured to ascertain that the research instrument measured the study constructs. Consultation with academic supervisors was sought on the appropriateness of the research instruments

developed. This facilitated face validity. The recommendations from the supervisors were considered in correcting the research instruments.

3.7.3 Reliability

Reliability is the internal consistency of research instruments (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Cronbach's alpha was employed in testing reliability. This reliability measure was estimated utilizing Cronbach's alpha (α). Creswell and Clark (2007) prescribed that instruments utilized in research should have a reliability of about 0.70 or more. The value of 0.7 was used as a cut-off point in this study. This implies that a value lower than 0.7 was rejected since it meant that the research instrument's internal consistency was weak. If the Cronbach alpha was found to be below 0.7, the research items would be refined to ensure they are reliable in answering the research questions.

Table 3.1 exhibits the results of the reliability analysis.

Table 3.1: Reliability Test Results

Variable	No. of Scale Items	Cronbach's alpha	Remark
Strategic competencies	7	0.850	Reliable
Relationship competencies	6	0.848	Reliable
Leadership competencies	5	0.757	Reliable
Innovative competencies	6	0.876	Reliable
Business Growth	6	0.867	Reliable

Source: Research Data (2023)

As shown in Table 3.1, the Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.757 to 0.876. The scale measuring innovative competencies yielded the highest coefficient of the four variables. Applying the threshold criterion by Creswell and Clark (2007), which suggests that a reliability coefficient above 0.7 signifies acceptable internal consistency, it was concluded that all the scales, each corresponding to a variable of interest, had excellent reliability.

3.8 Diagnostic Tests

The goal of this section is to present diagnostic analysis results whose focus was on testing the data for compliance with the assumptions underlying the simple linear regression technique. Diagnostic tests are an essential part of any statistical analysis technique as potential distortions and biases in the final results become more potent when the assumptions are severely violated. In this study, the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were tested. The results from these tests are detailed in the subsequent subsections.

3.8.1 Test of Normality

A fundamental assumption in linear regression analysis is that the residuals (i.e., the difference between the observed and predicted values) are normally distributed (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021). To test this assumption, a Q-Q (quantile-quantile) plot of residuals was employed. The Q-Q plot is a graphical tool that compares the observed residual quantiles against the expected quantiles from a standard normal distribution. If the data points in the Q-Q plot closely follow a straight diagonal line, it suggests that the residuals are normally distributed. Figure 3.1 to 3.4 show the distribution of residuals for the relationship between business growth and the independent variables: strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies.

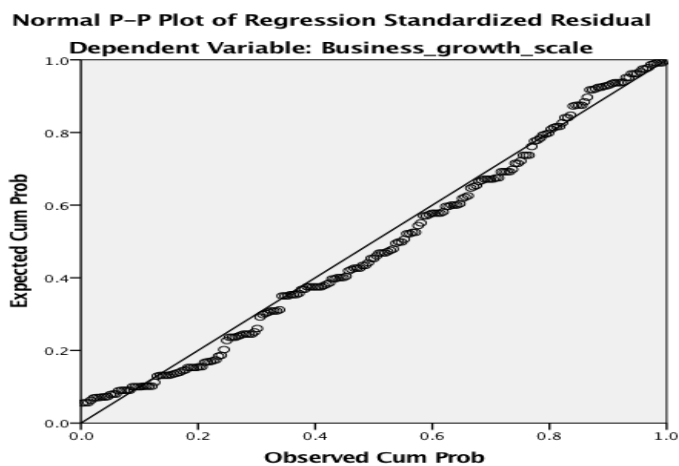


Figure 3.1: Normal Probability Plot of Residuals for Strategic Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

Figure 3.1 validates the normality assumption for strategic competencies in the linear regression model. The data points in the Q-Q plot align closely with the theoretical normal distribution line, suggesting a normally distributed set of residuals. This lends credence to the model's capacity to analyze the impact of strategic competencies on business growth.

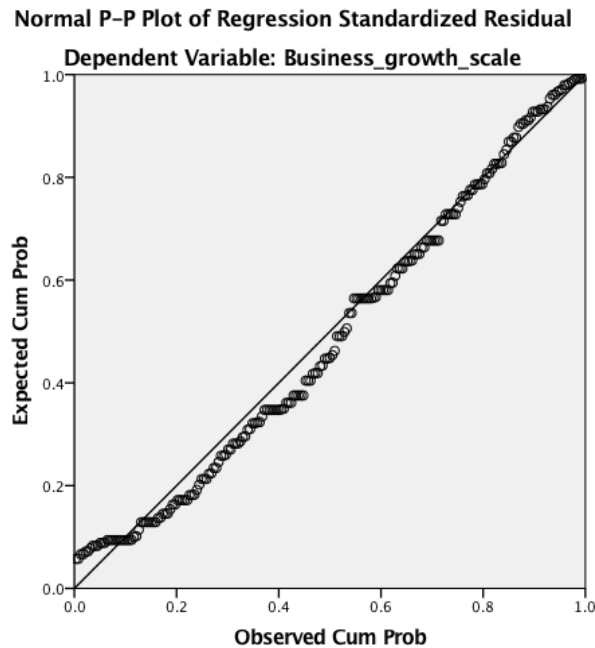


Figure 3.2: Normal Probability Plot of Residuals for Relationship Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The Q-Q plot shows that the data points aligned approximately on a straight line, indicating that the distribution of the residuals was consistent with a normal distribution. This showed that the simple linear regression reliant on normality assumption was appropriate in analyzing the relationship between relationship competencies and business growth.

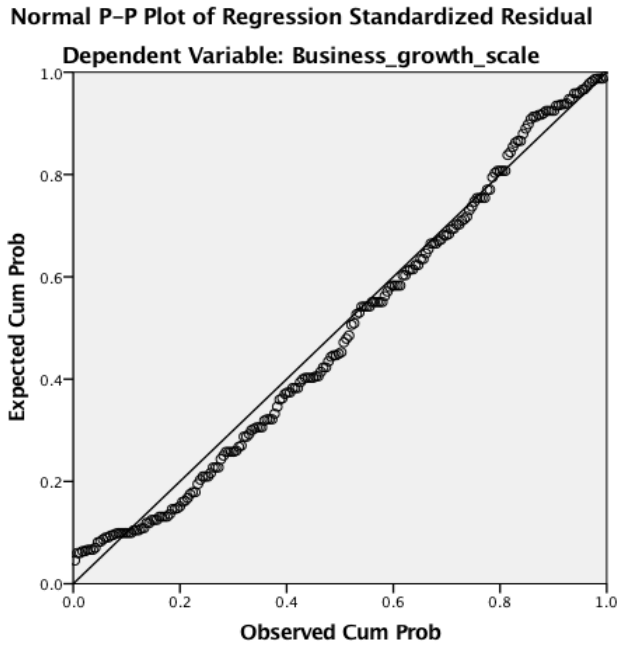
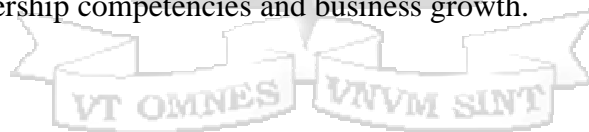


Figure 3.3: Normal Probability Plot of Residuals for Leadership Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

Figure 3.3 demonstrates a close alignment of the data points along a straight line, indicating that the distribution of the residuals conformed to the assumption of normality. This finding substantiates the suitability of employing a simple linear regression model to examine the association between leadership competencies and business growth.



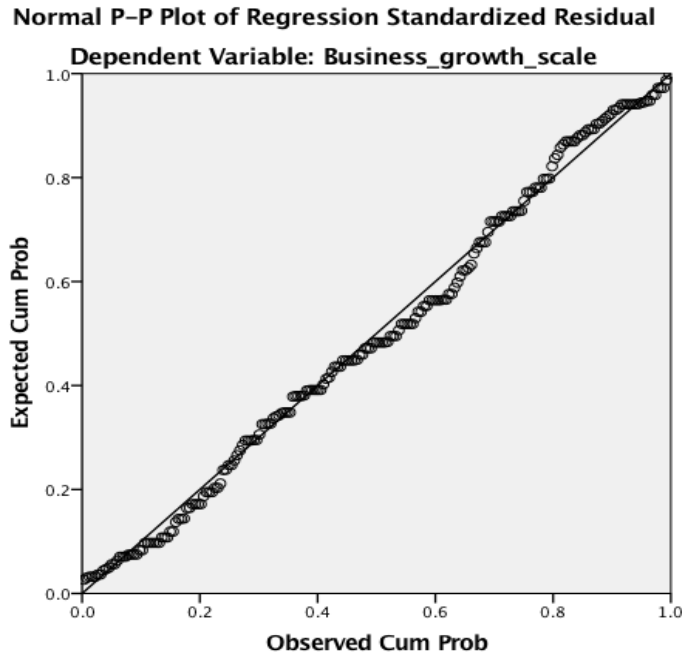


Figure 3.4: Normal Probability Plot of Residuals for Innovative Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The Q-Q plot exhibited a relatively strong conformity of the data points to a straight line, providing evidence that the residual's distribution satisfied the normality assumption. This finding supports the appropriateness of utilizing a simple linear regression model to analyze the relationship between innovative competencies and business growth.

3.8.2 Homoscedasticity Test

Homoscedasticity is the assumption that the variability of the dependent variable is exhibited equally across a predictor variable (Hair et al., 2020). The test for homoscedasticity was performed using graphical analysis, specifically an analysis of the residuals. This analysis involved constructing a residual plot of standardized residuals versus predicted values for all the four independent variables. The plots shown in Figure 3.5 to Figure 3.8 shows that the residuals were randomly distributed around zero for all four predictors indicating that the assumption of homoscedasticity was met. Therefore, the variance of the residuals was constant across all values of the independent variables, and the results of the simple linear regression were valid.

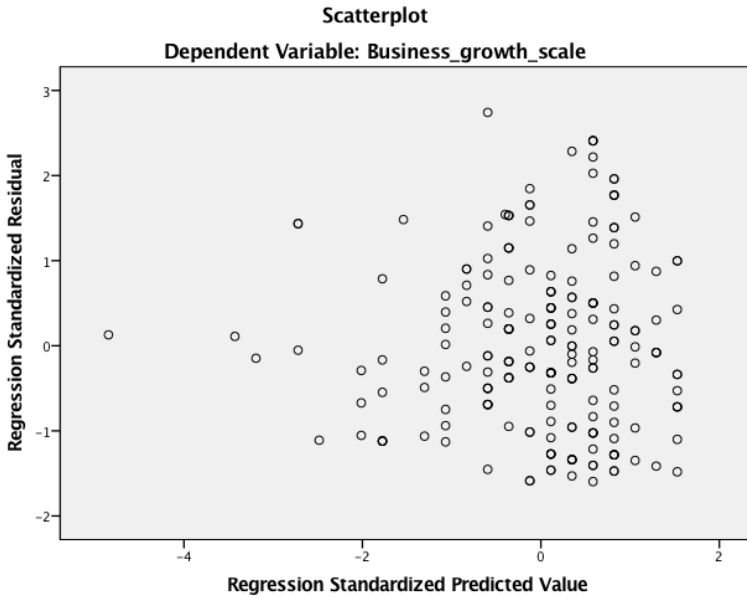


Figure 3.5: Scatterplot of Residuals by Predicted Values for Strategic Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The plot displayed no discernible pattern or systematic relationship between the residuals and the predicted values, indicating that homoscedasticity was satisfied. This finding suggests that the variability of the residuals remains constant across different levels of the predicted values. Consequently, the assumption of homoscedasticity is met, allowing for reliable interpretation of the regression coefficients and accurate assessment of the relationship between strategic competencies and business growth.

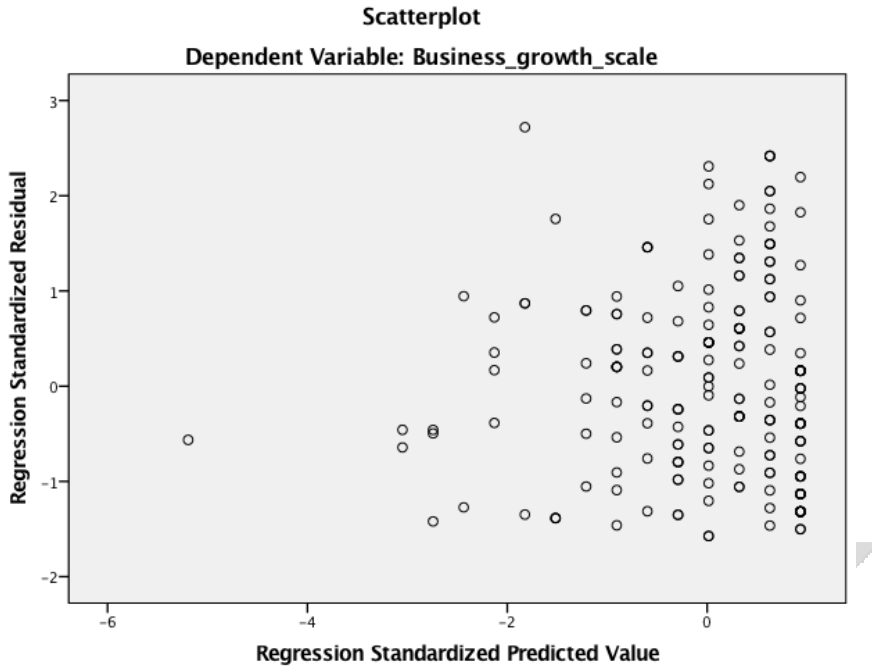


Figure 3.6: Scatterplot of Residuals by Predicted Values for Relationship Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The scatterplot of residuals against predicted values showed a random scattering of points around the horizontal axis, indicating the fulfillment of the homoscedasticity assumption. The spread of the points remained relatively constant, with no noticeable pattern or systematic change, indicating consistent variability across the predicted values.

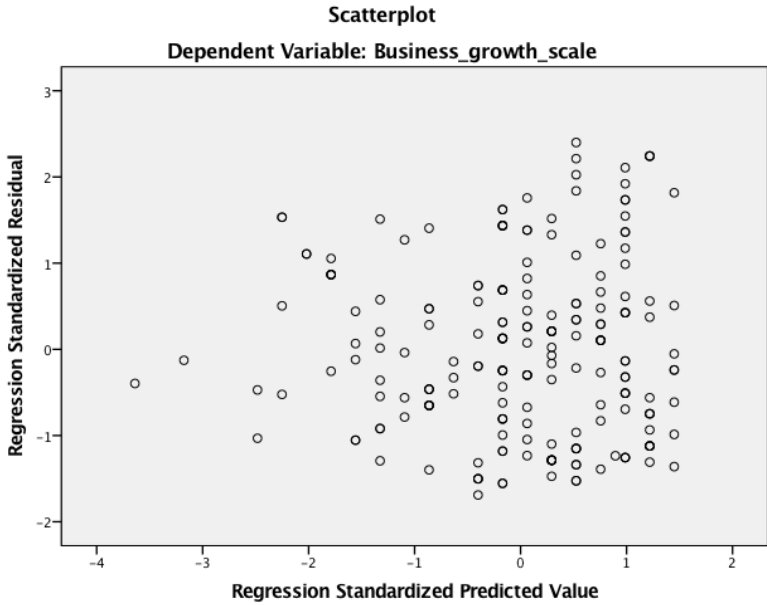


Figure 3.7: Scatterplot of Residuals by Predicted Values for Leadership Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The scatterplot of residuals against predicted values displayed a consistent scatter of points around a horizontal line, indicating the presence of homoscedasticity. The points were evenly distributed and did not exhibit any specific pattern or trend, suggesting that the variability of the residuals was constant across different levels of the predicted values.



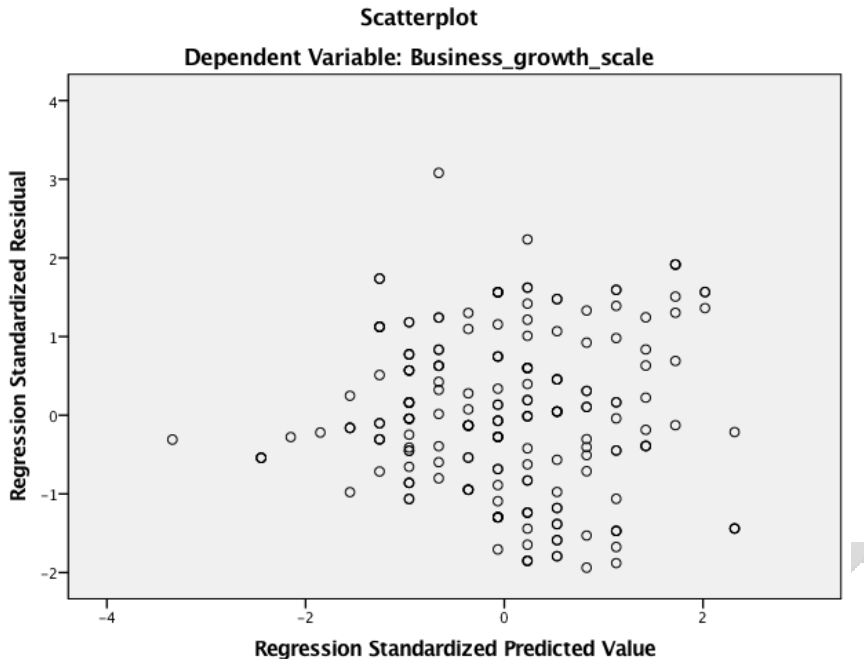


Figure 3.8: Scatterplot of Residuals by Predicted Values for Innovative Competencies and Business Growth

Source: Research Data (2023)

The scatterplot of residuals against predicted values displayed a random dispersion of points, indicating homoscedasticity. The absence of systematic patterns or trends suggested that the variability of residuals was constant across the entire range of predicted values. This observation validates the assumption of homoscedasticity, ensuring the reliability of the simple linear regression model.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research, ethical considerations were adhered to and maintained. The researcher obtained a permit from NACOSTI and a letter from the university allowing the student to conduct the research. A letter of approval from Strathmore University was sought before the data collection. The research also sought permission from the entrepreneurs before gathering any data. Each questionnaire was administered together with a transmittal letter indicating the authorization to conduct the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. No respondent was coerced to participate in the research. No incentive was offered to any respondent participating in the study. All the respondents were informed about the study's objectives before data collection. Third, all the respondents were treated with respect, and all the collected data were used for academic

purposes only. Consent for participating in the study was sought. The researcher ensured that the data collected remained confidential and only for academic research work. The personal identity of the respondents was not divulged during the report writing. The research did not engage in data plagiarism, fabrication, or falsification. The researcher ensured that all the information is documented in original. Moreover, the researcher acknowledged the scholars whose work was used to develop this paper. The researcher also trained the research assistants on the etiquette of collecting data. This facilitated a smooth data collection process.



CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study, which was designed to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the business growth of agricultural SMEs in Kiambu County. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the study's response rate, followed by a description of the sample characteristics and manifestation of study variables. The inferential statistical results are then presented in relation to the research questions and objectives.

4.2 Response Rate

A high nonresponse rate in survey research can lead to inaccurate results and systematic bias (Hair, Page & Brunsveld, 2020). Therefore, it is important to calculate the response rate as a first step in assessing the quality of a survey. The response rate indicates the percentage of people who completed the survey (Creswell, 2012). A breakdown of the response rate for this study is provided in Table 4.1 to show how many people participated and to provide an idea of the representativeness of the sample. Adhering to best practices for response rates is essential in minimizing potential bias and improving the reliability of the findings.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Response Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Completed the questionnaire	211	72.51
Did not complete the questionnaire	79	24.83
Total	290	100.000

Source: Research Data (2023)

The sample for this study consisted of 290 agribusinesses, of which 211 provided usable questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 72.51%. The remaining businesses either did not initiate the survey or completed an insufficient number of items. As noted by Bryman, Bell and Harley (2019), the response rate is an essential component of survey research, with a rate of 60-69% considered acceptable, a rate of 70-85% regarded as very good, and over 85% considered excellent. Therefore, the response rate achieved in this study can be classified as very good, indicating that the sample is representative and the results are reliable. The high response rate

implies that nonresponse bias was mitigated, which is a crucial factor for ensuring the validity of the study.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The aim of this section is to present a descriptive analysis of the participants in the study. The characteristics examined include gender, age, education level, household size, marital status, number of years lived in Kiambu County, and years of experience as an entrepreneur in the agribusiness sector. By providing a comprehensive overview of the sample characteristics, this section helped to contextualize the findings of the study and provide a better understanding of the demographic profile of the study participants.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The distribution of gender among the respondents in this study is an important aspect of the background information analyzed. The purpose of this section is to provide a descriptive analysis of the gender distribution among the study participants. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.2. This information is critical in understanding the representation of men and women in the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County and how gender may impact entrepreneurial success. Analyzing the gender distribution of the respondents provides valuable insights into the role of gender in agribusiness and the potential implications for gender-responsive policies and programs

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	107	50.7
Female	104	49.3
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The gender distribution of the respondents in this study was nearly equal, with 50.7% male and 49.3% female. This suggests that there is a balanced representation of men and women in the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County. This finding is noteworthy given that women are often underrepresented in entrepreneurship, particularly in male-dominated sectors such as agriculture. The relatively equal gender representation in this study could be indicative of the changing landscape of gender roles in agriculture in Kenya, as more women become involved in

agribusiness. The results of this study suggest that gender may not be a significant barrier to entry for entrepreneurship in this sector in Kiambu County.

4.3.2 Age

This section aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the age distribution among the study participants. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.3. The age distribution of the respondents is an important factor to consider as it provides insight into the demographic profile of the study participants and how it may relate to their entrepreneurial success.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Age-group

Age-group	Frequency	Percent (%)
Below 20 years	6	2.8
21-30 years	67	31.8
31-40 years	74	35.1
41-50 years	44	20.9
Above 50 years	20	9.5
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The age distribution of the respondents in this study was relatively diverse, with the majority of respondents falling within the age range of 31-40 years (35.1%). The data suggests that the sample consisted mainly of individuals in the early or mid-stages of their careers, which may have implications for entrepreneurship outcomes. The findings suggest that there is potential for age-responsive policies and programs to be tailored to specific age groups to support entrepreneurship.

4.3.3 Highest Education Level

Examining the educational attainment of the respondents in this study is an essential element of understanding the demographic characteristics of the participants. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the highest level of education achieved by the study participants. Table 4.4 illustrates the educational background of the respondents' using frequencies and percentages. Analyzing the highest level of education attained by the respondents is crucial in identifying the potential impact of education on entrepreneurial success in Kiambu County and understanding any disparities in entrepreneurship outcomes based on educational attainment.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Highest Education Level

Highest Education Level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Secondary	59	28
College diploma	71	33.6
Undergraduate	61	28.9
Postgraduate	20	9.5
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The highest educational level achieved by the respondents in this study was relatively diverse, with a majority having completed some form of higher education. College diplomas were the most common level of education attained (33.6%), followed by undergraduate degrees (28.9%) and secondary education (28%). The findings suggest that higher education may play a critical role in the development and success of agribusiness in Kiambu County.

4.3.4 Household Size

This section aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the household size of the respondents in this study. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.5. Analyzing household size is crucial in understanding the potential impact of family responsibilities on entrepreneurship and the potential implications for family-responsive policies and programs. By examining the household size of the respondents, we can gain valuable insights into the potential differences in entrepreneurial success based on household size.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents by Household Size

Household Size	Frequency	Percent (%)
1-3	32	15.2
4-6	88	41.7
7-9	72	34.1
10 and above	19	9.0
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The household size of the participants in this study exhibited a considerable range, with most respondents having between 4-9 members in their households (41.7%). This observation indicates that the majority of the entrepreneurs surveyed have significant familial obligations, which may constrain the amount of time and resources they can allocate to their agribusiness ventures. These

findings emphasize the necessity for policies and programs that are sensitive to the responsibilities of entrepreneurs with family obligations in the agribusiness sector.

4.3.5 Marital Status

The goal of this section is to offer a descriptive evaluation of the respondents' marital status in this study. Frequencies and percentages were employed to analyze the data, and the outcomes are demonstrated in Table 4.6. Studying marital status is important to understand the possible differences in entrepreneurial achievement based on family structure, as well as the potential implications for policies and programs that cater to families.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent (%)
Single	57	27
Married	116	55
Divorced	31	14.7
Other	7	3.3
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

Table 4.6 illustrates the marital status of the respondents in this study, with the majority of respondents being married (55%) and a smaller proportion being single (27%) or divorced (14.7%). Only a small percentage of the respondents fell under the category of "other" (3.3%). These findings suggest that the majority of the entrepreneurs surveyed have family responsibilities, with over half of the respondents being married. The results highlight the need for family-responsive policies and programs that take into account the potential challenges faced by entrepreneurs with family responsibilities in the agribusiness sector.

4.3.6 Monthly Income

The monthly income of the study participants serves as a crucial indicator of the financial resources available to entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the monthly income of the respondents. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.7. Analyzing monthly income is critical to understanding the potential financial challenges faced by entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector and the potential impact on entrepreneurial success. By examining the monthly income of the

respondents, we can gain valuable insights into the potential differences in access to financial resources and investment opportunities based on income levels.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Monthly Income in KES	Frequency	Percent (%)
0 – 10,000	24	11.4
10,001-20,000	92	43.6
20,001-30,000	44	20.9
30,001-40,000	31	14.7
Above 40,000	20	9.5
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results revealed that the majority of respondents had a monthly income between KES 10,001-20,000 (43.6%), with a relatively small proportion of respondents having a monthly income above KES 40,000 (9.5%). These findings suggest that many of the entrepreneurs surveyed have a relatively low monthly income, which may limit their ability to access financial resources and investment opportunities necessary to grow their agribusiness ventures. The results underscore the need for income-responsive policies and programs that can support entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector, particularly those with limited financial resources.

4.3.7 Years Lived in Kiambu County

The number of years that an entrepreneur has lived in a particular area can influence their understanding of the local market, access to resources, and networks, among other factors. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the number of years that the respondents have lived in Kiambu County. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.8. By examining the number of years lived in Kiambu County, we can gain valuable insights into the potential differences in entrepreneurial success based on local knowledge and access to resources.

Table 4.8: Distribution of Respondents by Years Lived in Kiambu County

Years Lived in Kiambu County	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 5 years	33	15.6
5 to 10 years	77	36.5
More than 10 years	101	47.9
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results showed that the majority of respondents had lived in Kiambu County for more than 10 years (47.9%), indicating that many entrepreneurs surveyed have significant knowledge of the local market and access to resources in the area. These findings highlight the importance of local knowledge and resources for entrepreneurial success in the agribusiness sector. The results can inform policies and programs that support entrepreneurs in the sector and improve their access to local resources and opportunities.

4.3.8 Years the Respondent has been an Entrepreneur

The number of years an entrepreneur has been involved in agribusiness can have a significant impact on their understanding of the industry, access to networks, and business success. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the number of years that the respondents have been involved in agribusiness as entrepreneurs. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.9. By examining the number of years, the respondents have been involved in agribusiness, we can gain valuable insights into the potential differences in entrepreneurial success based on experience and industry knowledge.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Respondents by Years Lived in Kiambu County

Years of Entrepreneurship	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 5 years	68	32.2
5 to 10 years	69	32.7
More than 10 years	74	35.1
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results showed that a significant proportion of the respondents have been involved in agribusiness for more than 10 years (35.1%), while a slightly lower proportion have been involved for between 5 to 10 years (32.7%). These findings suggest that many of the entrepreneurs surveyed have a considerable amount of experience in the agribusiness sector, which may have a positive impact on their ability to succeed. The results highlight the importance of experience and industry knowledge for entrepreneurial success in the agribusiness sector.

4.4 Business Profile

The business profile of agribusinesses provides valuable insights into the structure, performance, and growth potential of these enterprises. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the

business profile of agribusinesses in Kiambu County. Specifically, the number of years the businesses have been in existence, the number of employees, and the average annual gross turnover are examined. By examining these variables, valuable insights can be gained into the agribusiness environment in the county and the opportunities and challenges that entrepreneurs face in this sector.

4.4.1 Years the Business has been in Existence

The age of a business is a crucial factor in determining its success and growth potential. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the number of years that agribusinesses in Kiambu County have been in existence. The data was analyzed using frequencies and percentages, and the results are presented in Table 4.10. By examining the age distribution of businesses, valuable insights can be gained into the stability, maturity, and growth potential of these enterprises.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Businesses by Age

Years the Business has Existed	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 5 years	111	52.6
5 to 10 years	84	39.8
More than 10 years	16	7.6
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

Based on the results, the key finding is that the majority of agribusinesses surveyed have been in existence for less than five years (52.6%). This finding suggests that the agribusiness sector in the region is relatively new, with a significant number of enterprises still in the early stages of development. Such insights can inform policies and programs that support agribusiness entrepreneurs in the county, such as access to financial and technical assistance for start-ups, and mentorship programs to enhance business management skills.

4.4.2 Number of Employees

The number of employees in a business is a critical factor in determining its productivity, growth potential, and contribution to the local economy. This section presents a descriptive analysis of the number of employees in the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County. By examining the distribution of employees across businesses, valuable insights can be gained into the structure, size, and growth potential of these enterprises. The results of the analysis were presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Distribution of Businesses by Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 10 employees	96	45.5
10 to 20 employees	110	52.1
More than 30 employees	5	2.4
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

Based on the analysis of the number of employees in the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County, the majority of enterprises have between 10 and 20 employees (52.1%). This suggests that most agribusinesses in the region operate at a small to medium scale, with a significant proportion of the workforce concentrated in enterprises of moderate size. This insight can inform policies and programs that support entrepreneurship and job creation in the county, such as training and capacity-building initiatives that enhance business management skills and promote workforce development.

4.4.3 Average Annual Gross Turnover

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the average annual gross turnover of the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County. By examining the distribution of turnover across businesses, valuable insights can be gained into the scale, profitability, and growth potential of these enterprises. Additionally, any trends or patterns in the distribution of turnover can inform policies and programs that support entrepreneurship and economic development in the region. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Businesses by Average Annual Gross Turnover

Average Annual Gross Turnover (KES)	Frequency	Percent (%)
20,001-100,000	76	36
100,001 – 500,000	108	51.2
More than 500,000	27	12.8
Total	211	100.00

Source: Research Data (2023)

The analysis of the average annual gross turnover of the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County reveals that the majority of enterprises have an average annual gross turnover of between KES 100,001 and KES 500,000 (51.2%). This suggests that most agribusinesses in the region operate at a small to medium scale, with a significant proportion generating moderate levels of

revenue. The finding highlights the need for policies and programs that support business growth and development, such as access to credit and financing, marketing assistance, and mentorship programs that promote entrepreneurial skills and strategies.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

This section provides a detailed exploration of the study variables, which include strategic competencies, relationship competencies, leadership competencies, innovative competencies, and business growth. The aim is to unveil emerging patterns and features that may not be immediately apparent from the raw data. By utilizing descriptive statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation, this section seeks to reveal the manifestation of these variables in the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County.

To achieve this goal, the sub-sections that follow provide a comprehensive analysis of each study variable. They are organized by type of competency, including strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies, as well as a section dedicated to the manifestation of business growth. The statistical insights presented in this section offer a nuanced understanding of the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County and can inform policies and programs that support entrepreneurship and agribusiness development.

4.5.1 Strategic Competencies

This section examines the manifestation of strategic competencies in the agricultural SMEs surveyed in Kiambu County. The analysis explores the mean and standard deviation of responses to each statement related to strategic competencies, providing insights into the level of strategic competency development in the agribusiness sector. The results of the analysis of strategic competencies are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Competencies

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The goals of the business can be measured	208	4.20	.76
The goals of the business are attainable	207	4.29	.79
The business has documented long-term and short-term goals	211	4.06	.91
The business has clearly documented goals and objectives	211	3.75	.94
The business has a documented vision statement	211	3.88	.81
Each goal has specified time to be completed	208	4.09	.77
A framework has been formulated outlining the day-to-day operations of the business	208	4.22	.81
Overall Mean Score	211	4.08	.61

Source: Research Data (2023)

The overall mean score for strategic competencies was 4.08 ($SD = 0.61$). The highest mean score was for the statement, “The goals of the business are attainable” with a mean score of 4.29 ($SD = 0.79$). The lowest mean score was for the statement, “The business has clearly documented goals and objectives” with a mean score of 3.75 ($SD = 0.93$).

The results show that the businesses surveyed generally have a good level of strategic competencies. The mean scores for all seven statements related to strategic competencies were above 3.75, indicating that the respondents generally agreed that their businesses have a documented vision statement, clearly documented goals and objectives, and documented long-term and short-term goals, as well as a framework outlining the day-to-day operations of the business. These findings suggest that the businesses surveyed have a clear sense of direction and are organized in their approach to achieving their goals. Additionally, the results suggest that the agricultural SMEs in Kiambu County have a relatively strong foundation in strategic competencies, particularly in terms of setting and documenting goals and objectives. These findings highlight the importance of strategic planning and goal-setting in the success of small businesses in the agricultural sector.

4.5.2 Relationship Competencies

This section of the report explores the relationship competencies of the agribusinesses surveyed in Kiambu County. Relationship competencies play a crucial role in the success of an enterprise as they involve building and maintaining good relationships with suppliers, customers, employees, and other stakeholders. Using mean and standard deviation, the analysis in this section provides an understanding of the manifestation of relationship competencies in the agribusiness sector. The results of the analysis are illustrated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Descriptive Statistics for Relationship Competencies

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The entrepreneur is aware of the key stakeholders of the business	211	4.57	.61
The entrepreneur interacts with the surrounding community in a friendly manner	211	4.50	.73
The entrepreneur has strong relationships with regular customers	211	4.68	.59
The entrepreneur has established long-term relationships with the suppliers	211	4.62	.71
The customers recommend business to their friends	211	4.11	.94
The business has a loyalty program that is subscribed by customers	211	4.46	.69
Overall Mean Score	211	4.49	.54

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results show that the surveyed entrepreneurs have strong relationship competencies, with high mean scores recorded across all statements. The overall mean score for relationship competencies was 4.49 ($SD = .54$). The highest mean score was recorded on the statement, "The entrepreneur has strong relationships with regular customers" with a mean score of 4.68 ($SD = .59$), indicating that the entrepreneurs have established strong and enduring relationships with their regular customers. This finding suggests that the surveyed entrepreneurs have invested time and effort in building long-term relationships with their customers, which can be crucial for business success.

Similarly, the mean score for "The entrepreneur has established long-term relationships with the suppliers" was also high at 4.62 ($SD = 0.71$). This suggests that entrepreneurs in the agribusiness

sector in Kiambu County place a high value on building and maintaining long-term relationships with their suppliers. Furthermore, the mean score for "The entrepreneur is aware of the key stakeholders of the business" was also high at 4.57 ($SD=0.61$). This indicates that entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector are cognizant of the importance of identifying and engaging with key stakeholders in their business operations.

However, the statement "The customers recommend business to their friends" had a lower mean score of 4.11 with a high standard deviation of 0.94, suggesting that entrepreneurs may need to focus more on building customer loyalty and advocacy. Overall, the high mean scores in relationship competencies suggest that entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County value and prioritize building strong relationships with their stakeholders.

4.5.3 Innovative Competencies

This section delves into the innovative competencies in the agribusiness sector as observed in the agricultural SMEs surveyed in Kiambu County. The analysis uses mean and standard deviation to examine the extent to which the respondents demonstrate innovative competencies. The results of the analysis of innovative competencies are presented in Table 4.15. The aim is to provide insights into the level of innovative competency development in the agribusiness sector, which is critical for growth and sustainability of agribusiness ventures.

Table 4.15: Descriptive Statistics for Innovative Competencies

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The entrepreneur markets the business through social media	211	3.88	.81
The entrepreneur has ventured in new markets in 2023	208	3.72	.78
The entrepreneur has come up with new products and services based on the customer demands over the past two years	208	3.61	.84
The entrepreneur conducts research before introducing new products	207	2.80	1.17
The business uses computers and online applications for day-to-day operations	208	3.11	.92
Overall Mean Score	211	3.44	.67

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results indicate that the agribusiness entrepreneurs in Kiambu County have moderate levels of innovative competencies. The mean score for the innovative competencies scale is 3.44 ($SD = 0.67$). Among the statements, "the entrepreneur has come up with new products and services based on customer demands over the past two years" had the highest mean score of 3.61, while "the entrepreneur conducts research before introducing new products" had the lowest mean score of 2.80 ($SD = 1.17$).

The results suggest that while the agribusiness entrepreneurs in Kiambu County are moderately innovative, they may need to focus on conducting research before introducing new products. Additionally, only a minority of entrepreneurs use computers and online applications for day-to-day operations, which could be an area of improvement for increasing efficiency and productivity in the agribusiness sector.

4.5.4 Leadership Competencies

The participants were provided with a list of statements evaluating leadership competencies and asked to rate the extent the practices were adopted by their respective businesses. The responses were coded on a five-point Likert scale with higher scores representing extensive adoption of the particular practice. Table 4.16 presents the descriptive statistics yielded from analysis of the responses.

Table 4.16: Descriptive Statistics for Innovative Competencies

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The entrepreneur seeks feedback from the customers and suppliers	208	4.20	.84
The entrepreneur is able to take business risks to improve performance	211	3.59	1.12
The entrepreneur is able to make decisions under pressure	211	4.02	.94
The entrepreneur is a transformational leader	207	3.91	.91
The entrepreneur allows the employees to offer suggestions on improving the business	208	4.00	.85
The business has a leadership structure.	208	4.00	.81
Overall Mean Score	208	3.96	.72

Source: Research Data (2023)

The mean score for the Leadership Competencies Scale was 3.96 ($SD = .72$), indicating that the overall level of leadership competencies among the surveyed entrepreneurs was high. The highest mean score is for the statement "The entrepreneur seeks feedback from customers and suppliers"

with a mean score of 4.20 (SD = 0.84), indicating that the entrepreneurs value input from external stakeholders. The lowest mean score is for the statement "The entrepreneur is able to take business risks to improve performance" with a mean score of 3.59 (SD = 1.12), suggesting that the entrepreneurs may be hesitant to take risks.

Based on the results, the majority of the businesses surveyed had a leadership structure, and the entrepreneurs were open to suggestions from employees and feedback from customers and suppliers. The entrepreneurs also displayed qualities of being able to make decisions under pressure and being transformational leaders. However, the entrepreneurs were less inclined to take business risks to improve performance.

4.5.5 Business Growth

This section focuses on examining the business growth of the agricultural SMEs surveyed in Kiambu County. Business growth is an important aspect of any enterprise as it is a measure of its success and sustainability. The analysis in this section explores the mean and standard deviation of responses to each statement related to business growth, providing insights into the level of growth and expansion in the agribusiness sector. The results of the analysis of business growth are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Descriptive Statistics for Business Growth

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
The sales of the SME have increased over the past one year	211	2.80	.81
My sales are often as a result of customer referrals	211	2.51	.84
My annual sales profits have been on the rise over the past one year	211	2.51	.85
I make repeat sales to my loyal customers	211	2.23	.91
I intend to expand my business over the next two years	211	3.20	.94
I find it difficult to open a branch of my current business	211	2.26	1.12
Overall Mean Score	211	2.58	.91

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results indicate that the majority of the agricultural SMEs surveyed in Kiambu County have experienced an increase in sales and sales profits over the past year, with mean scores of 2.80 (*SD*

= .81) and 2.51 ($SD = .85$), respectively. However, the mean scores for making sales as a result of customer referrals and making repeat sales to loyal customers were relatively lower, at 2.51 ($SD = .84$) and 2.23 ($SD = .91$) respectively, suggesting that there is room for improvement in these areas.

The mean score for the intention to expand the business over the next two years was relatively high at 3.20 ($SD = .94$), indicating a positive outlook for the agribusiness sector in the county. However, the mean score for the difficulty in opening a branch of the current business was low at 2.26 ($SD = 1.12$), indicating that entrepreneurs may face challenges in expanding their businesses.

Overall, the mean score for the business growth scale was 2.58 ($SD = .91$), suggesting that there is potential for growth in the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County, but also indicating that entrepreneurs may face challenges in certain areas such as increasing stock and customer loyalty.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which strategic competencies, relationship competencies, innovative competencies and leadership competencies are related to the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. The analysis entailed computing Pearson correlation coefficients between each type of entrepreneurial competency and the growth of business SMEs. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Business growth	1				
2. Strategic competencies	.27**	1			
3. Relationship competencies	.12	.73**	1		
4. Leadership competencies	.22**	.72**	.59**	1	
5. Innovative competencies	.44**	.54**	.41**	.52**	1

** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

The results indicate that strategic competencies had a moderate positive correlation with business growth ($r(209) = 0.27, p < 0.01$). The association between relationship competencies and business growth was not statistically significant ($r(209) = 0.12, p > 0.05$). Leadership competencies had a moderate positive correlation with business growth ($r(209) = 0.22, p < 0.01$). Finally, innovative competencies had a strong positive correlation with business growth ($r(209) = 0.44, p < 0.01$).

4.7 Influence of Strategic Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The first objective of this study was to assess the influence of strategic competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. To accomplish this objective, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with business growth as the dependent variable and strategic competencies as the independent variable. The results are presented in Table 4.19

Table 4.19: Simple Linear Regression Results for Business Growth and Strategic Competencies

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.272	.074	.070	.874	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	12.79	1	12.79	16.75	.000
Residual	159.67	209	76		
Total	172.46	210			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.92	.41		2.24	.026
Strategic competencies	.41	.10	.27	4.09	.000

Source: Research Data (2023)

The regression model was significant, $F(1, 209) = 16.75$, $p < .001$, indicating that strategic competencies have a significant influence on business growth. The coefficient of determination, $R^2 = .074$, indicated that strategic competencies explained 7.4% of the variance in business growth.

The regression equation that represents the relationship between strategic competencies and business growth in agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County can be written as follows:

$$Y = 0.92 + 0.41X_1$$

The regression equation shows that the coefficient for strategic competencies was 0.41. This coefficient was also statistically significant, $t=4.09$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that for each unit increase in strategic competencies leads, on average, to a 0.41 increase in business growth, holding all else constant. This positive relationship underscores the importance of strategic competencies in driving business growth.

4.8 Influence of Relationship Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The second objective of this study was to investigate the role of relationship competencies in promoting business growth in the agribusiness sector. To accomplish this objective, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted with relationship competencies as the independent variable and business growth as the dependent variable. The aim of this analysis was to determine whether entrepreneurs who possess strong relationship competencies are more likely to experience higher levels of business growth compared to those with weaker relationship competencies. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20: Simple Linear Regression Results for Business Growth and Relationship Competencies

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.122	.015	.010	.90	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.58	1	2.58	3.17	.076
Residual	169.88	209	.81		
Total	172.46	210			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.67	.52		3.23	.001
Relationship competencies	.20	.11	.12	1.78	.076

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results of the regression analysis revealed that relationship competencies accounted for a very small amount of variation (1.5%) in business growth of SMEs, $R^2=.015$. The results also showed that relationship competencies do not have a significant influence on the growth of agribusiness SMEs, $F(1, 209) = 3.17, p = .076$. This shows that relationship competencies are not significant predictors of the growth of the SMEs.

4.9 Influence of Leadership Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The third objective of this study was to explore the influence of leadership competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with leadership competencies as the independent variable and business growth as the dependent variable. The objective of this analysis was to determine whether entrepreneurs who possess strong leadership competencies are more likely to experience higher levels of business growth compared to those with weaker leadership competencies. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21: Simple Linear Regression Results for Business Growth and Leadership Competencies

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.221	.049	.044	.89	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	8.43	1	8.43	10.60	.001
Residual	163.84	206	.80		
Total	172.27	207			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.48	.35		4.28	.000
Leadership competencies	.28	.09	.22	3.26	.001

Source: Research Data (2023)

The regression model accounted for 4.9% of the variation in the growth of the agribusiness SMEs, $R^2 = .049$. The regression model was also statistically significant in accounting for variation in the growth of the SMEs using leadership competencies, $F(1, 206) = 10.60, p = .001$. The relationship between leadership competencies and business growth can be encapsulated by the following regression equation:

$$Y = 1.48 + 0.28X$$

The coefficient for leadership competencies was 0.28. The coefficient was also statistically significant, $t = 3.26, p = .001$, suggesting that each unit increase in strategic competencies leads, on average, to a 0.41-unit increase in business growth, assuming other factors remain constant. This positive coefficient emphasizes the pivotal role of leadership competencies in bolstering business growth.

4.10 Influence of Innovative Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The fourth objective of this study was to assess the influence of innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. A simple linear regression analysis was conducted, with innovative competencies as the independent variable and business growth as the dependent variable. The objective of this analysis was to probe whether entrepreneurs who possess strong innovative competencies are more likely to experience higher levels of business growth compared to those with weaker innovative competencies. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22: Simple Linear Regression Results for Business Growth and Innovative Competencies

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.440	.194	.190	.82	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	33.38	1	33.38	50.15	.000
Residual	139.08	209	.67		
Total	172.46	210			
Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.54	.29		1.84	.068
Innovative competencies	.59	.08	.44	7.08	.000

Source: Research Data (2023)

The results show that the regression model explained 19.4% of the variation in the growth of the agribusiness SMEs, $R^2 = .194$. The regression model was also statistically significant in accounting for variation in the growth of the SMEs using innovative competencies, $F(1, 209) = 50.15$, $p < .001$. The relationship between innovative competencies and business growth is represented by the following regression equation.

$$Y = 0.54 + 0.59X_4$$

The statistically significant coefficient of innovative competencies, 0.59, $t = 7.08$, $p < .001$, indicates that for each unit increase in innovative competencies, there is a corresponding increase in of 0.59 units in business growth, all other factors being equal. The positive coefficient highlights the instrumental role of innovative competencies in facilitating business growth.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. Firstly, it succinctly summarizes the key findings of the study in relation to the research objectives and the corresponding analysis. Secondly, it presents the conclusions drawn from the findings, emphasizing the implications and contributions of this research to the existing body of knowledge. Lastly, the chapter proposes recommendations based on the conclusions, addressing the practical implications for stakeholders involved in the development and support of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, as well as identifying potential avenues for further research in this area.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study aimed to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study was guided by four specific objectives: to assess the impact of strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs. The research was grounded in entrepreneurial competencies theory and was informed by a comprehensive review of relevant literature.

The findings of this study reveal that strategic, leadership and innovative competencies significantly influence the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, while relationship competencies do not have a significant impact. This section discusses these findings in relation to the theories and literature reviewed.

5.2.1 Influence of Strategic Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The study sought to examine the influence of strategic competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. Strategic competencies, in this context, were defined as an entrepreneur's ability to formulate and implement strategies based on the organization's goals/objectives. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between strategic competencies and business growth.

The positive relationship between strategic competencies and the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya, resonates deeply with the core tenets of the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory. The significant impact of strategic competencies found in this study signifies that

entrepreneurs who effectively strategize, plan, and execute their business strategies are more likely to propel their businesses towards growth and success.

This underscores the theory's assertion that strategic competencies form an essential part of the entrepreneur's skill set. The ability to link the organization's goals and objectives to the broader market context, to make strategic decisions based on that understanding, and to implement these decisions effectively, is central to driving business growth and competitiveness, as is emphasized by Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory

The findings corroborate with the study by Candra and Soelaiman (2022), which showed that strategic competencies had a positive and significant impact on the growth of culinary businesses in Belitung Island, albeit in a different industry and geographic context. Additionally, the positive influence of strategic competencies on business growth found in this study is consistent with the findings of Hallyyev (2019). Although Hallyyev (2019) operationalized entrepreneurial competencies in a broader sense to include various dimensions like commitment, conceptual, opportunity, organizing, and leading competencies, strategic competencies were found to have a direct and significant relationship with business success. This study, focusing solely on strategic competencies, strengthens this relationship and underlines the critical importance of this specific competency in driving SME growth.

Sarwoko's (2016) research further supports the findings of this study. His study, which evaluated growth strategy as a mediating variable in the relationship between entrepreneurial competencies and performance, concluded that strategic competencies, as measured by the business vision and goals, drive business growth. The research presented here aligns with this conclusion, reinforcing the critical role of strategic competencies in business growth, particularly for agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County.

However, it is important to note that while the studies mentioned above found a positive relationship between strategic competencies and business growth or success, the specific definitions of strategic competencies varied, as did the contexts in which they were applied. For example, while this study defined strategic competencies as an entrepreneur's ability to formulate and implement strategies based on the organization's goals/objectives, other studies incorporated additional dimensions, such as ethical competencies (Candra & Soelaiman, 2022), and conceptual and opportunity competencies (Hallyyev, 2019).

Despite the overall supportive evidence, it's essential to acknowledge that not all studies align with these findings. Contrary studies exist, such as the one by Sakib et al. (2022) found that while organizing and leading, learning, relationship, and commitment competencies of entrepreneurs significantly influenced SME performance, strategic and opportunity competencies did not have an effect. This discrepancy may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the business environments of Bangladesh and Kenya are different, and the effectiveness of strategic competencies may be influenced by local business conditions and cultural norms. Secondly, the industries examined in the studies were different. While the study in Kiambu County focused on agribusiness SMEs, Sakib et al. (2022) did not specify the industries of the SMEs examined, which could have been more diverse. Furthermore, the methodologies employed in the studies were different. While the study conducted in Kiambu County employed regression analysis, Sakib et al. (2022) used the partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method, which could also lead to different results. The variations in the conceptualization and measurement of strategic competencies might have also contributed to the different findings.

5.2.2 Influence of Relationship Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The study aimed to investigate the influence of relationship competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. Relationship competencies, in this study, were defined as the entrepreneur's ability to engage in relationship marketing, cultivate loyal customers, form strategic alliances, and use feedback effectively. Contrarily, the findings revealed that relationship competencies do not significantly influence the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. This suggests that, in this context, the strength of the entrepreneur's relationships might not be a determining factor for business growth.

The Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory proposes a holistic approach to entrepreneurship, suggesting that entrepreneurs need a balance of various competencies to succeed, including strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative skills, among others. In many cases, these competencies are closely interrelated, and success in one area can support and reinforce success in others.

However, the study's findings challenge the universally applicable nature of relationship competencies as proposed in the theory, at least in the context of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu

County, Kenya. While the theory assumes relationship competencies to be universally beneficial, the study indicates that the impact of these competencies might be more context-specific than previously believed. The study found that relationship competencies, defined as relationship marketing, customer loyalty, strategic alliances, and effective feedback use, did not significantly influence business growth in this context. This does not necessarily invalidate the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory but rather prompts a more nuanced interpretation. It suggests that the effectiveness of relationship competencies and their impact on business growth may depend heavily on the specific industry and geographical context, among other factors.

These findings deviate from several studies in the literature that emphasize the positive impact of relationship competencies on firm performance. For example, Hallyyev (2019) found a strong association between relationship competencies, defined as the ability to form formal networks, and a company's growth. Similarly, Tehseen et al. (2018) demonstrated that relationship competence, considered as the entrepreneur's ability to maintain positive relationships with stakeholders, positively impacts firm performance for both Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Akinyemi (2017) and Lee et al. (2016) suggested that relationship competencies, particularly the skills to maintain positive customer relationships, are essential for promoting business success.

The discrepancy in the findings of this study compared to others might be attributed to the different contexts and operational definitions of relationship competencies. While the previous studies were conducted in various geographical locations (such as China, India, and Finland) and spanned various sectors, this study focused specifically on agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya. Furthermore, the definitions of relationship competencies varied across studies. For instance, this study focused on relationship marketing and strategic alliances, whereas Hallyyev (2019) emphasized formal networks, and Tehseen et al. (2018) considered the broader aspect of stakeholder relationships.

It is also noteworthy that there are studies that align with this study's findings. For instance, Ibidunni et al. (2021) found that relationship competencies, defined as the ability of SMEs to network with other firms, were not significant in determining performance of informal SMEs in Nigeria. This aligns with the current study's finding of relationship competencies not having a significant impact, suggesting that the impact of relationship competencies might vary based on specific socio-cultural contexts.

5.2.3 Influence of Leadership Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The study aimed to evaluate the influence of leadership competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. Leadership competencies, in this context, were defined as an entrepreneur's ability to guide an organization towards achieving its objectives and goals, embodying a visionary leader, and facilitating the attainment of set goals. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between leadership competencies and business growth.

With respect to the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory, the findings serve as an affirmation of the theory's assumptions. According to the theory, the success of an entrepreneurial endeavour is significantly influenced by an entrepreneur's leadership capabilities, specifically their ability to guide, motivate, and inspire their team towards achieving organizational goals. In this light, the positive correlation observed between leadership competencies and business growth is consistent with the theory's central premises.

These findings align with Tshwete's (2020) research on SMEs in South Africa's ICT industry, which found that leadership competencies, understood as the ability to identify and deploy capabilities required for business growth, were essential. Moreover, Tshwete (2020) suggested that leadership competencies in team building facilitate the fast adoption of innovation, driving growth. Despite the contextual difference - ICT industry in South Africa versus agribusiness in Kiambu County, Kenya - the findings on leadership competencies' role in growth are consistent.

Abdul (2019) also demonstrated the importance of leadership competencies for SMEs' survival in Kenya. The study identified leadership competencies as the ability to be results-driven, encourage communication among staff, and foster teamwork. This definition aligns with the leadership competencies emphasized in the current study, further supporting the importance of leadership competencies for business growth and survival.

The work of Sajilan et al. (2016) in the Malaysian Hospitality and Tourism Industry (HTI) also supports these findings. Their research suggested that leadership competencies, alongside other entrepreneurial competencies, significantly impact SMEs' performance within the HTI. Even though the industry and geographical context differ from the current study, the overarching theme of leadership competencies influencing business performance is common.

However, it's important to note that these studies were conducted in various industries and geographical contexts, with different operational definitions of leadership competencies. While this study focused on visionary leadership and goal attainment, others have incorporated team building, transformational leadership, and communication facilitation. Despite these differences, the common thread across all these studies is the positive influence of leadership competencies on business growth or survival. This reinforces the importance of leadership competencies for SME growth, extending beyond industry and geographical boundaries.

5.2.4 Influence of Innovative Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County

The study sought to examine the influence of innovative competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. Innovative competencies, in this context, were defined as an entrepreneur's ability to generate new ideas, develop new products/services, explore new markets, and effectively utilize technology. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between innovative competencies and business growth.

The findings serve as a potent testament to the Entrepreneurial Competencies Theory's relevance. This theory postulates that an entrepreneur's ability to innovate, amongst other competencies, can significantly influence the performance and growth of a business. In this light, the significant positive relationship observed between innovative competencies and business growth in this study aligns with the theory's core tenets.

These findings corroborate with the study by Ayepa et al. (2019) who defined innovativeness as the ability to introduce new ideas, methods, or products in a firm, and firm resources as the tangible and intangible assets of a firm used in the production of goods or services. Ayepa et al. (2019) showed that innovativeness and firm resources had a significant positive impact on the growth of small enterprises in Ghana. The present study complements their findings and extends the applicability of the entrepreneurial competencies theory to the agribusiness sector in Kiambu County, Kenya. The specific emphasis in this research on the long-term impact of innovative competencies on business growth also contributes a unique perspective to this body of literature.

Furthermore, the positive influence of innovative competencies on business growth found in this study is consistent with the findings of Kimeu (2017). Kimeu (2017) operationalized entrepreneurial competencies, including creativity, risk-taking, and innovation, as the abilities to

think outside the box, take calculated risks, and introduce novel solutions, respectively. While Kimeu (2017) found that these competencies statistically and positively impact performance in the public transport sector, this study extends this relationship to the agribusiness sector, demonstrating the universal importance of innovative competencies in driving business growth.

Abdilahe et al. (2017) similarly found a positive relationship between innovation and SME performance. They studied innovation in the context of introducing changes in products, processes, and marketing strategies, and discovered that these dimensions were critical drivers of SME performance in Hargeisa, Somaliland. Despite the different geographic and sector contexts, this study's findings resonate with theirs, further cementing the importance of innovative competencies for business growth.

However, while the above studies found a positive relationship between innovative competencies and business growth, their specific definitions of innovative competencies varied, and so did the contexts in which they were applied. For example, while this study defined innovative competencies as an entrepreneur's ability to generate new ideas, develop new products/services, explore new markets, and effectively utilize technology, Abdilahe et al. (2017) considered innovation in terms of changes in products, processes, and marketing strategies.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that strategic, leadership and innovative competencies have a significant positive influence on the growth of agribusiness SMEs, while relationship competency does not have a significant impact. These conclusions contribute to the understanding of the role of entrepreneurial competencies in agribusiness SMEs' growth in Kiambu County, Kenya. The findings underscore the importance of fostering strategic, leadership and innovative competencies in agribusiness SMEs to enhance their growth potential. This research also highlights the need for further investigation into the role of relationship competencies in this context, as their impact on SME growth was not found to be significant in this study.

Overall, the study provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners interested in the development and support of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County and beyond. By examining the role of entrepreneurial competencies in the growth of agribusiness SMEs, this study contributes to the broader field of entrepreneurship research, and it emphasizes the

importance of understanding and nurturing entrepreneurial competencies for the growth and success of SMEs in the agribusiness sector.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study following recommendations are proposed to support the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya, and enhance the role of entrepreneurial competencies in this context. First, policymakers and support organizations should develop programs and initiatives to foster strategic competencies among agribusiness SME owners. This may include training programs focused on strategic planning, goal setting, and decision-making processes, as well as mentorship and networking opportunities with experienced entrepreneurs who can share insights and best practices in strategic management.

Secondly, encouraging innovation should be a priority for agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County. Support organizations and government agencies can facilitate this by providing access to resources, funding, and training to enable SMEs to develop and implement innovative practices, products, and services. Additionally, creating a supportive environment for innovation, such as through tax incentives or innovation competitions, can further stimulate innovative competencies in the agribusiness sector.

Thirdly, while the current study did not find a significant impact of relationship competencies on agribusiness SME growth, it is recommended that future research further explores these competencies in different contexts and settings. This may help to uncover specific conditions or factors under which these competencies contribute significantly to SME growth.

Fourthly, policymakers, support organizations, and other stakeholders should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurial competencies and SME growth. This will help to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and that support programs are continually refined and improved to maximize their impact on agribusiness SMEs.

Lastly, encouraging collaboration among agribusiness SMEs, research institutions, and industry stakeholders can help facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices. This can contribute to the development of entrepreneurial competencies and promote the adoption of innovative and strategic approaches within the agribusiness sector.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights provided by this research on the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, Kenya, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study focused exclusively on agribusiness SMEs in Kiambu County, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions in Kenya or to different countries. The entrepreneurial ecosystem, cultural factors, and market dynamics may vary significantly across different geographical locations, potentially impacting the role of entrepreneurial competencies in SME growth.

Secondly, the research employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach may not adequately capture the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial competencies and their influence on business growth over time. Longitudinal studies would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these competencies evolve and impact SME growth.

Lastly, the study had a limited focus on specific competencies. The study investigated the impact of strategic, relationship, leadership, and innovative competencies on agribusiness SME growth. However, there may be other important entrepreneurial competencies or factors that contribute to SME growth that were not considered in this research such as financial management skills, market research skills and risk management skills.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, several avenues for future research on entrepreneurial competencies and agribusiness SME growth can be explored. First, future studies should focus on geographical expansion. In particular, future researchers should conduct similar studies in other regions of Kenya and in different countries to examine the generalizability of the findings and identify any region-specific or cultural factors that may influence the role of entrepreneurial competencies in SME growth.

Secondly, future researchers should carry out longitudinal studies to investigate the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial competencies and their impact on business growth over time, capturing the evolution of competencies and the changing market dynamics that may affect SME performance.

The third avenue is to explore the impact of entrepreneurial competencies on SME growth across different sectors other than agribusiness to determine whether the influence of these competencies varies depending on the sector of the business

Lastly, future researchers should focus on additional entrepreneurial competencies. In particular, future studies should examine the influence of other entrepreneurial competencies, such as financial management, technical skills, or adaptability, on agribusiness SME growth, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to success in this sector



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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction to Entrepreneur



Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR DATA COLLECTION

I am a student at Strathmore University. As part of my study requirements, I am conducting a field study targeting SME entrepreneurs in Kiambu County's agricultural sector. The research intends to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial competencies on the growth of SMEs in the agricultural sector of Kiambu County. I request your participation in this study by answering the research questions.

The data you share will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and only used for the research. Your identity will not be revealed, and the responses provided will be accessible to the researcher and research assistants only.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and the staff may pull out at any time without reason by simply informing the Researcher.

I am looking forward to your cooperation.

Gwada Miruca Noel

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Entrepreneurs

This questionnaire is categorized into four parts. The demographic questions about the respondents' demographic information will be covered in section A. Section B will collect data on the business profile. Section C will collect data on the component of entrepreneurial competencies. Section D will gather data on business growth. NB: Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained in handling the responses provided.

Part A: Demographic Profile of Entrepreneur

1. Kindly indicate your gender
 - i. Male
 - ii. Female
2. What is your age bracket?
 - i. Below 20 years
 - ii. 21-30 years
 - iii. 31-40 years
 - iv. 40-50 years
 - v. Above 50 years
3. Please indicate the highest level of education attained. (Tick as applicable)
 - i. Secondary
 - ii. College Diploma
 - iii. Undergraduate
 - iv. Master
 - v. Others (specify).....
4. Kindly indicate your marital status
 - i. Single
 - ii. Married
 - iii. Divorced
 - iv. Other.....
5. How many people live in your household?.....
6. What is your level of income in Kshs?
 - i. 0-10000
 - ii. 10,001-20,000

- iii. 20,001-30,000 []
- iv. 30,001-40,000 []
- v. Above 40,001 []

7. How many years have you lived in Kiambu County?

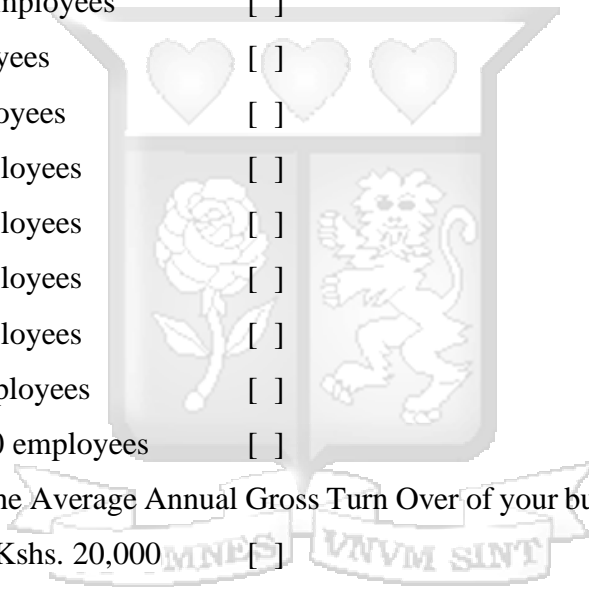
8. For how long have you been an entrepreneur in the agriculture sector?.....

Part B: Business Profile

1. Kindly indicate how long the business has been in existence

2. Kindly indicate the number of employees in your business

- i. Below 2 employees []
- ii. 2-5 employees []
- iii. 6-10 employees []
- iv. 11-19 employees []
- v. 21-30 employees []
- vi. 31-40 employees []
- vii. 41-50 employees []
- viii. 51 -99 employees []
- ix. Above 100 employees []



3. Kindly indicate the Average Annual Gross Turn Over of your business in the past 3 years?

- a. Less than Kshs. 20,000 []
- b. Kshs. 20 – 100 (000) []
- c. Kshs. 100 - 250 (000) []
- d. Kshs. 250 -500 (000) []
- e. Kshs. 500 (000) and above []

Part C: Entrepreneurial Competencies

4. Please indicate with a tick (√) the extent to which your firm focuses on the following: The scale to use is: 1= Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3= Somewhat Agree; 4=Agree; 5= Strongly Agree

Strategic competencies	1	2	3	4	5
i. The business has a documented vision statement					
ii. The business has clearly documented goals and objectives					
iii. The business has documented long-term and short-term goals					
iv. Each goal has a specified time to be completed					
v. The goals of the business can be measured					
vi. The goals of the business are attainable					
vii. A framework has been formulated outlining the day-to-day operations of the business					
Relationship Competencies					
i. The entrepreneur is aware of the key stakeholders of the business					
ii. The entrepreneur has strong relationships with regular customers					
iii. The entrepreneur has established long-term relationships with the suppliers					
iv. The entrepreneur interacts with the surrounding community in a friendly manner					
v. The business has a loyalty program that is subscribed by customers					
vi. The customers recommend the business to their friends					
Leadership Competencies					
i. The business has a leadership structure.					

ii.	The entrepreneur allows the employees to offer suggestions on improving the business					
iii.	The entrepreneur seeks feedback from the customers and suppliers					
iv.	The entrepreneur is a transformational leader					
v.	The entrepreneur is able to make decisions under pressure					
vi.	The entrepreneur is able to take business risks to improve performance					
Innovative Competencies						
i.	The business uses computers and online applications for day-to-day operations					
ii.	The entrepreneur has come up with new products and services based on the customer demands over the past two years					
iii.	The entrepreneur has ventured in new markets in 2023					
iv.	The entrepreneur conducts research before introducing new products					
v.	The entrepreneur markets the business through social media.					

Part D: Business Growth

5. Please indicate with a tick (√) the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statement on business growth: The scale to use is: 1= Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3= Somewhat Agree; 4=Agree; 5= Strongly Agree

Business Growth	1	2	3	4	5
i. The sales of the SME have increased over the past one year					
ii. My sales are often as a result of customer referrals					
iii. My annual sales profits have been on the rise over the past one year					
iv. I make repeat sales to my loyal customers					
v. I intend to expand my business over the next two years					
vi. I find it difficult to open a branch of my current business					

“THANK YOU”



Appendix iii: Letter of Approval



11th April 2023

Mr Gwada Miruca Noel,
miruca.noel@strathmore.edu

Dear Mr Gwada,

**RE: Influence of Entrepreneurial Competencies on the Growth of Agribusiness
Small and Medium Enterprises in Kiambu County**


This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above **SU- master's** research proposal. Your application reference number is **SU-ISERC1670/23**. The approval period is from **11th April 2023 to 10th April 2024**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, and MTA) will be used
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC.
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 48 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise, that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 48 hours
- v. Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/> and obtain other clearances needed.


Yours sincerely,



for: **Dr Ben Ngoye,**
Secretary; SU-ISERC

Cc: Mr Ambrose Rachier,
Chairperson; SU-ISERC




Appendix iv: Research Permit


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

Ref No: **211490** Date of Issue: **25/April/2023**


RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr.. GWADA MIRUCA of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kiambu on the topic: INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES ON THE GROWTH OF AGRIBUSINESS SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KIAMBU COUNTY . for the period ending : 25/April/2024.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/23/25350**

211490
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION**

Verification QR Code



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See overleaf for conditions