

**INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCES ON SERVICE DELIVERY
PERFORMANCE IN PETROLEUM FIRMS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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of the Requirements for the Conferment of the Degree of Masters of Business
Administration (Strategic Management Option) of Kenya Methodist University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any university for examination purposes.

Signature.....

Date

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RECOMMENDATION

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dear mother Sahra Ali Osman, for the support she has given me throughout the entire course. She understood the need to sacrifice our meagre resources for this noble course. I also dedicate this work to my grandmother Anod Jamaac Elmi, my father Abduhakim Hassan Iidow and my best friend for their understanding and encouragement during this study.

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ABSTRACT

Petroleum firms in Kenya face increasing pressure to remain competitive, deliver quality services, and adapt to challenges such as fluctuating oil prices, regulatory constraints, and limited technological capacity. Many firms form strategic alliances to boost capacity, share resources, and improve service delivery. However, despite such partnerships, inefficiencies and limited competitive advantage persist, raising questions about their actual effectiveness. This study examined the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to assess the role of strategic leadership, market share expansion, resource and capability sharing, and competitive strategy. A quantitative research design was adopted, with data collected from managers of 125 petroleum service stations using semi-structured questionnaires. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the research process. Findings revealed that all four constructs of strategic alliances showed a moderate and significant relationship with service delivery performance. Further analysis demonstrated that while each construct had some level of influence, the combined effect was uneven. Competitive strategy emerged as the most impactful factor, underscoring the importance of innovation, technological adaptation, and customer-focused practices in improving service outcomes. Market share expansion demonstrated limited significance, while strategic leadership and resource sharing showed no notable effect on service delivery performance. The study concluded that strategic alliances moderately contribute to service delivery performance, but their effectiveness varies across different dimensions. It recommends that petroleum firms prioritize competitive strategy within alliances by investing in service innovation, digital platforms, and differentiated offerings. Leadership and resource-sharing initiatives should be realigned toward measurable service outcomes. Practical insights are also offered to policymakers and industry stakeholders seeking to strengthen the role of alliances in improving service delivery. Future research should consider additional organizational, technological, and environmental factors, and extend the study to other Counties for broader generalizability.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DC:	Dynamics Capabilities
OPEC:	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
RBV:	Resource Based View
SD:	Standard Deviation
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TQM:	Total Quality Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globally, petroleum is considered one of the commodities widely consumed across the world. Today's current global consumption of petroleum is approximately 100 million barrels per day, thus a valuable commodity in high demand (Ahmad et al., 2020). The annual consumption of petroleum increased annually; in 2022 it stood at 4.39 billion metric tons, which increased by 0.13 metric tons from the previous year's 4.26 billion metric tons (Kober et al., 2020). Petroleum has highly volatile prices that fluctuate daily. International organizations such as the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are involved in determining global petroleum prices across the world.

The petroleum industry is a complex multifaceted market that experiences unpredictable changes. Petroleum firms existing in the complex market are largely challenged to maintain their market position to avoid the collapse of their firms due to huge losses and risks (Kago et al., 2018). Petroleum firms are in a state of flux as the volatile petroleum pricing and supply changes affect service delivery performance of their firms. Technological innovation plays an important role as it affects all sectors from production to the sale of petroleum and petroleum products (Luo et al., 2019). Enhanced techniques of oil exploration and exploitation due to advanced technology increase production efficiency, resulting in increased oil production and prolonged oil reservoir lifespan. The advanced technology reduces the cost of oil per barrel and maximizes the use of resources, thus more profits and improved utilization of resources, pricing and enhanced service delivery performance (Luo et al., 2019). A case study on ExxonMobil Company illustrates strong financial performance from the benefits of using digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence to expand on oil exploration and streamline

production operations where the use of real-time data provided by AI and machine learning enables efficient operations and saving on costs (Fernandez et al., 2022).

Regulatory changes influence the performance of petroleum firms. In Sub-Saharan Africa, set environmental regulations need strict adherence by petroleum firms to reduce pollution by greenhouse gases produced in operations (Arthur, 2020). Compliance with these regulations becomes expensive for petroleum firms, especially for those that are financially unstable thereby affecting short-term profitability of these firms. Petroleum firms are mandated to enforce health and safety regulations to provide worker safety in operations by minimizing workplace accidents (Obomhense & Ejikeme, 2022). This also requires significant investment in the purchase of safer working types of equipment and safety training programs in compliance with the standards. These investments increase operation and procedure costs but also assist in the prevention of expensive accidents, boost operations speed and efficiency, and motivate workers by an assurance of safety thus improving production and overall service delivery.

Oil price volatility negatively impacts the operations, supply, and profit margins of petroleum firms. Smaller petroleum firms in Africa face challenges in the creation of budgets thus affecting their stability and operations (Ulusoy & Ozdurak, 2018). When the prices go high the economy slows down making oil and petroleum product consumption low then when the price unpredictably drops it harms financially strapped firms (Yang et al., 2022). In recent years the world has been transiting to cleaner energy sources which has significantly reduced the demand for fossil fuels (Ulusoy & Ozdurak, 2018). The uproar global transition to electric vehicles and renewable energy sources poses a threat to the long-term profitability of petroleum firms. Petroleum firms strain a lot in their efforts to comply with required regulations, mitigate the gradually decreasing demand for petroleum, and come up with new strategies to remain significant in the global market.

Kenya is a third-world developing country dependent on imported crude oil from foreign countries such as the UAE and Nigeria. Kenya discovered petroleum deposits in Turkana County in the year 2012. It is a great discovery as it has put Kenya on the global map as an oil-producing country, but it isn't sufficient for the overwhelming petroleum and gas needs of its large population (Mkutu et al., 2019). In Kenya, the current oil consumption is 114,000 barrels per day constituting to being the 75th rank of oil consumption in the world. Kenya has over 60 registered oil firms. Oil firms in Kenya are grouped into two main categories. The major category includes firms such as Vivo Energy Limited, Total Kenya Limited, Kenol Kobi Kenya Limited, and National Oil Corporation of Kenya. The major petroleum and oil firms hold 70% of the oil market share. The minor group consists of Lake Oil Company, Hashi Energy, and many others. All oil firms in Kenya fall under the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum (Wang'ombe, 2018). Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority regulates petroleum prices.

As of 2024, Vivo Energy Kenya Limited is strongly in good service delivery performance as it leads with a market share of 22.07%, followed by Total Energies by 14.88%, Rubis Energy by 14.05% among others having a contribution to the market share (Wamwara et al., 2023). The enhanced service delivery performance of these firms is contributed by strategic leadership as they engage in extensive networks of many branches operating all over the country and strategic market positioning thus providing a competitive advantage in the complex market (Muthimi & Kilika, 2018). Efficient initiatives innovated by leaders such as loyalty programs to customers help maintain customer loyalty and attract new customers, enhancing overall service delivery. In contrast, petroleum firms operating in Kenya face supply chain disruptions fueled by cases such as the Russia-Ukraine war, which results in high oil price volatility (Bai, 2024). This affects the supply of petroleum as firms experience stock outs and fuel prices tend to fluctuate, affecting the capacity to meet overwhelming customer demand which results in

revenue loss, harm the firm's standing, and damage customer trust. Financial constraints have limited firms to improve infrastructure and control operational costs which restricts the firms from outsourcing market opportunities and experiencing inefficient operations resulting in low profits and market share (Muthimi & Kilika, 2018). Operating with outdated technologies causes the firms to have a lot of delays, errors, and high operational costs making the companies less competitive.

Strategic alliances enable organizations to build partnerships to maintain their significance in the ever-changing market dynamics. Many organizations opt to form strategic alliances to achieve individual firm goals and objectives and gain benefits by partnering with other firms that they were not in the capacity to achieve alone. Therefore, a strategic alliance is a cooperative attempt firms or organizations use to pool some of their assets and skills to gain a competitive advantage. Firms can share their capabilities, resources, risks, and information to achieve a competitive advantage. According to Cuthbertson and Furseth (2022) for firms to build their foundation for competitive advantage they leverage their resources and capabilities and work with partnering companies to gain additional resources and capabilities.

Strategic alliances play a crucial role for petroleum firms in Africa. According to Kohnert (2023), a case study of petroleum firms namely Total Energies and Uni came into a joint venture to create a new petroleum firm called Azule Energy in Angola. The establishment of Azule Energy aimed at consolidating positions, maximizing production, and improving operational efficiency in the oil and gas industry in Angola. Azule Energy resulted in cost reductions and placed the two partnering firms in a better market competitive position in Angola. Strategic alliances play as an instrument in service delivery performance in diverse and complex petroleum markets (Kago et al., 2018).

Strategic alliances have created numerous benefits for petroleum firms both globally and locally. Collaborations with other firms, organizations, regulatory bodies, and governments have led to access to new markets (Chaziza, 2020). Local firms have the opportunity to partner with petroleum firms to gain new geographical markets. Collaborations create innovations that provide technological solutions to operating and service systems. Pooling resources saves on costs as the organizations collaborate and gain economies of scale. The existence of strategic alliances also influences service delivery performance among petroleum firms (Scholvin, 2021). Organizational performance is how an organization carries out its activities efficiently towards set goals and objectives. Petroleum firms gauge their quality-of-service delivery performance using indicators on various sectors of their firms for efficient operations. Financial performance is very crucial to petroleum firms as they can monitor their revenue growth and profitability, it indicates their significance in the market and overlooks their competition in the market (Orazalin & Narbaev, 2019). Petroleum firms have to look into their operations for efficient production of petroleum products, use of petroleum byproducts, and quality of their products and services to their consumers.

Petroleum firms constitute the oil and gas marketing companies that operate and are placed at different places throughout the country. They have outlets commonly referred to as stations where they retail fuel and lubricants. All the marketing firms distribute and sell the same products the difference is that they put them in different brands to create huge competition (Chiluyi, 2018). For customers to be reached with petroleum products such as gasoline, diesel, lubricants, and other petroleum products crude oil has to be imported, refined, transported, and finally retailed as a finished product. Therefore, the study sought to investigate the relationship between strategic alliances and service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi

County, Kenya since it hosts the majority of the petroleum firms in the country as they disperse and spread out to far-reaching regions within the country and outside.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Petroleum firms in Kenya are striving to remain flexible and relevant in the volatile market by trying to maintain a competitive advantage for their sustainability in the market. The fluctuating oil prices affect the profit margins of petroleum firms. When the prices are high operation costs intensify reducing profits and when they fall the firms experience inventory depreciation leading to money losses. Kenya is also experiencing high inflation rates and strict environmental regulations which concurrently result in increased operational costs that significantly reduce profit margins. The saturation of many petroleum dealer firms makes it a challenge for small and upcoming firms to hold a significant market share and have the capacity to compete with already established giants in the market. Political instability in the country has caused disruptions in the supply chain thus repelling investors which in turn limits the firms from making long-term plans and investments. Limited finances have limited firms from investing in required advanced technology and expansion projects thus limiting the growth and competitive edge of petroleum firms.

Many studies have focused on diverse and different fields of the petroleum industry. According to Nginyo and Ntale (2018), a case study on Kenol-Kobil and ethics revealed tax evasion activities that the Kenya Revenue Authority alleged against the oil company as it had underreported revenues that were not accounted for in tax compliance. The same study also revealed fuel supply manipulation by the firm which caused false fuel shortages to raise fuel prices and make more profits. A study on Tullow Oil and the Turkana community discovered the economic development and social impact of the discovery and exploration of oil reserves in the area (Obongo, 2018). Jobs were created and infrastructure was developed thus locals

were employed for both skilled and unskilled labor and the infrastructure enabled easier access to healthcare and education. In contrast, findings revealed that oil spills from the site threatened the livelihoods of locals because of the concerns of water and soil contamination requiring intervention by the government to protect the livelihood and environment from degradation. These studies provide knowledge of the complexities and operational challenges existing in the petroleum industry.

The study on the influence of strategic alliances on the service delivery performance of petroleum firms is yet to be fully understood. Strategic alliances allow for the sharing of skills and resources, combat risks that would result in huge losses, and allow for the use of advanced technologies for improved operations for the petroleum firms that collaborate. Despite having establishment of many alliances among petroleum dealer companies, these companies still strain on achieving competitive advantage, inefficient operations, ineffective service delivery performance and lack of flexibility to withstand the evolving global petroleum market. Nairobi County is an economic hub that provides a conducive environment for this research due to the high competition of the many established petroleum firms having their headquarters situated in Nairobi. Nairobi has a well-laid-out infrastructure and available resources that provide support for operations such as transportation and distribution of petroleum. There exist questions regarding the effectiveness of strategic alliances that benefit and challenge petroleum dealers. How the established strategic alliances affect the financial, human resource, market, and operations of petroleum firms is not well understood. Therefore, the study this study sought to investigate the relationship between strategic alliances and service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

General Objective

To investigate the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- a) To determine the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.
- b) To determine the influence of strategic market share expansion on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.
- c) To determine the influence of strategic resources on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.
- d) To determine the influence of competitive strategy on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypothesis

H₀₁. Strategic leadership does not have significant influence on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

H₀₂. Market share expansion does not significantly influence service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

H₀₃. Strategic resources does not significantly influence service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

H₀₄. Competitive strategies has no significant influence on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The research help petroleum firms to understand the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of their firms. The study aimed at helping petroleum firms in Kenya to identify, evaluate, and respond to risks and challenges associated with strategic alliances to improve individual service delivery. The study help petroleum firms grasp benefits that they previously wouldn't achieve while working as an individual entity in the complex market. In the rapidly changing and growing global market, there is the emergence of new advanced technologies that are important to petroleum firms for their operations, access to these opportunities is important for the sustained success of petroleum firms which can only be easily accessed through strategic alliances. Therefore, strategic alliances help petroleum firms to gain access to advanced technologies and complementary skills.

Petroleum firms can strategically select the most compatible and complementary petroleum firm counterpart for them to achieve a competitive advantage by accessing new markets thus having a larger customer base and growing to new geographical locations. Strategic alliances enable mitigation of risks as they are greatly reduced and their existence managed leaving minimal impact on the service delivery performance of the petroleum firms. Petroleum firms in strategic alliances enjoy economies of scale as costs per unit scale of production are reduced and they can share facilities such as storage, retail, and distribution facilities thus cutting down operational costs. The study also provide the government with knowledge of the delivery of services of petroleum firms and how certain strategic policies impact the quality of services of petroleum firms.

The study provide useful knowledge to petroleum firms to integrate strategic alliances for sustainable existence in the global market. Furthermore, the study provide new knowledge to academicians and scholars to get a better understanding of strategic alliances and their

influence on service delivery performance of petroleum dealers. The study also deliver information to policymakers which, in turn, facilitate proper policy and guideline formulation. Finally, the study findings provide a basis for further studies to be done on strategic alliances and address existing gaps.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covered petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya serving as the largest economic hub of the country thus making it the best study area for this research. There exist many petroleum firms in Nairobi as well as their headquarters being located at the Central Business District. This makes it a relevant study environment for this case study. The large market size of the large population density of petroleum consumers provides a huge consumer market for petroleum products creating a competitive environment that makes the different petroleum firms form alliances for their significant existence. Conducting this study in Nairobi provided valuable insights into the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of petroleum firms. Strategic alliance is the main independent variable. Service delivery performance serves as the dependent variable.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The case study has a limited general study as it focused on petroleum firms within Nairobi County thus making it difficult for the findings to be generalized for all petroleum firms in different counties and other regions of the country. The data collected from the petroleum firms' managers or stakeholder representatives may be subjected to bias based on personal perspectives and fear of revealing companies' strategic competition. There existed constraints in accessing accurate and valid data from petroleum firms as some were not willing to provide confidential firm data and sensitive operational information. Finally, the study used data gathered at a specific moment in time, and therefore, the long-term effectiveness of strategic

alliances on service delivery performance might have yet to be fully discovered. Future studies on similar case studies could enhance longitudinal research designs.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that data collected from the petroleum firms in Nairobi County represented the whole country and the findings can be generalized. The study assumed that the data gathered would help answer the research hypothesis and that the findings were accurate and trustworthy. This study was also dependent on the researcher's capacity to gather sufficient and reliable sources so that it can be finished and the respondents can be contacted as soon as possible.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Competitive advantage: Refers to factors that position a company in a more privileged position compared to their fellow competitors thereby gaining more profits based on the ability to outperform in the market (Kuncoro & Suriani, 2018).

Market share: Refers to the percentage total amount of sales that a company has and the portion of the market that the company has control over (Hydock, 2020).

Operational efficiency: Refers to the ability of a company to effectively use the available resources to conduct its procedures to produce goods and services of high quality. It is a measure of comparison and balance of inputs against outputs (Hartono & Hartono, 2022).

Petroleum firm: This is a company or organization that engages in the supply distribution, and sale of petroleum and petroleum-related products. They mostly operate as retailers and establish service stations for their operations (Ondiek, 2019).

Risk: Refers to any aspect or occurrence that has the potential to limit a company's ability to achieve its goals and objectives. These factors may be internal or external to the company causing uncertainty of outcomes when the event happens (Lemos, 2020).

Service delivery: This is the extensive manner through which firms or organizations provide services to related stakeholders inclusive of customers, local community, and clients. Activities involved in the success of this operation include operational efficiency, resource utilization management advanced integration, and improvement of innovation and processes (Ndevu & Muller, 2018).

Strategic Alliance: Refers to a formal agreement established by two or more companies for mutual benefits while each company remains independent. It involves

collaborations to achieve certain objectives for the mutual benefit of both companies (Ndevu & Muller, 2018)

Strategic leadership: It is a practice of leaders of a company or organization where the executives use different styles of management, develop the entity's goals and visions to maintain competition, and put-up measures to maintain flexibility in the changing market environment for the achievement of the set goals (Samimi et al., 2022).

Strategy: This is a well-detailed plan established to achieve set goals and objectives while having a long-term vision for a company's achievements. It encompasses setting goals and objectives, establishing of path of action to achieve the goals, and proper utilization of resources to carry out the actions (Barforoush et al., 2021).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outline the theoretical and literature review, organized according to the study objectives. Strategic alliances have been reviewed critically, focusing on their influence on service delivery performance among petroleum firms. Among the concepts reviewed are strategic alliances, strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resources, and competitive strategy in the petroleum industry among others that anchor the study's objective.

2.2 Theoretical Review

The theoretical review outlines several existing theories and frameworks related to the research study that are analyzed and applied to serve as a foundation of a case study to address a specific research problem for a research study. This study's theoretical framework comprise of three theories, Total Quality Management Theory, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Transaction Cost Economics Theory.

2.2.1 Dynamics Capabilities (DC) Theory

This theory highlights that firms must develop, grow, integrate, and reconfigure internal and external proficiency. This allows it to sustain a competitive advantage in the rapid ever-changing global market environments. The theory illustrates where not only is it important for a firm to have valuable resources to have a competitive position in the market but also the firm's ability to dynamically utilize the available resources in response to market and environmental changes. According to Mamédio et al (2019), a firm's response to internal and external threats and opportunities relies on some key concepts such as sensing, seizing, and changing to environmental changes that are beneficial to organizations to adapt, innovate, and achieve long-term sustainability.

In the context of petroleum firms where competition is intense and the ever-changing consumer preferences continually evolve, the Dynamics Capabilities Theory applies in enabling petroleum firms to form alliances to have a better competitive market advantage. Strategic alliances enhance sensing capacities where the collaborating companies have a broader ability to perceive opportunities and threats thus enabling them to get access to many sources of information, broad markets, and new technologies (Helfat & Raubitschek, 2018). Dynamic capabilities enable petroleum firms in a strategic alliance to grab emerging market opportunities by gathering complementary skills and resources therefore co-developing new products and enhancing streamlined operational procedures and service delivery performance. Through Dynamic capabilities collaborating petroleum firms transform their firms in per changing environment to achieve a competitive advantage. This involves ongoing reshaping of the firm's structure, processes, and procedures by innovation and learning new strategies.

The Dynamic Capability Theory addresses directly the variables of strategic alliances, strategic market share expansion, and competitive strategy, showing how petroleum firms in Kenya dynamically align internal and external resources to deliver improved and adaptive service experiences. By embracing the Dynamic Capability Theory petroleum firms in strategic alliances gain access to new broader markets and advanced technologies that might have been unavailable internally, develop market flexibility to seamlessly react to changes in the market and upcoming risks and the collaborative actions enhance learning and unlearning of strategies through joint problem-solving and knowledge sharing.

2.2.2 Total Quality Management Theory

Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory is a managerial approach used by firms or organizations to relentlessly improve the quality of products and services they offer to their customers through collaborative efforts of all entities of the firm such as firm leaders, employees, customers, and partners. This theory emphasizes creating a framework for

receiving feedback from all key stakeholders to address any issues or concerns to continuously improve the delivery of services and products as well as enhance operational efficiency for the sustainability of the firm or organization.

In the case of petroleum firms, this theory clearly illustrates key elements on which petroleum firms focus to continually improve their operations and ensure quality products and services to consumers. Petroleum firms that seek and understand customer needs and preferences can come up with tailored interventions to meet the expectations of customers. Customer satisfaction is highly considered through the production of petroleum products that are safe, of good performance, and meet environmental standards to achieve customer satisfaction. Another key area is employee involvement which entails engaging all employees in training programs for best practices and standard procedures for their empowerment and fostering teamwork to uphold responsible work ethics for the quality delivery of services. This improves employee morale reduces the wastage of resources and minimization of workplace risks that would otherwise incur costs thus raising production costs. Optimization of processes such as oil drilling, refining, supply chain, and retailing of petroleum products significantly ensures consistent improvement of processes making it more efficient. The theory also comes in handy through the application of the Kaizen strategy of identifying areas of improvement and coming up with solutions and plans to address the issues.

The Total Quality Management Theory anchors the independent variables of strategic leadership and strategic resources, while also anchoring the dependent variable service delivery. The theory illustrates how petroleum firms in strategic alliances can coordinate leadership and shared resources toward continuous service improvement. Petroleum firms that engage in strategic alliances adopt this theory through shared customer insights to prioritize customer satisfaction, adoption of leadership tactics that understand customer needs and the sharing of advanced technology to streamline operations to better service delivery. Strategic

alliances enforced with effective leadership of petroleum firms pool resources and capabilities for long-term planning and investment to strategically keep up with continuous improvement that meets the ever-changing customer needs and preferences.

2.2.3 Transaction Cost Economics Theory

The Transaction Cost Economics Theory was developed to illustrate and examine how transaction costs influence organizational strategy, structure, service delivery, and boundaries of companies. Transaction costs are expenditures incurred when buying and selling a good or service outside the defined cost of the good or service. Transaction costs occur in the form of finances where, there are fees to be paid in the execution of buying or selling of a good or service such as appraisal fees, and government fees. Labor transaction costs that are incurred for the transportation of goods across long distances for their delivery and cost occurrence for gathering information for instance from marketing and logistics experts (DeMiguel et al., 2024). Enforcement of contracts and monitoring transactions build up large transaction expenses for companies.

Transaction Cost Economics Theory expands on asset specificity, a central concept where assets can be reoriented for substitute uses by alternate users without losing the value of the given asset. Human specificity, physical assets such as customized machines, and dedicated assets like investments influence the efficiency and authority structures of transactions (Tate & Ellram, 2022). Transaction costs can be unpredictable and complex due to the uncertainties in the global market which cause the transaction costs to fluctuate (Schneiberg & Hollingworth 2019). Negative fluctuations in the market can raise transaction costs for companies therefore requiring constant monitoring to reduce risks that come along with raised transaction costs.

In the context of the petroleum industry, the Transaction Cost Theory is relatively applicable, especially to those petroleum firms that form strategic alliances. These firms can reduce transaction costs as they easily share search and information costs concerning the market, the

latest available technology, and regulatory requirements. This significantly reduces costs which would otherwise be expensive if search and information costs would be incurred individually. Strategic alliances with the help of the theory enable petroleum firms to gain higher bargaining power through the simplification of the negotiation process. The creation of mutual agreements between the collaborating firms builds trust enabling informed decision-making with supply contractors thus saving on time and costs and achieving economies of scale.

The Transaction Cost Theory provides a robust explanation for the role of strategic resources in shaping service delivery. It demonstrates how collaborative strategies reduce operational complexities and financial outlays, thereby enabling petroleum firms to enhance service reliability and responsiveness. Strategic alliances allow the sharing of high-specific assets used in the petroleum industry. Since high asset specificity results in increased transaction costs, sharing them will cut down costs and risks as they are distributed to both collaborating firms. Application of the Transaction Cost Theory is very resourceful for petroleum firms as they can navigate across uncertainties, risks, and complexity of the petroleum industry resulting in enhanced service delivery performance of various stakeholders such as customers, local community, and clients.

2.2.4 Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT)

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) offers a fitting and insightful lens that comprehensively anchors the dependent variable of this study which is service delivery. Developed by Richard L. Oliver in 1980, this theory is widely recognized in the fields of service marketing and consumer behavior for its explanation of how customer satisfaction emerges from the comparison between service expectations and the actual performance experienced (Hasan, 2019). Central to the theory is the concept of disconfirmation, which refers to the gap between what a customer anticipates and what they ultimately perceive. Satisfaction, therefore, is influenced by whether the actual service delivery performance meets, exceeds, or falls short

of initial expectations. Within this framework, three potential outcomes can arise. Satisfaction is highest when a firm's service performance exceeds customer expectations, a state referred to as positive disconfirmation. If the service merely meets expectations, then the customer experiences a neutral state known as confirmation (Carraher-Wolverton & Hirschheim, 2023). However, if the perceived service is below expectations, negative disconfirmation occurs, resulting in dissatisfaction.

In the context of petroleum firms operating in Kenya, service delivery performance extends beyond the provision of fuel to include elements such as prompt access to services, employee responsiveness, safety standards, cleanliness, digital convenience, and the overall customer experience. Consumers, particularly in urban and peri-urban markets, form expectations based on a variety of factors, including prior encounters, brand reputation, promotional messages, and service offerings by competing firms (Hasan, 2019). For instance, if a customer visits a fuel station expecting long queues and limited payment options but instead finds swift service, digital payment systems, well-maintained facilities, and courteous attendants, their expectations are positively disconfirmed—leading to heightened satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Strategic alliances play a significant role in shaping these service delivery performance outcomes. Through such partnerships, petroleum firms gain access to a broader pool of resources, including technology, infrastructure, skilled personnel, and market intelligence. For example, a Kenyan petroleum firm that partners with a logistics company may improve its fuel distribution system, resulting in more reliable product availability and timely restocking, factors that enhance customer satisfaction. Similarly, an alliance with a global energy company may introduce advanced customer relationship management systems, enabling personalized services, effective complaint handling, and improved customer feedback mechanisms.

Such enhancements in operational processes and service delivery performance standards allow firms to not only meet but often exceed customer expectations. In this way, strategic alliances contribute directly to the mechanisms described by Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Hasan, 2019). Furthermore, the theory highlights the importance of managing customer expectations effectively. Petroleum firms engaged in alliances can implement coordinated marketing, set realistic service promises, and offer consistent customer experiences across their retail network—helping to ensure expectations are properly aligned with service realities.

Therefore, the Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory serves as a powerful explanatory framework for this study's dependent variable. It demonstrates how perceptions of service quality are shaped and how strategic partnerships influence the ability of petroleum firms to deliver value that exceeds expectations. By applying this theoretical framework, the study can better understand and assess the impact of strategic alliances on customer satisfaction and service excellence within Kenya's petroleum sector.

2.3 Empirical Literature

This chapter provide a review of various kinds of literature related to the topic of study and the specific objectives of the study. The empirical review synthesizes existing studies and provides a summary of existing findings and identifies gaps in the literature.

2.3.1 Influence of Market Share Expansion on Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms

Globally, market share is a defining factor of the market position of petroleum firms. A case study conducted by Park (2020) on Saudi Aramco petroleum firm that holds the world's largest market share suggested that petroleum firms that held the highest market share in the industry were the largest market competitors thus holding a strong competitive advantage. They become the leaders of the market and harvested increased revenue and profit margins. Saudi Aramco

achieved economies of scale thus reducing costs per unit production that enabled it to competitively price its goods and services enabling the provision of diverse and readily available services to customers. Large market share allowed the large-scale investment of resources to research and development thus achieving effective and efficient operations that boost service delivery performance to consumers (Bagchi et al., 2020). Large market size also allowed other firms with large market shares to be stable in the rapidly evolving market and thus have the power to stabilize the market and price determination (Godzimirski, 2019). Large market shareholders can form strategic alliances with fellow petroleum firms that boost the firm to improve their brand, geographical markets and consequently service delivery performance in the world.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, petroleum firms with large market share are in the capacity to invest their resources in the improvement of customer service platforms. According to (Tob-Ogu & Cullen, 2018) conducted a case study on integration of technology of Vivo Energy petroleum firm having a large market share was in capacity of allocation of resources allows for the adoption of technology such as AI customer service metrics to create loyalty programs for loyal customers and enhance customer engagement (Wilson et al., 2020). This allowed petroleum firms to get a better understanding of customer's perspectives on the firm's service delivery performance as well as complaints that could be addressed. Petroleum firms in the region that put consideration in their customer experience have the potential to attract new customers and maintain loyal ones thus having a consistent customer base resulting in increased revenue generation and higher profit margins giving a better market position (Lisitsa et al., 2019).

According to Daneeva et al (2020) a case study on Shell Energies in South Africa revealed that they have paid attention to the customer experience by innovating Shell MarketHub. Shell MarketHub has enabled customers to order, check available products, and get deliveries and

invoices online. This has substantially reduced waiting times as customers create accounts that they easily access at their convenience and enjoy Shell Energies services (Al Balushi 2023). Shell Energies holding a large market share allows them to provide customer service teams to respond to any queries and issues raised by customers (Bamutire, 2021). This initiative has allowed Shell to maintain their market position in the evolving market as they appropriately respond to the changing customer preferences.

A large market share of petroleum firms provides the firms with the capabilities to open up more retail and service stations in larger geographical coverage. The presence of service stations close to consumers allows customer convenience and accessibility increasing the utilization of the available firm's services (Ghasemian et al., 2020). Large geographical markets increase distribution networks to larger markets ensuring on-time supply of products and services to customers (Godzimirski, 2019). Total Energies has set up solar panels in its service stations to allow consistent uninterrupted service delivery performance to customers. The solar panels save on electricity costs and provide a continuous power supply even in regions that experience frequent power blackouts (Ghasemian et al., 2020).

According to a study conducted by Adam et al. (2021), possession of large market shares comes with detrimental effects such as a monopoly petroleum market. Monopolization of Ghana Oil Company Limited a dominant petroleum firm in Ghana resulted in a reduced competitive market where the dominant firm does not put effort into improving service quality as customer satisfaction is undermined (Akinola & Wissink, 2018). Lack of competition made the petroleum firm dictate prices, which were often set high to gain more profits but consumers are not satisfied as they have limited choices (Manneh et al., 2020). Inefficiencies in operations are also causing poor service quality because there lack of competitive pressure to maintain a competitive position.

In Kenya, a case study by Maundu (2020) on Vivo Energy limited reflected that having a large market share and having over 260 stations all over the country provided services such as financial services of ATM money machines and fast food retains that boost its customer experience thus outcompeting other competitive counterparts such as Rubis Energy and Total Energies (Wavinya & Kariuki, 2020). Kenya has a competitive petroleum industry making the smaller firms with small market share to experience high production costs as they have less capacity to enjoy economies of scale. Limited financial resources hinder investments in expansion of stations and adoption of advanced technologies and they are less recognized brands that would go unrecognized by investors (Wavinya & Kariuki, 2020). These smaller firms such as Gulf Energy need to engage in strategic alliances and collaborations with other small firms or technological companies for them to increase their potential to elevate and succeed in the dynamic petroleum industry. It is in this context that this research study sought to find out the influence of market share expansion on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Kenya and how the small firms can put up measures such as strategic alliances to uplift improved service delivery.

2.3.2 Influence of Strategic Resources on Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms

Strategic resources alongside capability sharing allows petroleum firms to interact with their counterparts and collaborate with other relevant sectors such as technology companies and research and development establishments. At the global scale a case study conducted by Waterworth and Bradshaw (2018) on ExxonMobil, Petrobras and Statoil revealed that these petroleum firms formed a consortia alliance that enabled them to develop the largescale Brazilian offshore oil fields. Through the mutual agreement and cooperation of the member petroleum firms to exchange knowledge, share their resources as well as distribute the risks encountered for the success of the major project. The accomplishment of the major project

became cost effective as all firms were able to pool their resources such as human labor, machinery and equipment as well as financial support Lima-de-Oliveira (2018). This reduced the cost burden on individual firm due to deep-water drilling or challenging exploration of the deep sea that could have demanded high input cost on an individual firm. The sharing of risks by the collaborating petroleum firms enabled the firms to mitigate risks such as globally fluctuating oil prices and political instability (Tanui , 2020). Distribution of the risks improved the stability and reliability of petroleum firms.

According to a case study conducted by Amungo (2020) revealed that a non-equity alliance between Chevron and China National Petroleum Corporation in Kazakhstan enabled the upgrade of supply chain network and improved logistics of Chevron. The non-equity partnership allowed for the contract-based agreement between the two entities to save on transportation costs and integrate supply chains guaranteeing a sound supply of petroleum and petroleum products (Syzdykov & Ozkan, 2019). The improved supply chain and logistics resulted to the overall improved service delivery performance thus making sure of timely and salable distribution of petroleum and services to customers.

Resource and capabilities sharing allows for successful establishment of large projects that individual petroleum firms would not afford to set up individually. Large projects such as the setup of an oil refinery or drilling require dense infrastructure, human labor and expertise, and financial investments that would be overwhelming and unachievable for a single independent petroleum firm (Mubofu & Chaula, 2020). Research case study conducted by Bangure (2020) provides a significant example of an alliance formed by Sonatrach an Algerian state oil company and Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos, Mozambique's national oil company that joined forces for the exploration and exploitation of liquified natural gas discovered in Mozambique (Heras, 2024). Harnessing of LNG in Mozambique created jobs for the local

unskilled and skilled labor and boosted their economy as it generated revenue from the exportation of the LNG (Cheon, 2023). Algeria was able to expand its geographical market and technological advancements of its operations.

According to Abudu and Sai (2020) case research conducted on Total Energies and Uganda National Oil Company, findings from the study show that the petroleum firms collaborated for the harnessing of oil deposits in Lake Albert region. Total Energies contributed by provision of advanced technology for the efficient drilling and production of oil as well as expertise in safety and environment management (Mbabazi et al., 2020). Uganda National Oil Corporation provided local expertise for the understanding of regulatory requirements and trusted relationship with local residents for the success of the project as it complied with the country's laws and acceptability from the locals (Mwesigye et al., 2018). This successful collaboration allowed for the improved oil production in Lake Albert resulting to increased revenue rates for both entities and saved costs due to integrated infrastructure and pooled financial resources thus finally leading to surplus, reliable, consistent and timely supply of petroleum to customers.

In Africa, in accordance to a case study conducted by Oloo (2023) findings reflected that large multinational petroleum firms Vivo Energy and Shell shared their resources and capabilities for the enhanced service delivery performance and operational efficiency of both firms. In their collaboration Shell provided advanced technologies in improved petroleum products such as oil and lubricants, innovational retailing tactics for best customer service. On the other hand Vivo energy provided large scale information and knowledge of global and local markets and customer needs and preferences in retail stations with both firms investing heavy finances for the training of staff, advanced technologies and integrated infrastructure (Hennchen & Schrempf 2021). The findings from this study revealed the successful collaboration enhanced product quality for Vivo Energy that were well received by customers resulting to increased

customer satisfaction rates as well as improved customer service of Shell petroleum firm due to the contemporary service stations leading to improved service stations.

In Kenya, petroleum firms operating within the country are prone to resource and capabilities sharing for their sustainability in the complex, dynamic petroleum market. With relation to the studies discussed this study sought to understand the success of collaboration of petroleum firms to share resources and capabilities through strategic alliances.

2.3.3 Influence of Strategic Leadership on Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms

Globally, a case study of the adoption of Wireless Sensor Networks in the petroleum industry revealed that the adoption of ISA100 wireless technology helped effectively monitor oil fields (Qureshi et al., 2022). This innovation largely contributed to oil deposit discovery operations where the digitization of this procedure allowed easier, faster, and safer exploration and harnessing of oil deposits. The findings of this study showcase that effective leader can utilize advanced technology for the enhanced operations of their firms to increase petroleum production with reduced costs thus increasing profit margins and achieving a surplus supply of petroleum and petroleum products to customers.

According to a case study conducted by Boon (2019) effective strategic leaders can comply with ethical regulations provided by the ethics regulatory boards. Findings from the study suggest that Royal Dutch Shell petroleum firm strategic leaders consciously understood the ethical provisions of Environmental Protection Agency of the United States and European Union's Emissions Trading System as they conducted their daily operations and were knowledgeable of the consequences of non-compliance with the regulations such as restriction of operations. Lack of accountability and fairness among leaders of the firm had the potential

to build a culture that encouraged harmful behaviors to enter and spread throughout the company (Sharma et al., 2019).

Attention has been put to ethics and ethical leadership as ethical leadership showcased appropriate behavior and encouraged other employees to adhere to the same conduct according to set values and principles (Dekker, 2018). Managers of Royal Dutch Shell who upheld accountability, integrity, and transparency encouraged their employees to copy their good traits thus promoting discipline among employees and reduced cases of conflicts between employee and customers and expulsion of workers (Usman & Hameed, 2017). Managers enforced ethical behavior on their employees through their power of punishment and reward its success promoted organizational growth, reduced worker turnover and learning resulting in reduced unwanted behaviors that would depreciate quality of services provided and promoted more productivity and streamlined work for the long-term sustainability of the firm.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, strategic leaders of petroleum firms are proactive in forming strategic alliances with other firms and entities such as governments and regulatory bodies. A case study of Tullow Oil operating in Ghana showed that the oil company formed good relationships with the nation's government and locals allowing the company to operate seamlessly in the country (Aboah, 2022). Tullow Oil being a British oil company was able to operate easily in Ghana gaining a new market and geographical expansion therefore the growth of the firm. Allying with the Ghanaian government allowed the firm's leaders to overcome regulatory restrictions that would otherwise crumple the operations of the firm (Adam et al., 2021). Leaders of the firm were able to identify the interests of the locals and satisfy them by conducting surveys therefore they gained trust of customers to provide quality services with reduced environmental pollution thus protecting the environment of their local consumers.

Renewable energy is part of the future of energy providence. According to research study of Ballard and Lawrence (2020) leaders of Total Energies were well-informed about the global transition to renewable energy for a greener planet. The firm invested heavily in setting up solar power projects in South Africa, the initiative broadened the income and profit margins from dependency on fossil fuels and avoided the risk of collapse in the future as the world transits to renewable energy. Diversification of energy sources also enabled Total Energies to combat the market fluctuations thus gaining stable profit gains, positive financial performance and provided customers with a variety of energies and power-based products (Boateng, 2021). Strategic leadership in innovations in renewable energy ensured the long-term sustainability and improved service delivery performance of Total Energies. Total Energies was able to meet customer needs for more efficient and energy saving energy source that they conveniently accessed at their retail stations.

Poor leadership of petroleum dealer firms results in detrimental consequences to the company's service delivery. According to Baadjie et al. (2021) case study of PetroSA, a government-owned oil company, lack of strategic leadership resulted in market vulnerabilities that caused huge losses and financial instability due to poor planning and lack of vision. It was evident that the management of PetroSA had corruption cases that stained the brand and reputation of the firm thus repelling investors and causing financial instability due to huge income losses. The results prove that inefficient leadership resBoonults into lowered mitigation of risks that drown petroleum firms into debt and in more severe cases shutdown of the firms.

In East Africa, leaders of petroleum firms have been fond of developing cost leadership strategies in their product pricing. According to a study conducted by Nuwagira & Muhumuza, (2023). Total Energies in Uganda employed the cost leadership strategic approach to reduce the cost of fuel and petroleum products to achieve a competitive advantage. Cost leadership

enabled the firm to offer products in the market at the lowest price by achieving cheaper operational and production costs thus attracting new customers and creating long-term loyal customers (Mohamed & Saad, 2022). Leaders creating a negotiable relationship with suppliers enabled Total Energies to access input materials and machinery at a relatively cheaper price (Pang, 2019), Cost leadership also allowed the achievement of economies of scale thus reducing costs per unit production and the leaders achieved increased market share thus outcompeting their competitors consequently providing customers with products at an affordable price in their retail stations (Udriyah et al., 2019). It is in this context of the related studies on the influence of strategic leadership that this study endeavored to understand the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance to customers in Kenya.

2.3.4 Influence of competitive strategy on service delivery performance of petroleum firms

Petroleum firms strive to remain significant in the petroleum industry for long-term sustainability. These firms need to establish a competitive strategy to remain competitive, increase profit margins and improve service delivery. Therefore, competitive strategy setup plan used by petroleum firms to obtain an added advantage over competing fellow counterparts in the petroleum market (Farida & Setiawan, 2022). Plans are put in place to monitor the market and get insight to come up with unique products and services that other petroleum firms are not offering thus attracting new customers and maintaining loyal ones (Bobby, 2022).

Globally, the petroleum market has been very competitive from the early years of the establishment of petroleum firms. Petroleum firms that have survived over the years have done so by creating novel goods to stand out in the market. For example, according to Ayuk (2023) a case study on TotalEnergies showed findings of its exploration in the production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) from traditional jet fuel. This innovation resulted in the

reduction of greenhouse gas emissions thus contributing to the Corporate Sustainability Responsibility (CSR) of environmental conservation. Sustainable aviation fuel has aligned TotalEnergies with the world's environmental goals as well as providing a competitive advantage to the petroleum firm as many customers prefer using renewable energy (Burgess et al., 2023). With the global market transiting into renewable energy and environmental sustainability Total Energies remains on track to the transitions and achieve a competitive edge and satisfying customer needs for cleaner and safer energy.

Petroleum firms also come up with tailored interventions that align with specific consumer needs and preferences. This strategy enables petroleum firms to cater to the needs of customers by personalizing customer support and interactions. According to Jackson (2020) a research study on ExxonMobil petroleum firm elaborated that implementation of customer loyalty programs, use of AI such as live chatbots to support online usage allowed the firm to track customer behavior. With this information the firm seamlessly would get data on the customer experiences thus create tailored advertisements and promotions thus building a stronger relationship with customers resulting into achievement of a competitive advantage.

Petroleum firms operating in Africa engage in formation of strategic alliances to gain a competitive advantage. One of the famous successful strategic alliances in East Africa is the East Africa Crude Oil Pipeline project. According to case study by Ogwang and Vanclay (2021), this project involved the collaboration of multiple national and international companies. The project enabled the harnessing, transportation and sell of petroleum from oil fields located in Lake Albert to the international market. China National Offshore Corporation provided advanced technology and infrastructure to identify, explore and exploit oil fields as well as reduced environmental pollution. Uganda National Oil company and Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation involved in the project allowed for the major project to be in line

with both nationalities' interests and regulatory mandates thus seamless operation and implementation of the project (Ogwang & Vanclay 2021). All petroleum firms and entities involved in the major project provided resources, expertise and shared risk-taking allowing Uganda to reach a large market internationally (Patey, 2020). The project's success benefits all entities involved, thereby improving the overall competitive position and feasibility and contributed to increased petroleum and fuel supply to consumers in Uganda and far market.

Petroleum firms struggle to set up an effective and efficient competitive strategy. A case study conducted by Patey (2020) on Tullow Oil in Kenya and Uganda revealed petroleum firms strain to comply with the regulation bodies of the country as they are complex thus delaying the implementation of the project and increasing expenses to comply with mandatory requirements. According to Ofuso and Sarpong (2022) there also exists an expertise gap where petroleum firms are forced to import skilled labor and professionals for the exploitation of oil fields and use of advanced technology which is expensive and discourages local experts that are otherwise attracted to working abroad (Armour et al., 2020). The investment in importing labor and advanced technology and regulatory obligations diverts resources that could have been utilized to achieve a competitive advantage and improve service delivery performance of petroleum firms (Bellucci & Eckert 2019). Lack and poor maintenance of infrastructure limits the supply chain and transportation of petroleum thus lagging the distribution of petroleum and its products to the market thus hindering the achievement of a competitive advantage and timely delivery of petroleum and its products to customers (Sheel et al., 2020). It is behind this literature that this study sought to explore the complexity of having a competitive strategy and achieving service delivery performance to customers for it to be successful given the challenges that surround the petroleum industry, particularly in Kenya.

2.4 Summary of Research Gaps

Empirical evidence that anchors this study majorly shows contradictory results. Most of the studies elaborate on strategies of petroleum firms such as strategic leadership, market share expansion, strategic resources and competitive strategy results in the improved performance and enhanced service delivery performance of petroleum firms. In contrast, effective leaders of petroleum firms struggle to comply with the ever-changing regulatory requirements despite them laying down counter interactive measure to navigate through mandatory environmental and ethical regulations. Even with good leadership expertise external challenges such as petroleum price fluctuations and economic downturns remain an uncontrollable and challenging crisis in the petroleum industry.

Many petroleum firms have been able to greatly expand their market share overtime. Large market share not necessarily result in improved customer service and satisfaction given that there are more resources to invest in service delivery. Establishment of measures to expand market share have minimized focus to maintain service standards to consumers which leads to loss of loyal customers and repel of would have become new customers. There is limited collaboration of petroleum firms via strategic alliances as there is fear of exposure of confidential tactics to exploit oil fields and navigation of the complex market that when shared with other petroleum firms' weakness their market position. There is limitation of knowledge of direct impact of sharing and adaptation of shared resources such as advanced technology and its adoption to operational efficiency, service quality and reliability. There exists a gap in collaborative efforts to achieve a competitive advantage as strategy integration remains difficult due to lack of a competent framework. Existence of underexplored areas of gathering customer feedback to measure the effectiveness of the strategies in service delivery. Gaps in understanding sustainability of parametric measurement tools and practices to evaluate

effectiveness and influence of the discussed strategies of leadership, market share expansion, resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy to improve service delivery.

The gap in understanding the resilience of the strategic measures put in place by petroleum firms to improve service delivery performance to contribute to the long-term sustainability of petroleum firms remains unexplored. Maintenance of the strategies for the success of petroleum firms in faced with challenges of understanding consumer preferences, adoption of advanced technology, navigation of price fluctuation, and supply chain crisis. Need to understand how strategic alliances enable petroleum firms to navigate the dynamics and complexity of the global petroleum industry is crucial for the survival, success of influential strategies for the sustainability of petroleum firms. This study is anchored in analyzing the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Kenya which is behind these contradictory shreds of evidence

2.5 Conceptual Framework

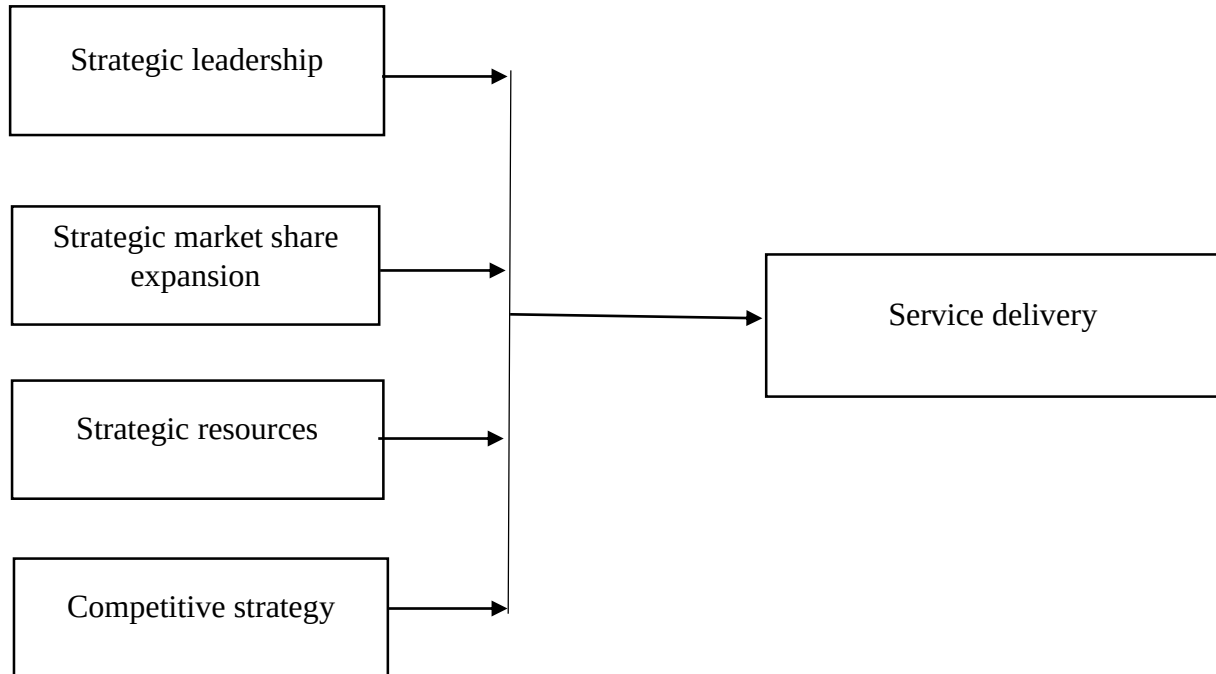
Service delivery performance is the dependent variable in this study, whereas the independent factors are strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy. As illustrated in figure 1, a conceptual framework illustrates the link between the independent and dependent variables.

Figure 2.1:

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



Source: Author

Strategic leadership entails the comprehensive activity of a firm or organization's leaders to plan, organize, execute, and assess the effective achievement of the firm or organization's goals and objectives. Firm leaders need to comply with mandatory ethical and environmental requirements to have permission to operate in a country (Muthoka et al., 2022). Lack of ethical and environmental compliance may lead to hindrance of operations and in worse case scenarios closure of the petroleum firm. Sustainability initiatives are important to counterpart challenges of production and retailing of petroleum products and service delivery performance (Iannuzzi, 2024). This is to ensure the continued existence of the firm for the long-term, maintenance of competitive advantage, and making of profits. Strategy execution rate is how fast do the firms plan and implement set strategies for the success of the firm and bettered service delivery. High execution rate shows that the firm has enough resources and capabilities to implement strategies for a specific desired outcome, while, low strategy execution rate drags the process

of implementation of strategies thus slowing down the achievement operational efficiency and service delivery performance (Wirtz & Zeithaml, 2018). Risk mitigation entails the various measures set to reduce or eliminate the impact of potential risks in business. High-risk mitigation rate shows the effectiveness of firms to identify, evaluate and address of risk encountered in the production process thus achieving a strategic advantage, compliance, and financial stability.

Strategic market share expansion is the methodology used by firms to grow their already established firms and expand them as far as possible in the already functioning channels of operations. Market penetration rate enables firms to monitor how well the firm grows to greater geographical regions and larger operations contributing to the growth, high revenue and profits rates that enable firms to achieve economies of scale. Customer acquisition cost outlines the expenses incurred in the efforts to gain new customers, Low customer acquisition costs reveal that less resources and time is used to gain customers while high customer acquisition costs reveal high resource utilization to gain customers while reducing the overall operational efficiency of petroleum firms (Okoye et al., 2019). Efforts to improve service delivery performance are crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty. Improved service delivery performance also attracts potential investors that boost the performance and speed of service delivery. Parameter metrics such as receiving feedback to measure customer satisfaction rate, cost efficiency such as enjoying economies of scale in purchasing materials, and resource utilization efficiency for maximization of the scarce available resources for more production (Kathuria et al., 2018).

The global petroleum industry is complex and requires establishment and monitoring of a competitive strategy. Competitive strategy entails achieving a framework for maintaining a competitive advantage and market position (Hosseini et al., 2018). Firms set up initiatives to evaluate their new service launch rate to gain an advantage that attracts new customers and

improves service delivery, brand reputation indices to track whether the firm has an admirable perception to the public, monitor employee satisfaction rate for their motivation to work to reduce costs that occur as a result of high employee turnover. Adaptation of technological advancement gauges how the new technologies improve agility and how well they are integrated into operations for streamlined service delivery performance as well as monitoring profit margins for the firm growth. Assessment of these elements and metrics provides insights into the firm's ability to navigate complexities and uncertainties on the dynamics of the rapidly changing petroleum industry.

2.6 Operational Framework

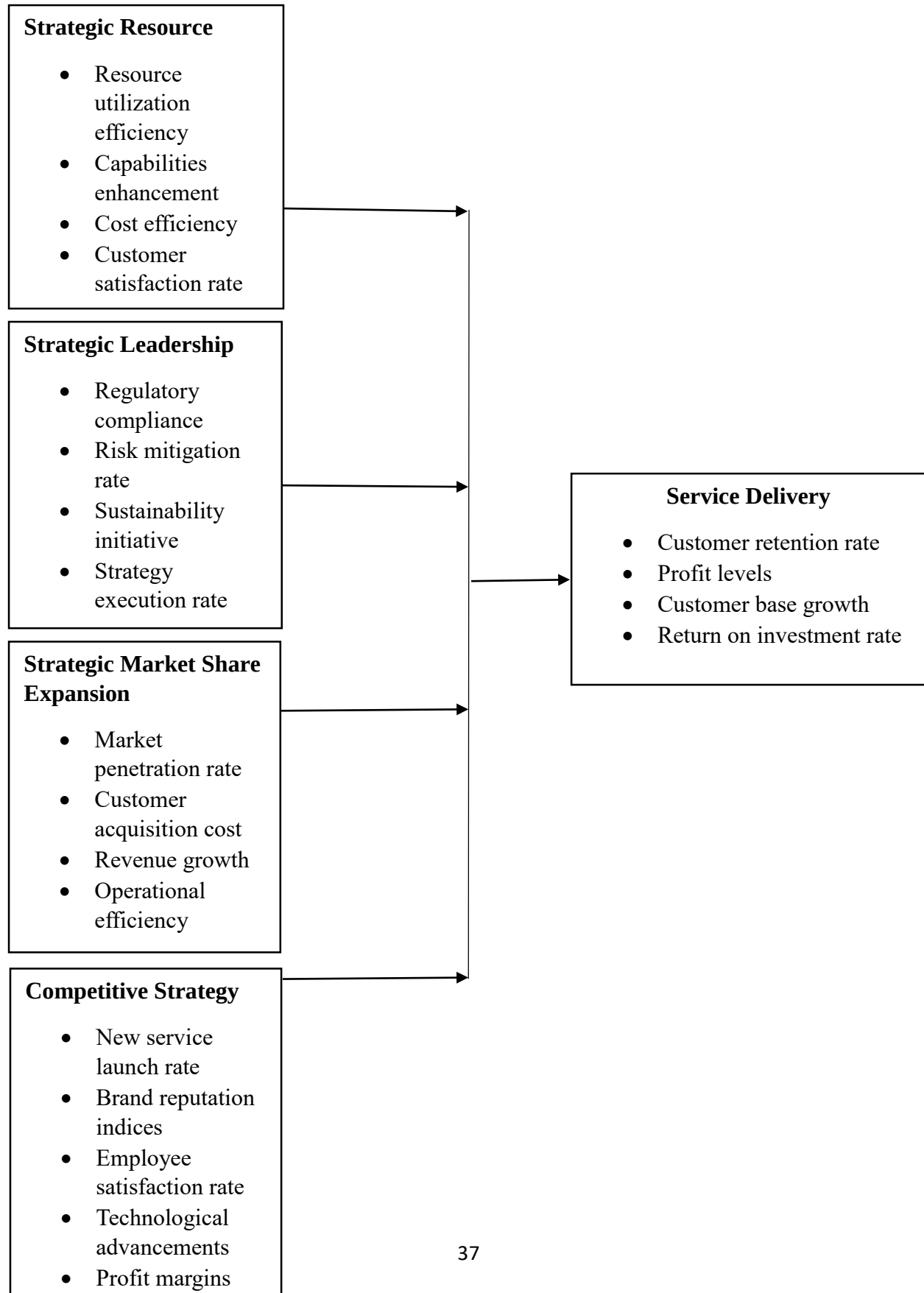
The operational framework for the study variables is displayed in Figure 2.2. It lists the study's dependent and independent variables and their corresponding measures.

Figure 1.2:

Operational Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes research design, study population, sampling procedure and sample size, research tool, instrument validity and reliability, information gathering procedures, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design employing mixed-methods including quantitative and qualitative methods to effectively help study the influence of strategic alliances on petroleum firms' performance. Quantitative approach employed statistical analyses to measure performance metrics. The approach provided numerical insights into performance trends and correlations. Qualitative approach, on the other hand, offered a deeper understanding of the input obtained from the petroleum firms' managers through discussions. Mixed methods is the best choice of research design for examining the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Kenya. The statistical findings were better anchored by the qualitative findings thereby improving the quality of the study.

3.3 Location of the Study

This study took place in Nairobi County in Kenya. The county is the capital city of Kenya. It neighbors Kiambu County to the North and West, to the South Kajiado County and to the East Machakos County. Nairobi County is a major economic hub of the country which has led to establishment of many petroleum firms both large and small to serve the high population of petroleum customers. Nairobi also hosts headquarters for the major petroleum firms operating in the whole country. The study aimed to achieve results that can be generalized to the whole country; therefore, the diversity of the study area would provide findings to be representative.

3.4 Target Population

The target population is the number of petroleum firms that this research study involved to draw resourceful findings and conclusions. According to Harefa (2023), a population is the total number of firms or organizations in a specific area may it be country or region. This study targeted population comprised of petroleum firms distributed within Nairobi County which included 324 petroleum service stations (Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority semi-annual report, 2024) operating in the county and served as the unit of analysis in the study.

3.5 Sampling Frame and Sample Size

A sampling frame is a list of distinctly representing units from which a sample is obtained from the population (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). In this study, the sampling frame included petroleum-branched service stations and service stations without other outlets in Nairobi County. It is estimated that there are 324 petroleum service stations within Nairobi County (Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority semi-annual report, 2024). The managers operating the 324 firms were the respondents. Kothari's (2004) sampling formula was employed to compute the desired size as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)} = \frac{324}{1 + 324(0.07^2)} \\ = 125 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where,

n= desired sample size

N=population size

e = acceptable error.

A sample of 125 randomly selected petroleum service stations was involved whose managers were the respondents. The acceptable sample size allows an acceptance error 7%.

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

The study used a stratified random sampling procedure to improve the representation of the sample. The 324 petroleum service stations were first grouped into strata based on the petroleum company they represent (e.g., Shell, Rubis, TotalEnergies, Lake Oil, Gulf Energy, etc.). This stratification acknowledged that different petroleum firms may have varying operational structures and managerial practices. Given that some companies have multiple stations while others have only one or two, the study adopted a proportional allocation strategy. Specifically, the number of sampled stations per company was determined proportionately based on the total number of stations each company owned within Nairobi County. For instance, if a company operated approximately 10% of all stations in the county (i.e., about 32 stations), then 10% of the sample size (i.e., approximately 12–13 stations) were selected from that company. This approach aligns with Parker (2021), who recommends proportional allocation in stratified sampling to ensure fair representation of all sub-groups.

From each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select the specific service stations included in the sample. At each selected station, only one manager and typically the station manager or supervisor was interviewed to represent the station's perspective. No service station contributed more than one respondent. Nairobi County was selected purposively due to its status as the county with the highest concentration of petroleum service stations in Kenya, accounting for over 300 licensed outlets. This high density of operations made Nairobi County an appropriate and statistically reliable location for generalizing findings to other regions of the country.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected from petroleum firm's managers managing the service stations. The chosen instrument for collection of data was a semi-structured questionnaire. A semi-structured

questionnaire was appropriate for the study since it offers a flexibility to open-ended questions that allow an in-depth exploration of information regarding experiences and ideas (Ruslin et al., 2022). A questionnaire is a recommended tool as it is efficient since it is standard and timesaving (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). The questionnaires were addressed to the managers operating the sampled petroleum service stations. Likert scale questions were designed into the questionnaire since it provides quick responses of the respondent based on their level of agreement. It allows the questions to be quickly tallied and grouped on the basis of the respondent's provisions of level of agreement (Taherdoost, 2019).

3.8 Pretesting of Questionnaires

A pretest refers to a preliminary trial study performed on a small-scale range to check the practicability of the research tool in connection with a large-scale project (Little et al., 2020). A pretest was undertaken prior to the research to make certain the questionnaire is reliable, effective and adequate for the study. Pretesting the questionnaire allows researchers to evaluate and assess that the questions achieve a consistent flow, are valid and reliable, provide insights to any technical errors and inadequate error that is detected and improved for its effectiveness. Pretesting ascertains improved response rates that indicate the questions are well understood and interpreted by the respondent to gather accurate and meaningful data (Donoghue & Hattie, 2021).

Early identification of issues enables researchers to optimize and ensure that the respondents answer appropriately to clear questions, are motivated to finish the questionnaire and provide insightful evidence which further enables the researcher to derive informed and useful findings for the research (Rahman, 2020). According to Teresi et al. (2022) piloting is recommended on 10% of the sample in the selected study area. Therefore, this study estimated 13 managers from different petroleum firm service stations, giving 13 managers respondents who represented the 10% respondents for piloting. Kiambu County was chosen as it is easily accessible for piloting

prior to performing the larger project. The County has an essential number of different petroleum firm service stations whose managers are easy to reach out for the exercise. Data collected was subjected to a thorough analysis to verify whether the questionnaire was fit for the large-scale project.

3.9 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument accurately measures what it is purposefully to measure (Clark & Watson, 2019). Validity also intends to attribute the variables tested other than other factors. Researchers considers the extent to which the theoretical fabric of the instrument is achieved to its initial design of measurement. It is important for the questionnaire to relate appropriately to its outcome. It is also crucial for any potential threats to the questionnaire to be addressed to ensure the questions seem relevant and applicable for measuring the intended construct (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The researcher involved academicians and other specialists in strategic management faculty to assure content and face validity. Content validity was guaranteed through a thorough evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literature in line with the study's key variables.

3.10 Reliability of the Research Instrument

A reliable research questionnaire is to purposively produce reliable findings. Intensive literature review and consultations with relevant experts in strategic management greatly improved reliability, stability and consistency of the data. Additionally, the questions were maintained short, simple and precise to ease understanding and repel confusion by the respondents when providing information to gather reliable findings (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). This also motivated respondents to easily go through the questions and save on time. Cronbach alpha test was adopted for the study to shape the standard scale reliability coefficient of the questionnaire. George and Mallery (2018) provided the following rule of thumb in testing reliability: if $\alpha > 0.9$ – excellent, $\alpha > 0.8$ – good, $\alpha > 0.7$ – acceptable, $\alpha = 0.6$ – questionable,

$\alpha = 0.5$ – poor and $\alpha < 0.5$ unacceptable. The alpha coefficient is the scale reliability value of the questionnaire, and the threshold for this study was an alpha of 0.7 or above.

3.11 Data Collection Methods

Four weeks were utilized to gather data from the sampled participants. The first week, the researcher acquired an introductory letter from the University to apprise the managers of the sampled petroleum service stations in Nairobi on the intent and duty of the survey. To ensure ethical compliance and authorization, the researcher obtained a research permit from NACOSTI (National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation) before data collection activity. After attaining the required letters, the researcher started the survey by employing the drop-and-pick method in the remaining three weeks. In the confines of the three weeks, respondents were needed to fill out the questionnaire, and the completed questionnaire were at once picked and assembled to move forward to data analysis.

3.12 Data Analysis and Presentation

The finalized and accurate questionnaires were assessed after gathering them. Afterwards, coding and entering scores of questionnaires into SPSS was done. The analysis involved finding the percentages and frequencies as well as inferential statistics done through regression analysis and correlation (Kabacoff, 2022). The association between the independent and dependent variables was determined by correlational analysis in conjunction with inferential analysis. Examination of data was done using statistical software package, SPSS version 28. Additionally, the study used bivariate regression model (2a) and multiple linear regression model (2b) to determine the relationship among variables as shown below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_j + \varepsilon \dots \text{Where } (i = j, 1, 2, 3, 4) \dots (2a)$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots$$

(2b)

Where: Y = Service delivery performance of petroleum firms

β_0 = Constant

X_1 = Strategic leadership

X_2 = Strategic market share expansion

X_3 = Strategic Resource and Capabilities Sharing

X_4 = Competitive strategy

ε = Error Term

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Regression Coefficients for Independent Variables

All variables were measured using multiple items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree to 5 = Strongly Agree). For each construct such as strategic leadership, market share expansion, and service delivery, individual responses were combined into a composite score using summation. As a result, the regression variables are measured in composite Likert units, and their values, including the intercept and coefficients, can exceed the original 1–5 item range. This approach is consistent with standard practice in social science research where composite indices are treated as interval-level data.

3.13 Diagnostic Tests

Following Khaled et al (2019), conducting a series of diagnostic tests is crucial prior to running a regression analysis. To assure the dependency of the findings, diagnostic tests must be undertaken while working with data that is in need of an iterative regression analysis. Various

estimation tests were run, including tests for normality, multicollinearity, and linearity, homoscedasticity and autocorrelation to warrant the reliability of the results.

3.13.1 Test of Normality

This study utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test to determine whether the collected data conformed to a normal distribution. The K-S test is a non-parametric statistical method used to assess whether a given sample originates from a specified distribution, most commonly a normal distribution. Due to the large sample size ($n > 50$), K-S test was considered appropriate for the study (Mishra et al., 2019). A total of 125 respondents participated in the study. The K-S test works by comparing the cumulative distribution function (CDF) of the sample data with the CDF of the reference distribution to evaluate any discrepancies (Khatun, 2021). The test statistic, denoted as D , represents the greatest absolute difference between these two CDFs.

The interpretation of the K-S test results is based on the test statistic (D) and its associated p -value. The p -value measures the probability of observing the given test results under the assumption that the null hypothesis is true, meaning that the sample follows the specified distribution (Khatun, 2021). If the p -value is small (typically below 0.05), it indicates a significant difference between the sample and the reference distribution, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

In the context of normality testing, the hypotheses are stated as follows:

- Null Hypothesis (H_0): The data follows a normal distribution.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): The data does not follow a normal distribution.

If the p -value exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected, implying that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the data deviates from normality. Conversely, if the p -value falls below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that the data does not follow a normal distribution (Mishra et al., 2019).

3.13.2 Test for Linearity

Test for linearity checks for a linear relationship between the relevant independent variables and dependent variable. The test proposes that each unit's outcome variable increases continually, which rise in explanatory variable. The Pearson correlation method was utilized to find out the correlation between any two such variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient compute the direction and strength of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. It spans from -1 to 1 where 1 designate a perfect positive linear relationship, -1 designate a perfect positive linear relationship and 0 designates no linear relationship (Schmidt & Finan, 2018). Negative correlations show an inverse link whereas positive correlations manifest a direct impact. According to Schmidt and Finan (2018), the positive correlation reveal that increasing one variable result in a drop in the other. A built up linear association is shown by a higher correlation coefficient absolute value.

The linear relation between the two variables is most likely to exist supposedly the p-value is less than the significant level= 0.05 and the null hypothesis is rejected (because the correlation coefficient is statistically different from zero). The null hypothesis is not rejected if the p-value is beyond the significant level of -0.05. A correlation coefficient with a p-value of less than 0.1 indicates a reasonable positive association between the dependent variable and explanatory variable indicating the two variables are major to be related linearly (Schad et al., 2020).

3.13.3 Test for Multicollinearity

The degree of linear link between independent variables is shown by a multicollinearity test. The quantification of multicollinearity severity in regression analysis will be performed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). Multicollinearity occurs when independent variables in a regression model are strongly correlated (Shrestha, 2020). VIF evaluates the extent the variance of an estimated regression coefficient is escalated because of multicollinearity. Practically VIF is computed for every predictor variable by regressing it in opposition to all other variables.

According to Bayman and Dexter (2021), a high VIF value signifies that the variable's variance is escalated by multicollinearity indicating that it may be troublesome for the regression model. Generally, a VIF surpassing ten shows a high multicollinearity VIF, a VIF between 5 and 10 shows average multicollinearity, whereas a VIF below 5 indicates there exists a low multicollinearity, which is recommended (Shrestha, 2020). Validity of regression coefficient in multiple regression analysis decreases with inclining degrees of correlation amongst independent variables (Bayman & Dexter, 2021). The test of multicollinearity utilized the Variance Inflation Factor for this study. Problems associated with multicollinearity were shown by the VIF as more significant than 10.

3.13.4 Autocorrelation

The problem that occurs when the error term is interrelated over time is termed autocorrelation. This study tested autocorrelation using Durbin-Watson test statistics. According to Pesaran (2021), Durbin Watson is the statistical test utilized in testing autocorrelation in regression analysis residues furthermore it spans from 0 to 4. This test discovers autocorrelation in the residuals of a regression model. Values notably lower or higher to 2 indicate negative or positive autocorrelation whereas a value of the test statistic close to 2 suggests no autocorrelation. Normally, the Durbin-Watson value between 2 and 2.5 suggests the absence of negative and positive autocorrelation. Elimination of existing autocorrelation can be achieved by having a correct specification of the functional form of the model.

3.13.5 Test for Homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity alludes to the presumption in regression analysis that the variance of residuals or errors is constant on all levels of the independent variable(s). The presumption is important since violation of it can result in biased estimates of regression coefficients and inaccurate conclusions concerning the statistical significance of the predictors. According to Hernandez (2023) before conducting a regression analysis, homoscedasticity will be tested

using the Breusch-Pagan test to evaluate in case the variance of the residuals is constant covering different levels of the independent variables. The intent of this test is normally to find out if the variance of the independent and dependent variables is equivalent. The Breusch-Pagan test assisted in verifying whether the variance of the errors from a regression relies on the values of the independent variables. Where the p-value of the test statistic is minor to reject the null hypothesis (for example $p0.05$) homoscedasticity is assumed.

3.14 Measurement of the Variables

Table 3. 1:

Measurement of Variables

Type	Variable	Indicator that will be measured	Type of analysis
Dependent variable	Service delivery performance	Level of customer retention Level of profits by the petroleum firm Size of customer base growth Return on investment rate 5 point Likert scale questions used	Regression analysis
Independent variable	Strategy leadership	Compliance with mandatory regulatory requirements Preparedness of risk mitigation Presence of established sustainability initiatives Improved rate to execute strategies 5 point Likert scale questions used	Descriptive analysis
Independent variable	Strategy market share expansion	Increased market penetration rate Reduced customer acquisition cost Increased revenue growth Improved operational efficiency 5 point Likert scale questions used	Descriptive analysis
Independent variable	Strategy resource and capabilities sharing	Improved utilization of available resources Increased expertise and technical know-how Improved cost efficiency Presence of customer feedback 5 point Likert scale questions used	Descriptive analysis

3.15 Ethical Considerations

The researcher used an introductory letter (Appendix II) to inform the respondent of the nature of the research and its objectives to highly consider the privacy and confidentiality of the data they provide. Respondents were also provided with a consent form (Appendix I). The study strictly complied with the ethical requirements of Kenya Methodist University by acquiring permission from the Department of Business Administration, afterward a research permit was acquired from NACOSTI. Additionally, the researcher provided the uttermost confidentiality of responses provided by respondents so that no respondent felt swindled or suspicious for providing honest answers to the research questionnaire. The respondents participated voluntarily in the study and were free to withdraw at any point of the study without providing any explanation. The questionnaires were not inclusive of any personal identifying information.

The study used APA, 7th edition to cite and reference all earlier research findings and other relevant information from different authors to reinforce ethical considerations. The essential ethical principles for the research were contemplated in the study to ensure the results' validity and creditability. The data gathering and analysis stages considered the highest degree of integrity to protect and safeguard the respondents' confidentiality and privacy. In addition, the Turnitin plagiarism checker was utilized to affirm the minimum acceptable level of plagiarism was observed throughout the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study for the data collected from the 125 respondents involved in managing different petroleum firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The chapter will include 4 various sections detailing the response rate, reliability and validity of data, background of the respondent information as well as descriptive and inferential analysis of the variables involved. The five key variables considered in the study include; strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy which are the independent variables and service delivery performance the dependent variable.

4.2 Response rate

The data was collected from individuals managing the petroleum firms within Nairobi and a total of 125 questionnaires were distributed and returned. A 100% response rate was therefore achieved as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1:

Response rate

Response rate	Frequency	Percent
Distributed questionnaires	125	100
Returned questionnaires	125	100

Source: Survey data (2024)

According to Adobor (2019), a response rate of 70% and above is excellent and adequate to proceed with data analysis.

4.3 Results of the Validity and Reliability Tests

4.3.1 Validity

The researcher carried out a comprehensive literature review to confirm the relevance and usefulness of the questionnaire items for the study. Additionally, the researcher collaborated with members of the strategic management faculty at Kenya Methodist University, who provided step-by-step guidance in validating the questionnaire's content. Experts in strategic management were also consulted to refine and authenticate the questionnaire items. This engagement ensured the content validity of the research questionnaire, making its findings reliable. This approach aligns with Hughes et al. (2022), who emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement in ensuring the content validity of study results.

4.3.2 Reliability

Reliability in research refers to the likelihood that a study's findings would be consistent with those of other similar studies conducted by different researchers (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). A reliability test was carried out on the collected data to assess the impact of strategic alliances on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Kenya. To evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha test was applied and results given in Table 3.

Table 4.2:

Reliability Tests

Study construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Strategic leadership	0.737	7
Strategic market share expansion	0.782	7
Strategic resource and capability sharing	0.753	10
Competitive strategy	0.707	7
Service delivery performance	0.777	9

According to George and Mallery (2018), a reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above is acceptable and such a questionnaire can be relied upon. The reliability tests for the different study constructs comply with George and Mallery's (2018) rule of thumb implying the questionnaire

is reliable as shown in Table 4.2 The Cronbach's Alpha for all constructs exceeded the 0.7 threshold (George & Mallery, 2018), indicating acceptable internal consistency: strategic leadership (0.737), market share expansion (0.782), strategic resource and capability sharing (0.753), competitive strategy (0.707), and service delivery (0.777)."

4.4 Background of the Respondent Information

This section presents information on the background of the participants which includes, gender, and age, level of education as well as years of work experience in the petroleum industry.

Table 2.3:

Gender, age education level and work experience of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender of respondent		
Female	48	38.4
Male	77	61.6
Total	125	100
Age of the Respondents (years)		
18-24	6	4.8
25-34	23	18.4
35-44	56	44.8
45-54	28	22.4
55-64	11	8.8
65 or over	1	0.8
Total	125	100
Education level		
Bachelor's degree	61	48.8
High school or equivalent	52	41.6
Master's degree	12	9.6
Total	125	100
Years of experience		
11-15 years	15	12
16 years or more	11	8.8
5 years or less	45	36
6-10 years	54	43.2
Total	125	100

Source: survey data (2025)

The study established that the majority of the respondents, 77 (61.6%), were male, while 48 (38.4%) were female (Table 4.3). These findings suggest that the petroleum industry is predominantly male-dominated, which could indicate that more men occupy roles in this sector compared to women. Further, the study found that most respondents, 56 (44.8%), were aged between 35-44 years, while 28 (22.4%) were in the 45-54 age group. Additionally, 23 (18.4%) of the respondents were aged between 25-34 years, while only 6 (4.8%) were aged 18-24 years. A smaller proportion, 11 (8.8%), were between 55-64 years, and only 1 (0.8%) respondent was 65 years or older. These findings suggest that the majority of employees in the petroleum industry are in their mid-career stage, which may indicate an industry preference for experienced professionals.

The study findings showed that 61 (48.8%) of the respondents had a bachelor's degree, while 52 (41.6%) had completed high school or its equivalent. A smaller proportion, 12 (9.6%), had attained a master's degree. These findings imply that the majority of employees in the petroleum industry have at least a high school education, with nearly half holding a bachelor's degree. This suggests that formal education is an important requirement in the sector. The study also sought to establish the respondents' years of experience in the petroleum industry. The results indicated that most respondents, 54 (43.2%), had 6-10 years of experience, while 45 (36%) had 5 years or less of experience. Additionally, 15 (12%) had 11-15 years of experience, while 11 (8.8%) had worked in the industry for 16 years or more. These findings imply that the majority of employees have significant industry experience, with many having worked for over five years, which may contribute to enhanced expertise in petroleum service delivery.

4.5 Descriptive Analysis

Statisticians employ descriptive analysis to summarize and present detailed information about a dataset. This type of analysis is essential for identifying data patterns before conducting more

complex statistical evaluations. The initial results in this section include numerical values representing the frequency and percentage of responses for each survey item.

4.5.1 Strategic Leadership

Table 4.4:

Strategic Leadership and Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms

Opinion	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mode	Mean	SD
Adherence to regulatory requirements increases customers	0 (0.0%)	26 (20.8%)	99 (79.2%)	Agree	3.55	0.856
Strategic alliances enhance customer base growth	0 (0.0%)	25 (20.0%)	100 (80.0%)	Agree	3.15	1.198
There is an effective risk mitigation plan	0 (0.0%)	45 (36.0%)	80 (64.0%)	Agree	3.30	0.944
Strategic alliances enhance risk mitigation processes	4 (3.2%)	32 (25.6%)	89 (71.2%)	Agree	3.32	1.029
Strategic alliances contribute to long-term sustainability	9 (7.2%)	38 (30.4%)	78 (62.4%)	Agree	3.12	1.126
The firm has a speedy execution of initiatives	3 (2.4%)	33 (26.4%)	89 (71.2%)	Agree	3.23	1.093
Strategic alliances enhance quality of service delivery	2 (1.6%)	46 (36.8%)	77 (61.6%)	Agree	3.14	1.06

Source: Survey Data (2025)

This study sought to examine strategic leadership effect on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi, Kenya. The variables analyzed included adherence to regulatory requirements, customer base growth through strategic alliances, risk mitigation plans, long-term sustainability, execution of initiatives, and the quality of service delivery.

The results are presented in Table 4.4

Firstly, 99 respondents (79.2%) agreed that their petroleum firms adhere to mandatory regulatory requirements, which they believe increases the number of customers, while 26 respondents (20.8%) remained neutral, and none disagreed (mean = 3.55, SD = 0.856). This strong agreement indicates a proactive approach to regulatory compliance as a strategy for customer attraction and retention, which is crucial for enhancing service delivery. Petroleum firms that adhere to regulations are more likely to build public trust and credibility. Supporting this view, Boon (2019) emphasized that strict compliance with industry regulations enhances public trust and increases consumer confidence in petroleum firms.

Secondly, 100 respondents (80.0%) agreed that strategic alliances have enhanced their firm's customer base growth, while 25 respondents (20.0%) remained neutral and none disagreed (mean = 3.15, SD = 1.198). These findings suggest that forming strategic alliances plays a crucial role in expanding the customer base. However, the neutral responses indicate that some firms may not have fully leveraged strategic partnerships to attract more customers. This finding is consistent with Artanti et al. (2022), who demonstrated that strategic alliances significantly improve customer acquisition and satisfaction, particularly through digital marketing collaborations.

The results also showed that 80 respondents (64.0%) agreed that their firms have an effective risk mitigation plan, while 45 respondents (36.0%) remained neutral, and none disagreed (mean = 3.30, SD = 0.944). This implies that while risk mitigation strategies are in place in most firms, a significant proportion of respondents remain uncertain about their effectiveness, possibly due to inconsistent implementation. These results align with Can Saglam et al. (2021), who found that well-structured risk mitigation strategies enhance supply chain resilience and operational

efficiency. The neutral responses in this study may indicate that some petroleum firms in Nairobi have yet to fully integrate proactive risk mitigation measures.

Regarding the impact of strategic alliances on risk mitigation, 89 respondents (71.2%) agreed that alliances have enhanced their firm's risk mitigation measures, while 32 (25.6%) remained neutral and 4 (3.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.32, SD = 1.029). These results highlight that partnerships contribute to improved risk management, although some firms may not have fully realized these benefits. This finding supports Can Saglam et al. (2021), who emphasized that alliances provide firms with better access to resources and expertise for mitigating supply chain risks.

In terms of long-term sustainability, 78 respondents (62.4%) agreed that strategic alliances have greatly contributed to the sustainability of their firms, while 38 (30.4%) were neutral and 9 (7.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.12, SD = 1.126). The agreement suggests that alliances play a key role in ensuring sustainability, though the neutral responses indicate that some firms may not yet see a clear long-term benefit. These findings are in line with Thomas (2021), who found that strategic alliances in the Nigerian oil and gas industry significantly contribute to long-term sustainability by fostering knowledge transfer and enhancing local capacity development.

The study also found that 89 respondents (71.2%) agreed that their firm has a speedy execution of initiatives, while 33 respondents (26.4%) remained neutral and 3 (2.4%) disagreed (mean = 3.23, SD = 1.093). The findings suggest that strategic leadership facilitates prompt implementation of initiatives, though some respondents perceive areas for improvement in execution speed. This finding aligns with Tjemkes et al. (2023), who argued that strategic alliances enhance decision-making speed by allowing firms to share expertise and streamline operational processes.

Further, the study established that 77 respondents (61.6%) agreed that strategic alliances have enhanced the quality of their firm's service delivery, while 46 respondents (36.8%) remained neutral and 2 (1.6%) disagreed (mean = 3.14, SD = 1.06). These results suggest that alliances positively impact service quality, but the high proportion of neutral responses indicates that some firms may not have experienced significant improvements. This result aligns with Tjemkes et al. (2023), who found that strategic alliances contribute to improved service delivery performance by fostering innovation and operational efficiency in firms. The study's findings confirm that strategic leadership, particularly through regulatory compliance, risk mitigation, and strategic alliances, plays a significant role in enhancing service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi. While the results align with previous research, the presence of neutral responses in several areas suggests that some firms may not be fully leveraging the benefits of strategic leadership and alliances.

4.5.2 Strategic Market Share Expansion

This study sought to establish market share expansion effect on the service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study examined factors such as revenue growth, cost reduction strategies, strategic alliances, technology advancement, customer acquisition efforts, operational efficiency, and service delivery performance effectiveness. The results are presented in Table 4.4. The study found that 78 respondents (62.4%) agreed that their firm has an effective strategy to continuously increase revenue and market share, while 23 (18.4%) were neutral. However, 24 respondents (19.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.00, SD = 1.23). These findings suggest that most firms have structured strategies for market share expansion, which can drive sustained business growth. However, the proportion of neutral and disagreeing respondents implies that some firms may lack clear or effective growth strategies. These findings align with Park (2020), who highlighted that Saudi Aramco's

global expansion strategy focused on structured market share growth to enhance revenue sustainability.

A total of 73 respondents (58.4%) agreed that their firm makes significant efforts to reduce costs in acquiring new customers while maintaining loyal ones, while 45 (36.0%) were neutral. Only 7 respondents (5.6%) disagreed (mean = 3.12, SD = 1.09). The high agreement rate suggests that cost management strategies are prioritized in the petroleum sector to balance customer acquisition and retention. The large proportion of neutral respondents may indicate that cost-reduction strategies are not always clearly communicated or effectively measured. These findings are supported by Adefulu et al. (2021), who found that petroleum marketing companies focus on cost-effective customer retention strategies to gain a competitive advantage.

The study results showed that 77 respondents (61.6%) agreed that strategic alliances have contributed to acquiring and retaining customers, while 45 (36.0%) were neutral. Only 3 respondents (2.4%) disagreed (mean = 3.23, SD = 1.00). The findings indicate that alliances play a key role in customer acquisition, but the high neutrality suggests that some firms have not fully capitalized on these partnerships. This finding is consistent with Manyathi et al. (2021), who emphasized that partnerships in procurement and logistics contribute significantly to customer retention and business growth.

A total of 84 respondents (67.2%) agreed that sharing capabilities with partners has advanced technology and competency within their firm, while 33 (26.4%) were neutral. Only 8 respondents (6.4%) disagreed (mean = 3.37, SD = 1.02). This suggests that most petroleum firms leverage partnerships to enhance technological advancements and industry expertise. These results align with Adefulu et al. (2021), who found that strategic collaborations in the petroleum industry promote innovation and technological competitiveness. The study found

that 78 respondents (62.4%) agreed that their firm conducts regular reviews and analyses of customer acquisition efforts, while 44 (35.2%) were neutral. Only 3 respondents (2.4%) disagreed. The high agreement suggests that firms recognize the importance of tracking customer acquisition strategies, although the neutral responses indicate that these reviews may not be consistently implemented. This finding supports Manyathi et al. (2021), who emphasized that strategic reviews in both public and private sector procurement enhance service efficiency and market positioning.

The study also found that a total of 61 respondents (48.8%) agreed that their firm has shown consistent revenue growth over the past five years, while 35 (28.0%) were neutral. However, 29 respondents (23.2%) disagreed (mean = 2.97, SD = 1.16). The results indicate that while nearly half of the firms have experienced consistent growth, a significant portion either doubts or has not observed such a trend. These findings contradict Bagchi et al. (2020), who noted that fluctuations in global oil prices and market instability negatively impact long-term revenue growth in the petroleum industry. The neutral and disagreeing responses in this study suggest that some firms in Nairobi may also be facing similar challenges. The study also found that 84 respondents (67.2%) agreed that their firm's market share has contributed to improved operational efficiency, while 35 (28.0%) were neutral. Only 6 respondents (4.8%) disagreed (mean = 3.19, SD = 1.127). The results suggest that a strong market presence enhances operational effectiveness, leading to better service delivery. This finding aligns with Akpokhio and Ekperiware (2022), who established that market share expansion in the petroleum industry is directly linked to improved operational performance.

A total of 78 respondents (62.4%) agreed that strategic alliances have significantly contributed to their firm's market share expansion, while 42 (33.6%) were neutral. Only 5 respondents (4.0%) disagreed (mean = 3.15, SD = 1.129). The high agreement indicates that partnerships

are a key driver of growth, though the neutrality suggests that not all firms have maximized this potential. These findings support Park (2020), who found that global petroleum firms use alliances to expand their market reach and strengthen their competitive positioning. The results showed that 83 respondents (66.4%) agreed that their firm frequently measures the effectiveness of its operations regarding service delivery, while 38 (30.4%) were neutral. Only 4 respondents (3.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.06). This suggests that most firms have established performance measurement mechanisms, though the neutral responses indicate potential gaps in evaluation methods. This finding is consistent with Manyathi et al. (2021), who emphasized that continuous performance assessments are critical in maintaining high service delivery performance standards in both private and public sector firms.

Table 4.5:
Strategic Market Share Expansion

Opinion	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mode	Mean	SD
The petroleum firm has established an effective strategy to continuously increase revenue and market share hold	24 (19.2%)	23 (18.4%)	78 (62.4%)	Agree	3.00	1.23
There exist significant efforts to reduce costs to acquire new customers as well as maintaining loyal ones	7 (5.6%)	45 (36.0%)	73 (58.4%)	Agree	3.12	1.09
Strategic alliances have contributed to acquiring new customers and maintaining loyal ones	3 (2.4%)	45 (36.0%)	77 (61.6%)	Agree	3.23	1.00
Sharing capabilities with partners has advanced technology and competency of your firm	8 (6.4%)	33 (26.4%)	84 (67.2%)	Agree	3.37	1.02
The firm conducts regular reviews and analyses of customer acquisition efforts	3 (2.4%)	44 (35.2%)	78 (62.4%)	Agree	3.29	0.99
The firm has shown consistent revenue growth over the past five years	29 (23.2%)	35 (28.0%)	61 (48.8%)	Agree	2.97	1.164
The firm's market share has contributed to improved operational efficiency	6 (4.8%)	35 (28.0%)	84 (67.2%)	Agree	3.19	1.127
Strategic alliances have greatly contributed to expansion of the firm market share	5 (4.0%)	42 (33.6%)	78 (62.4%)	Agree	3.15	1.129
The firm frequently measures the effectiveness of its operation regarding service delivery	4 (3.2%)	38 (30.4%)	83 (66.4%)	Agree	3.25	1.06
Increased market share has contributed to improved service delivery performance of the firm	2 (1.6%)	42 (33.6%)	81 (64.8%)	Agree	3.18	1.071

Source: Survey Data (2025)

The study also established that a total of 81 respondents (64.8%) agreed that increased market share has contributed to improved service delivery, while 42 (33.6%) were neutral. Only 2 respondents (1.6%) disagreed (mean = 3.18, SD = 1.071). The findings indicate that market share expansion enhances service quality, though some firms may not yet see a direct correlation. These findings align with Adefulu et al. (2021), who highlighted that an increased market presence enables petroleum firms to offer better service by leveraging economies of scale and resource efficiency. The study's findings confirm that strategic market share expansion positively influences service delivery performance in petroleum firms. Key factors such as cost reduction strategies, technological advancement, and strategic alliances contribute to customer acquisition and operational efficiency. While the findings align with previous research, discrepancies such as revenue inconsistencies suggest that some firms may face external market challenges affecting growth.

4.5.3 Strategic Resources

This study sought to establish the influence of strategic resources on the service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study examined aspects such as resource-sharing, operational redundancies, service quality, and cost reduction, utilization of shared resources, staff performance, and expertise acquisition. The results are presented in Table 7. The study found that 73 respondents (58.4%) agreed that sharing resources and capabilities has brought noticeable customer appreciation of services delivered, while 32 (25.6%) were neutral. However, 20 respondents (16.0%) disagreed (mean = 3.09, SD = 1.231). The high level of agreement suggests that resource-sharing enhances service quality, making customers more satisfied with the services offered. The neutral responses imply that some firms may not have fully optimized resource-sharing for customer satisfaction. These findings align with Oloo (2023), who established that effective resource-sharing in petroleum firms leads to improved customer perception and brand loyalty.

Table 4.6*Strategic Resources*

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Statement	Disagree	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Mode	Mean	SD
Sharing resources and capabilities has brought noticeable customer appreciation of services delivered	18 (16.0%)	32 (25.6%)	73 (58.4%)	Agree	3.09	1.231
Operational redundancies in the firm have significantly reduced as the firm shares its expertise, market information, and resources	49 (39.2%)	32 (25.6%)	44 (35.2%)	Disagree	2.98	1.184
Sharing resources and capabilities has improved the quality of services delivered to customers	23 (18.4%)	47 (37.6%)	55 (44.0%)	Agree	3.23	1.086
Sharing of resources and capabilities has reduced the overall operational costs of your firm	40 (32.0%)	31 (24.8%)	54 (43.2%)	Agree	2.97	1.257
There is effective utilization of shared resources with the firm's partners	14 (11.2%)	41 (32.8%)	70 (56.0%)	Agree	3.33	1.061
Sharing of resources and capabilities has brought about improved staff performance	15 (12.0%)	46 (36.8%)	64 (51.2%)	Agree	3.39	0.958
Strategic alliances have allowed the firm to access new expertise and skills	11 (8.8%)	43 (34.4%)	71 (56.8%)	Agree	3.22	1.104

Further, a total of 44 respondents (35.2%) agreed that operational redundancies have significantly reduced as firms share expertise, market information, and resources, while 32 (25.6%) were neutral. However, 49 respondents (39.2%) disagreed (mean = 2.98, SD = 1.184).

The mixed results suggest that while some firms have benefited from resource-sharing in eliminating redundancies, others may still face inefficiencies due to poor integration of shared resources. This finding partially supports Ondari (2022), who found that petroleum companies that effectively utilize shared market information and expertise experience improved efficiency. However, the disagreement in this study suggests that some firms in Nairobi have not yet fully optimized these practices.

The study found that 55 respondents (44.0%) agreed that sharing resources and capabilities has improved service quality, while 47 (37.6%) were neutral. A total of 23 respondents (18.4%) disagreed (mean = 3.23, SD = 1.086). The high level of agreement suggests that resource-sharing positively impacts service delivery. However, the substantial neutrality indicates that some firms may not have observed significant quality improvements. These results align with Abdikeir (2023), who found that strategic management practices, including resource-sharing, contribute to better service delivery performance and competitive advantage in the petroleum industry. Additionally, a total of 54 respondents (43.2%) agreed that sharing resources has reduced their firm's overall operational costs, while 31 (24.8%) were neutral. However, 40 respondents (32.0%) disagreed (mean = 2.97, SD = 1.257). This indicates that while many firms benefit from cost reductions, others may not have realized significant savings, possibly due to ineffective cost-sharing mechanisms.

The finding supports Arapha (2022), who highlighted that sustainable supply chain management practices, including resource-sharing, lead to cost efficiency in oil and gas firms. The disagreement in this study suggests that some firms may not have fully integrated cost-saving strategies into their resource-sharing initiatives. The study found that 70 respondents (56.0%) agreed that their firm effectively utilizes shared resources with partners, while 41 (32.8%) were neutral. Only 14 respondents (11.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.33, SD = 1.061). The

findings indicate that most firms successfully leverage shared resources, which contributes to operational efficiency. However, the neutral responses suggest that some firms may still struggle with optimal utilization. These results align with Odingo (2022), who found that petroleum firms that effectively manage shared resources enhance their overall performance and service delivery.

The study also established that a total of 64 respondents (51.2%) agreed that sharing resources has improved staff performance, while 46 (36.8%) were neutral. Only 15 respondents (12.0%) disagreed (mean = 3.39, SD = 0.958). The findings suggest that resource-sharing enhances workforce capabilities and performance. The neutral responses may indicate that not all firms provide adequate training to maximize the benefits of shared resources. This finding supports Oloo (2023), who noted that petroleum firms investing in resource-sharing improve employee efficiency and productivity. The study found that 71 respondents (56.8%) agreed that strategic alliances have allowed their firm to access new expertise and skills, while 43 (34.4%) were neutral. Only 11 respondents (8.8%) disagreed (mean = 3.22, SD = 1.104).

These results indicate that most petroleum firms recognize the value of alliances in acquiring expertise. However, the neutral responses suggest that some firms may not have fully utilized these partnerships for skill development. These findings align with Abdikeir (2023), who emphasized that strategic alliances provide firms with access to specialized skills and market knowledge, leading to improved service delivery. The study's findings confirm that strategic resource-sharing positively influences service delivery performance in petroleum firms. Critical elements such as service quality, cost reduction, staff performance, and expertise acquisition benefit from resource-sharing. However, mixed responses on operational redundancies and cost reduction indicate that some firms may not have fully optimized their strategic resource management.

4.5.4 Competitive Strategy

This study sought to establish the influence of competitive strategy on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study examined factors such as service innovation, strategic alliances, firm reputation, profitability, technology adoption, and employee satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 4.7

Table: 4.7:

Competitive Strategy

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Mode	Mean	SD
The petroleum firm frequently launches new services in response to market demands	4 (3.2%)	26 (20.8%)	95 (76.0%)	Agree	3.20	1.178
Strategic alliances contribute to the speedy launch of new service by the firm	4 (3.2%)	43 (34.4%)	78 (62.4%)	Agree	3.30	0.977
The firm's reputation has significantly improved due to strategic alliances	6 (4.8%)	35 (28.0%)	84 (67.2%)	Agree	3.24	1.117
Strategic alliances have allowed the firm to increase its profit margins	67 (53.6%)	34 (27.2%)	64 (51.2%)	Disagree	3.01	1.146
The firm continuously finances the adoption of new technologies to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage	8 (6.4%)	47 (37.6%)	70 (56.0%)	Agree	3.21	1.01
Employee satisfaction is highly considered within the firm	5 (4.0%)	28 (22.4%)	92 (73.6%)	Agree	3.43	1.05

The study found that 95 respondents (76.0%) agreed that their firm frequently launches new services in response to market demands, while 26 (20.8%) were neutral. Only 4 respondents (3.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.20, SD = 1.178). These findings suggest that most petroleum firms actively innovate their service offerings to remain competitive. However, the presence of neutral responses indicates that some firms may not have fully embraced service innovation.

This finding aligns with Adefulu et al. (2021), who found that continuous service innovation is crucial for sustaining a competitive advantage in petroleum marketing companies. The study also found that a total of 78 respondents (62.4%) agreed that strategic alliances contribute to the speedy launch of new services, while 43 (34.4%) were neutral. Only 4 respondents (3.2%) disagreed (mean = 3.30, SD = 0.977). The high agreement rate suggests that partnerships play a key role in expediting service rollouts. However, the neutrality observed may indicate that some firms do not rely on alliances as their primary means of accelerating service development. These findings align with Cuthbertson and Furseth (2022), who emphasized that strategic alliances in digital services strengthen competitive advantage by enabling faster market entry and innovation.

The study found that 84 respondents (67.2%) agreed that their firm's reputation has significantly improved due to strategic alliances, while 35 (28.0%) were neutral. Only 6 respondents (4.8%) disagreed (mean = 3.24, SD = 1.117). These findings suggest that partnerships enhance corporate image, likely through improved service delivery performance and expanded customer trust. The neutral responses imply that some firms may not have fully leveraged alliances for reputational benefits. This finding supports Abdikeir (2023), who established that strategic management practices, particularly alliances, play a critical role in building a firm's competitive positioning and reputation.

The results showed that 64 respondents (51.2%) agreed that strategic alliances have allowed their firm to increase profit margins, while 34 (27.2%) were neutral. However, 67 respondents (53.6%) disagreed (mean = 3.01, SD = 1.146). The mixed findings indicate that while alliances can improve profitability, some firms may struggle to translate partnerships into financial gains. These results contradict Adefulu et al. (2021), who found that firms that effectively leverage alliances experience significant profit margin growth. The high disagreement rate in

this study suggests that some petroleum firms may face challenges in optimizing alliance-driven financial benefits.

A total of 70 respondents (56.0%) agreed that their firm continuously finances the adoption of new technologies to maintain a competitive advantage, while 47 (37.6%) were neutral. Only 8 respondents (6.4%) disagreed (mean = 3.21, SD = 1.01). The findings suggest that most firms recognize the importance of technological innovation in maintaining competitiveness. However, the significant neutral responses indicate that some firms may not have made substantial technology investments. These findings align with Barforoush et al. (2021), who emphasized that green innovation and technology adoption are strategic resources that enhance a firm's long-term competitive edge.

The study found that 92 respondents (73.6%) agreed that employee satisfaction is highly considered within their firm, while 28 (22.4%) were neutral. Only 5 respondents (4.0%) disagreed (mean = 3.43, SD = 1.05). The strong agreement suggests that most petroleum firms recognize the role of employee satisfaction in improving service delivery. However, the neutral responses suggest that some firms may not have comprehensive employee engagement strategies. This finding aligns with Cuthbertson and Furseth (2022), who highlighted that employee engagement is essential for sustaining a competitive advantage in service-oriented industries. The study's findings confirm that competitive strategies, particularly service innovation, technology adoption, and strategic alliances, significantly impact service delivery performance in petroleum firms. While the results align with previous research, discrepancies such as the mixed responses on profitability suggest that some firms may not fully capitalize on the financial benefits of strategic alliances.

4.6 Results of Hypothesis Testing

This subsection presents the empirical findings from the hypothesis testing conducted to examine the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The analysis commenced with diagnostic testing to ensure the suitability and robustness of the regression model. Specifically, tests for normality (using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method), linearity (via Pearson correlation coefficients), multicollinearity (using variance inflation factor values), autocorrelation (through the Durbin-Watson statistic), and homoscedasticity (via the Breusch-Pagan test) were conducted to validate the core assumptions of linear regression. Following the successful validation of these assumptions, correlation analysis was performed to explore the strength and direction of relationships among the independent variables (strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing, and competitive strategy) and the dependent variable (service delivery). The study then proceeded to hypothesis testing, employing Bivariate and multiple linear regression analysis to determine the statistical significance and magnitude of influence that each strategic factor exerts on service delivery. The results of these analyses, along with the interpretation of regression coefficients, significance levels, and model fit indices, are detailed in the subsequent sections.

4.7 Diagnostics test

This section presents the outcomes of diagnostic tests conducted to assess normality, linearity, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and homoscedasticity.

4.7.1 Test for Normality

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was employed to assess whether the data collected from petroleum firms in Nairobi conformed to a normal distribution. This non-parametric test compares the sample distribution with a reference normal distribution to evaluate deviations.

Table 9 presents the K-S test results for each variable considered in the study. The normality test was conducted as per (Mishra et al., 2019). The null hypothesis assumes everything is normal in this test.

Table 4.8:

Test Results for Normality

Variable	K-S statistics	Df	P-value
Strategic leadership	0.412	125	0.121
Strategic market share expansion	0.317	125	0.106
Strategic resource and capability sharing	0.194	125	0.102
Competitive strategy	0.192	125	0.100
Service delivery performance	0.172	125	0.100

Source: survey data (2025)

Table 4.8 shows the results of the normality tests and the test statistic (D) for all the variables has corresponding p-values greater than the set alpha of 0.05. As a result, the study concluded that the null hypothesis that the data follows a normal distribution is not rejected. The K-S test revealed that the data was normally distributed and there was no enough proof to claim the data was not normally distributed.

4.7.2 Test for Linearity

The study evaluated the linearity of relationships between variables using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The assumption of non-linearity was tested, and the findings are presented in Table 10.

Table 4.9:*Test results for linearity*

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Prob>z
Strategic leadership	0.762	0.0005
Strategic market share expansion	0.164	0.0009
Strategic resource and capability sharing	0.618	0.0006
Competitive strategy	0.701	0.0005

Table 4.9 displays statistically significant p-values for the correlation coefficients (i.e., less than 0.05). Consequently, the computed test statistic outperforms the tabular test statistic at the 5% significance level. Consequently, we are unable to accept the null hypothesis that the correlation coefficients are all equal to zero at a significance level of 5%. As per Schmidt and Finan (2018), the positive correlation coefficients of all the independent variables suggest that the study constructs may go in the same direction as service delivery. Furthermore, the high regression coefficients goes hand in hand with efficient service delivery.

4.7.3 Test for Multicollinearity

The study aimed to determine whether multicollinearity was present among the four independent variables and results given in Table 11. Using the variance inflation factor (VIF) as a measure, the results indicated low multicollinearity, which is considered acceptable. According to Shrestha (2020), a VIF value below 5 suggests minimal multicollinearity that does not pose a significant concern. Since all four independent variables had VIF values under 5, the analysis confirmed that multicollinearity was not an issue.

Table 3:*Test results for Multicollinearity*

Study variables	Tolerance	VIF
Strategic leadership	0.643	1.556
Strategic resource and capability sharing	0.743	1.346
Strategic market share expansion	0.587	1.703
Competitive strategy	0.663	1.508

4.7.4 Test for Autocorrelation

It is important to measure autocorrelation because its presence can violate the assumptions of regression analysis, leading to biased or inefficient estimates. Detecting and addressing autocorrelation ensures the reliability and validity of the model's results (Pesaran, 2021). The test results for autocorrelation provided a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.914 as shown in table 4.11. The statistical value lies close to 2 implying autocorrelation is not a major concern in the data. Pesaran (2021) affirms that a Durbin Watson (DW) value close to 2 indicates no autocorrelation.

Table 4.11:*Durbin Watson Statistical Results*

Durbin Watson statistics	Test result
DW-statistics	1.914

4.7.5 Test of Homoscedasticity

The Breusch-Pagan test was conducted to assess homoscedasticity in the dataset. The results indicated that the data met the homoscedasticity assumption, with a p-value of 0.0726, which exceeds the significance threshold of 0.05. As noted by Ahmad and Ahmad (2018),

homoscedasticity is not problematic, whereas heteroscedasticity can affect the reliability of regression results. The test findings are summarized in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

Breusch-Pagan Test Results

Breusch-Pagan Test	chi2(1)	Prob > chi2
Test-statistics	2.14	0.0726

4.8 Correlation Analysis

The study used the variables (strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing, competitive strategy and service delivery) to conduct Correlation analysis. The analysis adopted Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation to determine the strength in the relationship between the variables. The Pearson Correlation test was done at 95% and 99 confidence levels and the test results are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13:*Pearson Correlation Coefficients for the study variables*

	Strategic leadershi p	Strategic market share expansion	Strategic resource and capability sharing	Competitive strategy	Service delivery
Strategic leadership Sig. (2- tailed)	1				
Strategic market share expansion Sig. (2- tailed)	.521**	1			
Strategic resource and capability sharing Sig. (2- tailed)	.371**	.478**	1		
Competitive strategy Sig. (2- tailed)	.500**	.501**	.354**	1	
Service delivery Sig. (2- tailed)	.431**	.459**	.307**	.560**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01level (2-tailed) N=125

The study established that there existed moderate and significant relationship between independent factors which are strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy on service delivery, the dependent variable among Petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The Correlation findings implied that any positive change in strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing as well as competitive advantage leads to efficient service delivery performance among petroleum firms. However, the existence of moderate correlation

implied that there are other factors that affects service delivery performance in petroleum firms which would give room for further researches. Further, while using the VIF to test for multicollinearity, the study found the existence of some low multicollinearity in the data (Table 4.10). This is further affirmed by the results of correlation test which have shown the existence of low chances of multicollinearity in the data as shown in Table 4.13. However, since there was no severe multicollinearity the data was deemed fit for analysis.

The study established that there existed moderate and significant relationship between independent factors which are strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy on service delivery, the dependent variable among Petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. The Correlation findings implied that any positive change in strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing as well as competitive advantage leads to efficient service delivery performance among petroleum firms. However, the existence of moderate correlation implied that there are other factors that affects service delivery performance in petroleum firms which would give room for further researches.

The study found that strategic leadership had a moderate positive correlation with service delivery performance ($r = 0.431$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that petroleum firms with strong strategic leadership tend to achieve better service delivery performance outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Ali and Anwar (2021), who emphasized that effective strategic leadership significantly enhances organizational effectiveness. Their study suggested that leadership contributes to better decision-making, resource allocation, and overall operational efficiency, which supports the idea that improved leadership practices result in better service delivery. Similarly, Muriithi and Kariuki (2022) explored the influence of strategic leadership on competitiveness in logistics firms and found that strong leadership improves a firm's ability to deliver services efficiently. The consistency between these findings reinforces the argument

that organizations with effective leadership structures are better positioned to enhance service delivery.

The study revealed a moderate correlation between strategic market share expansion and service delivery performance ($r = 0.459$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that expanding market presence through strategic alliances or entry into new markets positively influences service delivery. The finding concurs with Muthama (2021) who also found that competitive strategies related to market expansion in logistics firms led to improved service quality and customer satisfaction. This similarity in findings suggests that firms that adopt market expansion strategies, such as partnerships and geographic diversification, can enhance service delivery performance by reaching more customers efficiently and leveraging economies of scale.

The study established that strategic resource and capability sharing had a moderate and significant association with service delivery performance ($r = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that firms that engage in resource-sharing mechanisms, such as joint ventures and expertise acquisition, tend to perform better in service delivery. The importance of resource sharing is supported by Ali and Anwar (2021), who argued that firms that leverage shared resources and capabilities gain competitive advantages and improve service efficiency. The findings align with this argument by demonstrating that petroleum firms that pool resources are better able to provide high-quality services.

The study also found that competitive strategy had a moderate and significant positive correlation with service delivery performance ($r = 0.560$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that firms with well-defined competitive strategies experience better service delivery performance outcomes. The findings are in line with Muthama (2021), who found that logistics firms with strong competitive strategies were able to achieve superior service delivery performance through improved operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Muriithi and

Kariuki (2022) emphasized that strategic leadership plays a crucial role in defining and implementing competitive strategies that enhance organizational performance. The correlation found in the study reinforces these arguments by showing that firms that prioritize strategic competition are more likely to provide efficient services.

4.9 Bivariate Regression and Hypotheses Testing

Researchers can evaluate their pre-established hypotheses by comparing the study sample's results with those of the broader population (Onyoni, 2022). In this study, hypothesis testing involved determining the statistical significance of the coefficients explaining the data. The significance test aimed to assess the validity of the null hypothesis, which posits that the means of two normally distributed populations are equal, based on data from a statistical sample. The study used p-values at 1%, 5%, and 10% significance levels, applying a two-tailed test to examine the null hypothesis. The decision rule for each test was as follows: if the observed p-value was smaller than the set significance level (alpha), the null hypothesis was rejected; otherwise, it was retained. Bivariate regression analysis $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_j + \varepsilon$, was used to test the hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis One

H₀₁. Strategic leadership does not have significant influence on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

The results of the bivariate regression model in Table 4.14 indicate that strategic leadership has a statistically significant influence on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 4.14:*Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression Results for Strategic Leadership*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.431 ^a	0.185	0.179		5.318	
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	791.450	1	791.450	27.984	.000 ^b
	Residual	3478.678	123	28.282		
	Total	4270.128	124			
		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	p-value
	(Constant)	15.569	2.430		6.407	0.000
	Strategic leadership	0.552	0.104	0.431	5.290	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic leadership

b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

The R Square value of 0.185 suggests that strategic leadership explains 18.5% of the variance in service delivery. The ANOVA results show an F-statistic of 27.984 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant. The coefficient for strategic leadership is 0.552, with a t-value of 5.290 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the relationship between strategic leadership and service delivery performance is both positive and significant. Based on these findings, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) at 95% confidence level and conclude that strategic leadership has a significant influence on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County.

Ho₂. Market share expansion does not significantly influence service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

The results of the bivariate regression model in Table 4.15 demonstrate that market share expansion significantly influences service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 4.15:

Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression Results for Strategic Market Share Expansion

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.459 ^a	0.210	0.204		5.236	

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	898.484	1	898.484	32.777	.000 ^b
	Residual	3371.644	123	27.412		
	Total	4270.128	124			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	14.110	2.501		5.641	0.000
Strategic leadership	0.443	0.077	0.459	5.725	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic market share expansion

b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

The R Square value of 0.210 indicates that 21.0% of the variance in service delivery performance is explained by market share expansion. The ANOVA results, with an F-statistic of 32.777 and a significance level of 0.000, confirm that the overall model is statistically significant. The coefficient for market share expansion is 0.443, with a t-value of 5.725 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between market share expansion and service delivery. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (Ho₂) at 95%

confidence level and conclude that market share expansion has a significant influence on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County.

H03. Strategic resources does not significantly influence service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

The results of the bivariate regression model in Table 17 reveal that strategic resources have a statistically significant influence on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 4.16:

Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression Results for Strategic Resources

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.307 ^a	0.094	0.087		5.607

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	402.986	1	402.986	12.818	.000 ^b
	Residual	3867.142	123	31.440		
	Total	4270.128	124			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	20.490	2.205		9.294	0.000
Strategic leadership	0.346	0.097	0.307	3.580	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), strategic resource

b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

The R Square value of 0.094 indicates that 9.4% of the variance in service delivery performance is explained by strategic resources. The ANOVA results, with an F-statistic of 12.818 and a significance level of 0.000, show that the overall model is statistically significant. The coefficient for strategic resources is 0.346, with a t-value of 3.580 and a p-value of 0.000,

confirming a positive and statistically significant relationship between strategic resources and service delivery. Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}) at 95% confidence level and conclude that strategic resources significantly influence service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County

Ho4. Competitive strategies has no significant influence on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

The results of the bivariate regression model in Table 18 indicate that competitive strategies have a significant influence on service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Table 4:

Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression Results for Competitive Strategy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.560 ^a	0.314	0.308		4.881	
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1339.332	1	1339.332	56.209	.000 ^b
	Residual	2930.796	123	23.828		
	Total	4270.128	124			
		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	p-value
	(Constant)	11.962	2.206		5.422	0.000
	Strategic leadership	0.717	0.096	0.560	7.497	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Competitive strategy

b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

The R Square value of 0.314 shows that 31.4% of the variance in service delivery performance is explained by competitive strategies. The ANOVA results, with an F-statistic of 56.209 and a significance level of 0.000, confirm that the overall model is statistically significant. The coefficient for competitive strategies is 0.717, with a t-value of 7.497 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between competitive strategies and service delivery. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H_{04}) at 95% confidence level and conclude that competitive strategies significantly influence service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County.

4.10 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The study aimed at finding out the overall influence of the independent variables that is strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing, competitive strategy on the service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya. Regression analysis is useful as it enables the measurement of relationships between variables. Regression helped determine the extent to which strategic leadership, market share expansion, resource and capability sharing and competitive strategy impact service delivery performance in petroleum firms. The model $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$ explained 36.8% of the variations in petroleum firms' service delivery performance as shown in Table 19. This implies that strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing, and competitive strategy—collectively account for just over a third of the changes observed in service delivery performance outcomes.

Although this R^2 value may appear modest, it is considered acceptable in social science research, particularly in studies involving organizational behavior, where outcomes are often influenced by a broad range of contextual and intangible factors (Chin, 1998; Falk & Miller, 1992). The remaining 63.2% of variation may be attributed to other unmeasured factors such

as regulatory conditions, employee skills, technology use, customer engagement, or environmental influences. Importantly, despite the moderate R^2 value, competitive strategy emerged as the only statistically significant predictor in the multiple regression analysis (Table 21), reinforcing its unique contribution to improved service delivery.

Table 4.18:

Model Summary for the combined effect

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.607 ^a	0.368	0.347		4.741

a. Predictors: (Constant), competitive strategy, strategic resource and capability sharing, strategic leadership, strategic market share expansions

The analysis of variance results in Table 4.19 shows that the model is statistically significant at $p=0.000$, $F=17.495$ with 124 degrees of freedom. This implies that strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing as well as competitive strategy jointly have a significant and positive combined effect on service delivery performance in petroleum firms.

Table 4.19:

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results for the combined effect

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1572.900	4	393.225	17.495	.000 ^b
	Residual	2697.228	120	22.477		
	Total	4270.128	124			

b. Dependent Variable: service delivery

Determination of Regression Co-efficient

The multiple regression analysis conducted in the study provided valuable insights into the influence of strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing as well as competitive strategy on the service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi, Kenya. All variables were measured using multiple items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), and the responses were aggregated into composite scores. Therefore, the regression outputs, including coefficients and intercepts, are expressed in composite Likert units, which can exceed the original item range of 1–5. The multiple linear regression model holds service delivery performance by petroleum firms constant at 6.680 in the absence of the four study constructs considered in the study as shown in Table 4.19. This model implies that in the absence of the four strategic constructs, the baseline level of service delivery performance is 6.680 composite Likert units. Each construct adds to or detracts from this base level based on its influence, as indicated by the coefficients.

The first objective of the study sought to examine the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance among petroleum firms. The regression results indicate that strategic leadership had a coefficient of 0.163 with a p-value of 0.162. While the positive coefficient suggests a potential increase in service delivery performance with improvements in strategic leadership practices, the p-value exceeds the conventional 0.05 threshold, indicating that this result is not statistically significant. The implication of this finding is that strategic leadership, in isolation, does not have a reliable or statistically verifiable impact on service delivery performance within the context of petroleum firms in Kenya. This contradicts the findings by Ali and Anwar (2021), who asserted that strategic leadership significantly enhances organizational effectiveness through clear vision, policy direction, and the implementation of best practices. The discrepancy may be attributable to contextual differences, such as the regulatory environment or organizational structure in Kenya's petroleum sector. While

leadership remains an important strategic concept, the current evidence suggests it may not independently drive service delivery performance improvements in this specific setting.

The second objective focused on determining the effect of strategic market share expansion on service delivery. The regression coefficient for this construct was 0.172, with a p-value of 0.063. While this p-value exceeds the conventional 5% level of significance, it falls below the 10% threshold. Therefore, strategic market share expansion alone is not statistically significant at the 5% level but is considered marginally significant at the 10% level. The positive coefficient indicates that an increase in market share expansion is associated with a corresponding improvement in service delivery, albeit with weaker statistical confidence. This finding suggests that petroleum firms in Kenya that pursue strategic initiatives to grow their market presence, such as expanding distribution networks, competitive pricing, or brand positioning, may realize moderate gains in service delivery. The statistical support at the 10% level indicates a potential relationship that, while not robust, is noteworthy and warrants further exploration. This partially aligns with the findings of Hydock et al. (2020), who highlight the role of market share growth in enhancing firm performance through scale efficiencies and improved market access. Similarly, Adefulu et al. (2021) argue that strategic marketing and innovation-driven expansion can yield performance advantages.

The third objective was to assess how strategic resource and capability sharing influences service delivery. The regression results show a coefficient of 0.040 with a p-value of 0.675, which clearly indicates a lack of statistical significance. This suggests that resource and capability sharing, despite being a commonly promoted aspect of strategic alliances, does not have a measurable effect when in isolation on service delivery performance for petroleum firms in this study. The low magnitude of the coefficient and high p-value imply that such practices may not be effectively implemented or may not target the dimensions of service that customers value most. This finding directly contradicts studies such as Oloo (2023), who highlighted the

effectiveness of strategic operations management including resource sharing in enhancing firm performance. Odingo (2022) also emphasized the importance of strategy execution, including shared capabilities, in improving outcomes in the energy sector. The misalignment observed in the current study may stem from implementation gaps, incompatibility in shared resources, or a lack of synergy among alliance partners.

The fourth and most impactful construct examined was competitive strategy. According to the regression results, competitive strategy had a coefficient of 0.506 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant and strong positive relationship with service delivery. A unit increase in competitive strategies employed by petroleum firms leads to a 0.506 unit improvement in service delivery. This finding means that petroleum firms that actively implement competitive strategies such as innovation, technology adoption, and customer-focused services, are more likely to experience notable improvements in service delivery. This is consistent with the work of Abdikeir (2023), who found that firms leveraging product innovation and advanced service delivery performance mechanisms achieved superior market performance. The statistical significance and high coefficient confirm that competitive strategy is the most influential driver of service delivery performance among the variables studied. It underlines the need for firms to continuously innovate and adapt to changing customer expectations and technological advancements to maintain high levels of service delivery.

Table 4.20:*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.680	2.727		2.450	0.016
Strategic leadership	0.163	0.116	0.127	1.408	0.162
Strategic market share expansion	0.172	0.091	0.178	1.877	0.063
Strategic resource and capability sharing	0.40	0.095	0.035	0.420	0.675
Competitive strategy	0.506	0.114	0.395	4.432	0.000

Using the unstandardized beta coefficients in Table 4.20, the overall equation for the multiple regression model can be given as follows:

$$Y = 6.680 + 0.163X_1 + 0.172X_2 + 0.040X_3 + 0.506X_4$$

The model shows that in the absence of strategic leadership, strategic market share expansion, strategic resource and capability sharing as well as competitive strategies, service delivery performance in petroleum firms has a positive value of 6.680 composite Likert units. The implication is that although the four variables considered in this study were found to have a significant influence (36.8%) on the service delivery, there are other additional variables that contributes positively to service delivery performance in petroleum firms. The findings of the model suggest that among the strategic alliance dimensions examined, competitive strategy has the strongest and most statistically significant influence on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Kenya. Additionally, strategic market share expansion emerged as marginally significant at the 10% level, indicating a potential, though weaker, and association with improved service delivery. In contrast, strategic leadership and strategic resource and capability sharing did not demonstrate statistically significant effects in this context.

As petroleum firms integrates various strategic practices, Muthama (2021) explores the influence of competitive strategies on service delivery performance in logistics firms and concludes that companies implementing competitive tactics such as innovation strategies achieves much more superior service outcomes. The current study reinforces these perspectives, demonstrating that competitive strategies play a crucial role in enhancing service delivery performance in petroleum firms. By continuously improving products, integrating new technologies, and prioritizing customer satisfaction, firms can strengthen their market position and operational performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This section provides a summary of the study, examines the findings and conclusions, offers recommendations, and suggests areas for improvement and future research. The section also includes a brief analysis and discussion of the results, with conclusions drawn based on the study's objectives.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The first objective endeavored to establish the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County. Descriptive findings showed that strategic leadership was perceived to contribute positively to service delivery, with most petroleum firm managers (80%) agreeing that strategic alliances lead to a higher customer base. A high customer base would typically result from improved service delivery, implying that many petroleum firms have leadership structures aimed at customer attraction. However, regression analysis revealed that the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance was not statistically significant ($p = 0.162$). This indicates that although managers perceive leadership to be important, its direct effect on service delivery performance could not be empirically confirmed in this context. The earlier observed correlation ($r = 0.431$, $p = 0.000$) shows a relationship exists, but when accounting for other variables in the regression model, the effect of strategic leadership does not hold, suggesting the need for more targeted leadership strategies that translate directly into service outcomes.

The second objective sought to determine the influence of strategic market share expansion on service delivery. Correlation analysis showed a moderate and significant association ($r = 0.459$,

$p = 0.000$), and regression results found the relationship to be marginally significant at the 10% level ($p = 0.063$). This suggests a potential positive influence, albeit with weaker statistical confidence. The findings imply that firms pursuing strategic market share expansion such as geographical growth or service diversification, may experience improvements in service delivery, although the effect is not as strong or consistent. Furthermore, it was observed that market share expansion contributed a 0.172 unit improvement in service delivery performance per unit increase.

The third objective focused on the influence of strategic resources and capability sharing on service delivery performance in petroleum firms. Descriptive analysis revealed that 58.4% of petroleum firm managers believed that resource and capability sharing through strategic alliances contributes to improved service delivery. Despite these perceptions, regression analysis showed that strategic resource and capability sharing had no statistically significant effect on service delivery performance ($p = 0.675$). This indicates the existence of disconnect between managerial perception and actual measurable impact. While resource sharing may support efficiency or reduce costs, its direct contribution to enhancing service quality was not supported by the data in this study. The earlier positive correlation ($r = 0.307$, $p = 0.000$) did not translate into significance in the presence of other variables, pointing to the need for more structured and strategically aligned resource-sharing mechanisms.

The fourth objective examined the influence of competitive strategy on service delivery performance in petroleum firms. Descriptive results showed that 76% of petroleum firms frequently undertake innovations to maintain competitiveness. These initiatives, often facilitated by strategic alliances, have led to the launch of new services and products, 62.4% of which were attributed to alliances. The regression results confirmed that competitive strategy had a strong and statistically significant positive effect on service delivery performance ($\beta =$

0.506, $p = 0.000$). This was the most impactful variable among the four examined. The findings suggest that firms that embrace innovation, differentiation, and customer-focused strategies within alliances are more likely to see tangible improvements in service delivery. Thus, strategic alliances that support competitiveness appear to be the most effective approach in enhancing service delivery performance in Nairobi's petroleum sector.

5.3 Conclusions

The first objective of this study was to examine the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County. Based on the findings, strategic leadership was not found to have a statistically significant influence on service delivery. Although most of the petroleum firm managers perceived strategic leadership as essential for guiding firm direction, compliance, and operational performance, the evidence did not support a measurable impact on service outcomes. This finding does not concur with the study by Ali and Anwar (2021), which emphasized that strategic leadership enhances organizational effectiveness by shaping decisions and promoting innovation. In the context of this study, it appears that leadership efforts may not be directly aligned with mechanisms that influence service delivery, indicating a potential disconnect between leadership intent and operational execution.

The second objective of the study was to assess the influence of strategic market share expansion on service delivery performance in petroleum firms. Based on the findings, strategic market share expansion demonstrated a marginal significant influence on service delivery. This implies that while market growth strategies may play a role in improving service outcomes, their impact is relatively weak and may depend on how these strategies are executed and integrated with service delivery performance priorities. This conclusion partially concurs with

Adefulu et al. (2021), who found that strategic marketing contributes to improved organizational performance.

The third objective was to determine the influence of strategic resource and capability sharing on service delivery. Based on the findings, resource sharing did not show a significant influence on service delivery performance among petroleum firms. Despite theoretical assumptions that pooled resources enhance efficiency, the study found no measurable link between shared capabilities and improved service outcomes. This finding does not concur with the assertions of Oloo (2023) and Odingo (2022), who emphasized that resource and capability sharing strengthens firm operations and performance. The results suggest that unless resource sharing is specifically aligned with service functions, it may not contribute meaningfully to customer satisfaction or service quality in practice.

The fourth objective was to determine the influence of competitive strategy on service delivery performance in petroleum firms in Nairobi County. Based on the findings, competitive strategy was found to have a strong and positive influence on service delivery. Firms that actively pursued innovation, adopted modern technologies, and differentiated their services experienced enhanced service outcomes. This finding concurs with the studies by Muthama (2021) and Abdikeir (2023), who highlighted that competitive strategies are critical to improving service delivery performance and maintaining a firm's position in the market. Competitive strategy was the most influential factor in this study, indicating its vital role in enabling petroleum firms to meet customer needs and respond effectively to market dynamics. The study concludes that among the strategic alliance dimensions examined, competitive strategy is the most impactful in enhancing service delivery performance among petroleum firms in Nairobi County. Strategic market share expansion shows limited potential, while strategic leadership and resource sharing did not demonstrate significant effects.

5.4 Recommendations

This study recommends that petroleum firms in Nairobi County strategically prioritize competitive strategy as a key lever for enhancing service delivery. While other alliance dimensions such as strategic leadership, market share expansion, and resource sharing are conceptually important, their influence on service delivery performance was not strongly supported by the data. Therefore, firms should critically evaluate how these strategies are implemented and focus on aligning them more directly with service-oriented goals.

In line with the first objective, strategic leadership was not found to have a significant influence on service delivery. As such, petroleum firms should reconsider how leadership initiatives are structured and implemented. Instead of focusing broadly on compliance or hierarchical oversight, leadership practices should be reoriented to support innovation, customer service excellence, and strategic decision-making that directly improves service outcomes. Firms may also benefit from leadership development programs that are service-focused and performance-driven.

In line with the second objective, strategic market share expansion showed marginal significance, suggesting that it holds some potential if better aligned with service delivery performance initiatives. Petroleum firms should enhance their market expansion efforts by integrating customer service quality into their growth strategies. This includes adopting data-driven marketing, improving customer engagement, and ensuring that new market entries are supported by adequate service infrastructure and quality standards.

In line with the third objective, strategic resource and capability sharing did not show a significant influence on service delivery. Firms should therefore reassess the design and execution of such initiatives. Resource-sharing efforts should be specifically targeted at service-critical areas such as customer support systems, logistics, or technology, rather than

general or administrative collaborations. Additionally, before entering into resource-sharing agreements, firms should establish clear service-level objectives and mechanisms for evaluating impact.

In line with the fourth objective, competitive strategy demonstrated the strongest and most significant impact on service delivery. Petroleum firms should therefore prioritize continuous service innovation, customer differentiation, and digital transformation. Investing in emerging technologies, refining product offerings, and streamlining customer interactions are essential to maintaining competitive advantage. Strengthening strategic partnerships can also enhance innovation and agility. Furthermore, firms should focus on employee motivation and engagement through performance-based incentives, continuous training, and fostering a customer-oriented culture, all of which are critical in delivering high service standards.

5.5 Implications of the Findings on Theory, Policy, and Practice

The study on the influence of strategic leadership, market expansion, strategic resources, and competitive strategies on service delivery performance in petroleum firms offers critical insights that go beyond statistical relationships. These findings have substantial implications for theoretical development, policy formulation, and practical applications within the petroleum sector. This section explores these implications by aligning the findings with relevant theories, proposing policy enhancements, and suggesting practical strategies for petroleum firms.

Theoretical Implications

The first objective of the study examined the influence of strategic leadership on service delivery, drawing on the Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory, which emphasizes leadership's central role in driving continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. While descriptive statistics showed positive managerial perceptions of leadership's contribution, the

regression analysis revealed no statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.163$, $p = 0.162$). This finding contradicts TQM's assertion that leadership directly enhances service quality. The result suggests that while leadership may establish strategic direction and ensure regulatory compliance, it may not be sufficiently service-focused to produce measurable improvements in customer outcomes. Future theoretical models should therefore distinguish between strategic leadership at the governance level and leadership practices that are operationally embedded in service delivery, especially in highly regulated sectors like petroleum.

The second objective explored the influence of strategic market share expansion on service delivery, anchored in the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which posits that firms must adapt and reconfigure their resources to sustain competitive advantage. The study found a marginally significant relationship ($\beta = 0.172$, $p = 0.063$), suggesting that while market expansion contributes somewhat to improved service delivery, its standalone impact is modest. This partially supports Dynamic Capabilities Theory, indicating that market expansion must be paired with service responsiveness, technological innovation, and process improvement to drive substantial gains. The theory should be extended to emphasize that in sectors like petroleum, market reach alone is not enough and strategic expansion must be complemented by adaptive service mechanisms to deliver real value.

The third objective assessed the impact of strategic resource and capability sharing on service delivery performance through the lens of Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) Theory, which argues that firms form alliances to reduce transaction costs and optimize resource use. However, the regression analysis showed that resource sharing had no statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.040$, $p = 0.675$) on service delivery. This finding does not support the core assumptions of TCE in this context. While theory suggests that shared financial, technological, or human resources should improve service quality by enhancing operational efficiency, the results imply that without clear alignment to service-oriented processes, these shared resources

may not yield the expected benefits. Theoretical refinements are needed to account for the quality, relevance, and strategic targeting of shared resources, especially in sectors where customer satisfaction is influenced by real-time service performance and reliability.

The fourth objective focused on the role of competitive strategy in influencing service delivery, which also draws on Dynamic Capabilities Theory. The study found a statistically significant and strong relationship ($\beta = 0.506$, $p = 0.000$) between competitive strategy and service delivery. This finding strongly supports the theory's proposition that firms must innovate, differentiate, and continuously adapt to market dynamics to maintain competitive advantage. Petroleum firms that implemented competitive strategies such as service innovation, technology adoption, and customer-focused practices reported marked improvements in service delivery. The results reinforce the need for theoretical models to emphasize innovation, digital transformation, and customer responsiveness as central capabilities. Additionally, the inclusion of strategic partnerships and employee-centered practices within competitive strategies suggests that effective alliances can amplify the delivery of value-added services in the petroleum industry.

Policy Implications

The current study found that competitive strategy is the most significant driver of service delivery performance among petroleum firms, while strategic market share expansion showed marginal significance, and strategic leadership and resource sharing did not demonstrate statistically significant effects. These findings suggest that policy efforts should prioritize enabling innovation, market responsiveness, and competitive agility, while also reevaluating assumptions around leadership and resource-sharing practices within the industry.

To strengthen competitive strategies, policymakers should focus on creating an enabling environment for innovation and digital transformation. This includes offering tax incentives or

subsidies to petroleum firms investing in advanced service technologies, automation, and environmentally sustainable innovations. Government support for research and development (R&D) in the petroleum sector can accelerate service innovation, improve customer experience, and enhance the industry's resilience to shifting market demands.

Given the marginal influence of strategic market share expansion, regulatory authorities should establish clear and fair market entry and expansion guidelines to ensure competitive balance and avoid market saturation. Policies should support structured expansion while encouraging firms to integrate service quality standards into their growth strategies. Expansion initiatives should be assessed not just on scale but on their capacity to improve service accessibility and quality.

Although strategic leadership and resource sharing were not found to significantly affect service delivery, their theoretical relevance and managerial support suggest a need for further refinement rather than elimination. Policymakers might consider introducing sector-specific leadership development initiatives, focusing not only on regulatory compliance but also on service excellence and innovation management. Meanwhile, collaborative frameworks such as public-private partnerships in shared infrastructure (e.g., bulk fuel storage or digital platforms) could be supported, but with an emphasis on direct alignment to service delivery performance goals.

Practical Implications

The study provides actionable insights for petroleum firms aiming to improve service delivery performance through strategic alliances. The evidence suggests that firms should prioritize the development and implementation of competitive strategies while being more strategic and results-oriented in their application of market expansion, leadership, and resource-sharing practices.

To enhance competitive strategy, petroleum firms should actively invest in innovation, customer-centric service design, and technology adoption. This includes launching differentiated service offerings, expanding loyalty programs, adopting digital transaction systems, and improving customer interfaces. Embracing sustainable practices such as cleaner fuels and digital fleet management tools can also contribute to stronger market positioning and service excellence.

For strategic market share expansion, firms should focus on quality-driven growth, ensuring that efforts to expand geographically or demographically are backed by infrastructure and service standards that meet evolving customer expectations. Strategic planning must ensure that growth does not come at the cost of customer satisfaction or operational efficiency.

In terms of strategic leadership, firms should reconsider how leadership development is approached. Rather than broad managerial training, programs should focus on service-focused leadership capabilities, such as customer experience management, innovation leadership, and operational agility. Leadership efforts must be tied directly to measurable service outcomes to enhance their effectiveness.

Regarding resource and capability sharing, firms should evaluate the strategic value of collaborations based on service delivery performance impact. Joint initiatives in logistics, digital systems, or fuel supply should be clearly aligned with service efficiency targets, not merely cost-saving goals. Shared platforms or systems should be implemented only where they directly enhance customer service reliability or responsiveness.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Study

This study recommends that future research should explore additional factors that influence service delivery performance in petroleum firms beyond strategic alliances. Strategic alliance variables in this study accounted for 36.8% of the variance in service delivery, indicating that

a significant proportion (63.2%) remains unexplained by the current model. This suggests that other factors such as environmental and sustainability concerns, technological changes, economic conditions (e.g., fuel price volatility), may play an important role in shaping service delivery performance outcomes in the petroleum sector.

Secondly, the study focused exclusively on petroleum firms operating within Nairobi County, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Nairobi, being a major urban and economic hub, may not reflect the operational realities, infrastructure challenges, and customer expectations in other counties. Therefore, future studies should be replicated in other counties across Kenya to capture regional differences and develop a more comprehensive and nationally representative understanding of how strategic alliances influence service delivery.

Thirdly, future research should explore the interaction effects between various strategic alliance dimensions. For example, examining whether competitive strategy enhances or moderates the effects of strategic leadership, market share expansion, or resource sharing on service delivery performance could offer more nuanced insights into how these factors operate in combination rather than isolation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title: Influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

Sponsor: Self

Principal Investigator: Nasro Hassan

Address: Kenya Methodist University P.O. Box, 267 – 60200, Meru, Kenya

1. Introduction

This Consent Form contains information about the research named above. We are asking you to read this consent form for us to be sure that you are well informed of your participation in this research. You will also be requested to sign it. I will also provide you a copy of this form. Some words in this form may be unfamiliar to you, please ask me to elaborate anything you may not understand.

2. Reason for the Research

You are being asked to take part in research to help in determining the influence of strategic alliances on service delivery performance of petroleum firms in Kenya.

3. General Information about Research

The research survey will use a semi-structured questionnaire that contains various sections

4. Your Part in the Research

If you agree to participate in the research, you will be needed to fill in the questionnaire.

5. Possible Risks

The survey will not put forth any social, psychological or physical risks.

6. Possible Benefits

This study aims to help petroleum firms to understand the benefits of strategic alliances among petroleum firms as well as address any challenges encountered in forming these alliances in order to improve their service delivery.

7. If You Decide Not to Be in the Research

You have the choice to decide whether you want to be in this research. Your decision will influence health care you normally receive.

8. Confidentiality

We will observe high protection of information you provide in this research to best of our ability. Your name will not be mentioned nor included in any reports. Nonetheless staff of Strategic Management Faculty at Kenya Methodist University may at times look into your responses with the endeavor to assist me in accomplishment of my academic goal.

9. Compensation

There will be no payment since you do not have to take part in this research.

10. Leaving the Research

You may withdraw from the research at any time. If you do decide to take part in the research you are still allowed to leave the research at any given time.

11. Your rights as a Participant

This research will be subjected to a review and approved by the IRB of Kenya Methodist University. An IRB is a committee that evaluated research studies so as to assist in protection of participants.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

The above document outlines the risks, gains and procedure for the research titled “Influence of Strategic Alliances on Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms in Nairobi County, Kenya” has been read and explained to me. I have been provided a chance to channel any questions regarding the research answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part as a volunteer.

Date

Signature

Appendix II: Introductory Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am Nasro Hassan, a Kenya Methodist University student pursuing a Masters of Business Administration, Strategic Management Option. I am pursuing research on **“Influence of Strategic Alliances on Service delivery performance of Petroleum Firms in Nairobi County, Kenya”**. The purpose of this research is to partially satisfy Kenya Methodist University’s academic mandated provisions for the Master in Business Administration degree. I sincerely request that you respond to the subsequent questions with the most possible honesty. I promise to maintain the highest level of privacy of all your responses, and use the data only for the achievement of goals of this research. We appreciate that you took part in the study.

Yours faithfully,

Nasro Hassan.

Appendix III: Questionnaire

Kindly provide correct and resourceful data by filling in where necessary and ticking where required.

Section A: General Information

1. Gender of respondent

a) Female () b) Male ()

2. i. What is your highest number of years of schooling in formal education

ii. What is your highest level of educational qualification (tick)

a) Secondary education [] c) Certificate or diploma []

b) Graduate [] d) Postgraduate []

3. How many years have you worked in the petroleum firm in the said role as a manager?

a) 0-5 years [] b) 6-10 years []

c) 11-15 years [] d) Over 16 years []

4. What ways has strategic leadership within the firm impacted the establishment and success of strategic

alliances?.....

.....

How have strategic alliances improved your firm's expansion of market share in the petroleum industry?.....

.....

Can you provide examples of gained competitive advantages via strategic alliances that have improved your service delivery?.....

.....

How do you coordinate the sharing of resources and capabilities to guarantee successful service delivery performance within established alliances?.....

.....

Section B: Strategic Leadership

		1	2	3	4	5
	Statement regarding Strategic Leadership	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The petroleum firm adherence to mandatory regulatory requirements increases number of customers					
2	Strategic alliances enhance your firm's customer base growth					
3	Is there an effective risk mitigation plan					
4	Strategic alliances have enhanced the firm's risk mitigation measures and process					
5	Strategic alliances have greatly contributed to firm's long-term sustainability					
6	The firm has a speedy execution of initiatives					
7	Strategic alliances have enhanced quality of the firm's service delivery					

Section C: Strategic Resource

		1	2	3	4	5
	Statement regarding Strategic Resource	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Sharing resources and capabilities has brought noticeable customer appreciation of services delivered					
2	Operational redundancies in the firm have significantly reduced as the firm shares its expertise, market information, and resources					
3	Sharing resources and capabilities has improved the quality of services delivered to customers					
4	Sharing of resources and capabilities has reduced the overall operational costs of your firm					
5	There is effective utilization of shared resources with the firm's partners					
6	Sharing of resources and capabilities has brought about improved staff performance					
7	Strategic alliances have allowed the firm to access new expertise and skills					

Section D: Strategic Market share

Please use the Likert scale below to indicate your level of agreement by ticking once for each one of the given statements

		1	2	3	4	5
	Statement regarding Strategic Market Share Expansion	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The petroleum firm has established an effective strategy to continuously increase revenue and market share hold					
2	There exists significant efforts to reduce costs to acquire new customers as well as maintaining loyal ones					
3	Strategic alliances have contributed to acquiring new customers and maintaining loyal ones					
4	Sharing capabilities with partners has advanced technology and competency of your firm					
5	The firm conducts regular reviews and analyses of customer acquisition efforts					
6	The firm has shown consistent revenue growth over the past five years					
7	The firm's market share has contributed to improved operational efficiency					
8	Strategic alliances have greatly contributed to expansion of the firm market share					
9	The firm frequently measures the effectiveness of its operation regarding service delivery					

10	Increased market share has contributed to improved service delivery performance of the firm					
----	---	--	--	--	--	--

SECTION E: Competitive Advantage

	1	2	3	4	5
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Statement regarding Competitive Advantage					
The petroleum firm frequently launches new services in response to market demands					
Strategic alliances contribute to the speedy launch of new service by the firm					
The firm's reputation has significantly improved due to strategic alliances					
Strategic alliances have allowed the firm to increase its profit margins					
The firm continuously finances the adoption of new technologies to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage					
Employee satisfaction is highly considered within the firm					
Achieved competitive advantage has significantly improved service delivery performance of the firm					

Section F: Service Delivery

		1	2	3	4	5
	Statement regarding Service Delivery	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Strategic alliances have greatly improved service delivery performance of the firm					
2	Enhanced service delivery performance has attracted and maintained many customers					
3	Improved service delivery performance has increased the firm's profits					
4	Enhanced service delivery performance has allowed the firm to significantly gain its investment returns					
5	Customers are more attracted to continue using our services because of improved service delivery performance strategies					
6	Improved service delivery performance has efficiently reduced customer loss					
7	The Firms's improved service delivery performance has contributed to increased revenue gains					
8	The Firm's growing customer base can be attributed to improved service delivery					
9	Positive word-of-mouth by loyal customers has contributed to expanded Firm customer base					

Appendix IV: University Letter



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

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DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Our Ref: KEMU/ISERC/BUS/04/2025

February 21, 2025

Commission Secretary

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations

P.O. Box 30623-00100

NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: NASRO ABDUHAKIM HASSAN-BUS-3-2424-2/2023

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, in the Department of Business Administration, undertaking a Master's Degree in Business Administration. She is conducting research on; *"Strategic Alliances and Service Delivery in Petroleum Firms in Kenya"*.

We confirm that her research proposal has been defended and approved by the University.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a research license to enable her collect data.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nancy Nintari (PhD)

Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies

Cc: Dean, School of Business

CoD, Business Administration

Postgraduate Coordinator - BA

Supervisors

Appendix V: Research Permit

 REPUBLIC OF KENYA	 NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Ref No: 587640	Date of Issue: 11/March/2025
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
This is to Certify that Ms. Nasro Abduhakim of Kenya Methodist University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: STRATEGIC ALLIANCES AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN PETROLEUM FIRMS IN KENYA for the period ending : 11/March/2026.	
License No: NACOSTI/P/25/416754	
587640	
Applicant Identification Number	Director General NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
	Verification QR Code
	
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