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ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND QUALITY CULTURE IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS OF TOURISM BUSINESS ENTERPRISES IN KENYA

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background information, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and hypotheses, justification and significance of the study, scope and concludes by highlighting delimitations and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive business world, enterprises across various industries, including the tourism sector, are actively seeking innovative approaches to maintain their competitiveness (Bouncken & Kraus, 2013; Sigala, 2015). The adoption of effective operations management practices has become a common strategy among tourism businesses to enhance efficiency and competitiveness (Maingi, 2007). Management science focuses on establishing "laws of behavior" that increase productivity and competitiveness, highlighting the critical role of managers in creating and managing knowledge and learning within the organisation to drive smart actions and enhance business competitiveness (Bremser & Bremser, 2011; Liao, Fei & Liu, 2019). In the current economy, the significance of financial capital and machinery as principal features of production has diminished, with knowledge and its management gaining increasing importance in driving competitiveness (Kianto, Sáenz & Aramburu, 2018). Organizations that intentionally foster dynamic processes to nurture, leverage, and motivate their employees have shown improved learning ability and, consequently, enhanced competitiveness (Makina & Brouder, 2019; Chen & Huang, 2021). This is particularly relevant in the highly competitive and rapidly evolving tourism industry, where possessing product knowledge and providing quality products and services are pivotal for long-term success (Kim, Kim & Han, 2012). Establishing and maintaining a "quality culture" is thus crucial to ensuring a continuous flow of quality offerings in the tourism sector, driving competitiveness among tourism businesses (Kapiki, 2012).

In line with Kenya's economic development plan, Vision 2030, which identifies tourism as a key pillar, tourism enterprises in the country need to focus on effective knowledge management strategies (Kenya Vision 2030, 2008; UNWTO, 2021). Additionally, project-based business strategies have gained acceptance among organizations, necessitating a commitment to effective knowledge management within this framework to establish and sustain competitive advantage (Prencipe & Tell, 2001; Bouncken & Fredrich, 2016). In the least, existing research has consistently highlighted the importance of knowledge management, organizational learning, and quality culture in improving business efficiency, performance, and competitiveness (Subrata & Anindya, 2009; Minjoon et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2012). Thus, it is essential for tourism businesses in Kenya and Africa to prioritize strategies that enhance knowledge management, organizational learning, and quality culture to remain competitive in the global market (Mosoti & Mesheka, 2010; Ogare & Othieno, 2010; Cheruiyot, Jagongo & Owino, 2012). By doing so, these businesses can effectively navigate the challenges of the marketplace, meet the demands of customers, and achieve long-term success in the tourism industry.

This study is significant for advancing theoretical, practical, and policy perspectives on tourism business enterprise competitiveness, particularly in the Kenyan context, while aligning

with global sustainability agendas. It empirically examines the interrelationships between knowledge management (KM), organizational learning (OL), and quality culture (QC) as drivers of competitiveness, thus contributing to tourism performance and long-term sustainability (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Senge, 2006; Juran, 1998). By investigating whether KM and OL enhance competitiveness through a culture of quality, this research addresses a critical theoretical gap, generating evidence-based insights on how these constructs interact within tourism enterprises (Grant, 1996; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). The findings will provide actionable recommendations for tourism business managers, enabling more efficient resource allocation and improved operational performance (Porter, 1990; Barney, 1991), which is essential for fostering innovation and service excellence. Importantly, the study supports global sustainability efforts, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, by promoting tourism enterprises' competitiveness and productivity, thereby strengthening their contribution to inclusive and sustainable economic development (UNWTO, 2020; OECD, 2021; UN, 2023). Furthermore, the research can inform policy frameworks on knowledge-sharing, quality assurance, and capacity-building within the Kenyan tourism sector, offering valuable implications for regional planning and competitiveness enhancement strategies.

The scope of the study focuses on Class C01 and C04 tourism business enterprises: tour and travel companies operating in Kenya as classified by Kenya's Tourism Regulatory Authority, ensuring a targeted and context-specific investigation (Tourism Regulatory Authority, 2023). Several assumptions guide the research, including the representativeness of the sample, the honesty of participant responses, and the consistency of data collection conditions, which are necessary for ensuring methodological rigor (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study acknowledges limitations such as the inability to obtain a purely random sample, time and resource constraints, and challenges in generalizing findings beyond the study population (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Nonetheless, this research establishes a robust empirical foundation that future studies can build upon by expanding to other regions, sectors, and longitudinal analyses to capture evolving dynamics. By integrating KM, OL, and QC into a single analytical framework and situating the findings within the sustainable tourism discourse, the study contributes to strengthening Kenya's tourism sector resilience and competitiveness, aligning with SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals (Gomezelj & Mihalič, 2008; Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). This dual focus on competitiveness and sustainability ensures that the research not only advances academic debates but also provides practical tools for policymakers and industry stakeholders to foster a more innovative, inclusive, and sustainable tourism economy.

In summary, this study takes on the vital task of bridging the knowledge gap by exploring the potential of organizational learning and knowledge management in cultivating a vibrant quality culture and extending it across various functions to fuel competitiveness. Its outcomes will serve as a crucial reference for future endeavors in the field of Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning, Quality Culture, and the competitiveness of tourism business enterprises.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The competitiveness of tourism business enterprises (TBEs) today depends not merely on the possession of knowledge but on their ability to systematically acquire, share, and transform it into performance-enhancing routines through organizational learning (OL) (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Senge, 1990; Garvin, Edmondson & Gino, 2008). In Kenya's tourism sector, this process is often compromised by weak OL systems, high employee turnover, and poor knowledge-sharing practices, resulting in knowledge loss, fragmented expertise, and diminished adaptability (Muli, 2017; The Standard Newspaper Kenya, 2017; Obura, 2017). Although the link between knowledge management (KM) and competitiveness has been well established theoretically (Grant, 1996; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Li & Zhang, 2017), most empirical studies have concentrated on manufacturing and technology sectors (Mosoti & Masheka, 2010; Cheruiyot, Jagongo & Owino, 2012), leaving the tourism industry where knowledge agility and innovation are critical largely underexplored (Faulkner & Tideswell, 2021; Zhang, Li & Wang, 2018). Recent research is beginning to recognize KM's role in tourism and hospitality, emphasizing its synergy with digital transformation and innovation for resilience and sustainability (Anand et al., 2023; Digital Skills and Tourism Workforce Recovery, Nairobi), yet little is known about the mechanisms through which KM becomes actionable in TBEs in developing economies.

This study argues that organizational learning is the critical process that converts KM into tangible competitive advantage and that quality culture (QC), defined as an organization's commitment to excellence, customer focus, and continuous improvement, moderates this conversion by reinforcing or constraining its impact (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Kapiki, 2012; Munizu, 2019; Nguyen, Lee & Nguyen, 2021; Santana, Moreira & Leitão, 2018). However, in many TBEs, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, QC remains weak or inconsistently applied, blunting the potential benefits of KM and OL and undermining innovation and responsiveness (Kapiki, 2012; Munizu, 2019). Drawing on the knowledge-based and resource-based views of the firm (Grant, 1996; Barney, 1991), this study addresses a significant research gap by empirically testing OL's mediating role and QC's moderating effect in the KM–competitiveness relationship within the Kenyan tourism context. In doing so, it offers both theoretical insight and practical guidance for scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders seeking to strengthen KM systems, embed learning cultures, and institutionalize quality frameworks to build sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic and knowledge-driven global tourism market (Islam, Ahsan & Hossain, 2020; Jiang & Wang, 2020; Njoroge & Maina, 2021; Ogutu, 2023; Zhang & Huang, 2021; Birasnav & Rangnekar, 2010).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the mediating and moderating role of organisational learning and quality culture on the association between knowledge management and competitiveness of tourism business enterprises in Kenya.

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

i. To analyze the intellectual, conceptual, and social structures in the academic literature on knowledge management (KM), organizational learning (OL), quality culture (QC), and the competitiveness of tourism business enterprises (TBE) using bibliometric methods.
ii. To investigate the influence of knowledge management on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
iii. To establish the influence of organisational learning on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
iv. To assess the influence of quality culture on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
v. To examine the moderating effect of organisational learning in the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
vi. To determine the mediating effect of quality culture in the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
vii. To explore the joint effect of knowledge management, organisational learning and quality culture on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.

1.4.1 Study Hypotheses

This study will be guided by the following null and alternate hypotheses:

H_{O1}: Knowledge management does not have a significant influence on competitiveness of tourism business enterprise in Kenya.
H_{O2}: Organisational learning has no significant influence on competitiveness of tourism business enterprise in Kenya.
H_{O3}: Quality culture has no significant influence on competitiveness of tourism business enterprise in Kenya.
H_{O4}: Organisational learning has no moderating effect on the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
H_{O5}: Quality culture has no mediating effect on the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.
H_{O6}: Knowledge management, organisational learning and quality culture have no significant joint effect on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.

1.5 Operational Definition of Terms

This section provides clear definitions of key concepts used in the study. The terms are defined as follows:

1.5.1 ***Knowledge***: Refers to what employees know about customers, products, processes, etc. It can be tacit (informal) or explicit (recorded). *Tacit knowledge*: Knowledge held in people's minds, not easily codified or documented. *Explicit knowledge*: Knowledge that is recorded and accessible through databases, books, etc.

1.5.2 ***Knowledge Management***: The process of identifying, growing, and applying an organization's knowledge to achieve goals.

1.5.3 ***Organizational Learning***: The creation, retention, and transfer of knowledge within an organization.

1.5.4 ***Quality Culture***: Shared values guiding improvements in working practices and outputs.

1.5.5 ***Competitiveness***: The ability to offer products and services that meet quality standards and are economically viable.

1.5.6 ***Tourism Business Enterprise***: Tourism business enterprises are specific types of business ventures permitted within the National Constitution, operating within the tourism industry. These enterprises follow similar operational principles but on a large scale. In Kenya, they include tour and travel operations for the purpose of this study.

1.5.7 ***Mediating Variable:*** In this study, the mediating/intervening variable explains how or why the independent variable influences a dependent variable. It acts as a link or bridge that carries the effect of one variable to another. I.e. OL mediates the relationship between KM and TBE Competitiveness by transforming knowledge into improved performance (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Hayes, 2018).

1.5.8 ***Moderating Variable****:* A moderating variable identifies the conditions under which the relationship between two variables becomes stronger, weaker, or changes direction. It acts as a condition or control knob that influences the strength of a relationship. In this study, Quality Culture (QC) moderates the link between KM and competitiveness by strengthening or weakening how effectively knowledge is applied within tourism enterprises (Hayes, 2018; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

These definitions clarify the concepts used in the study and ensure a common understanding of key terms.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The content of this chapter is based on an empirical review that highlights the major concepts of literature pertaining to knowledge management (KM), organisational learning (OL), and quality culture (QC) in relation to the competitiveness of tourism business enterprise (TBE), which are significant to the study. The theoretical basis of the literature reviewed will contribute to the development of a conceptual framework. Which illustrates the relationship between the independent, moderating, mediating and dependent variables to address subjects and relationships pertaining to the study. The main goal of this chapter is to provide previous information on the concept of knowledge management, organisational learning, and quality

culture in relation to competitiveness of tourism business enterprises and to explore possible solutions to questions related to these issues.

2.1 Interactions Between Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning, Quality Culture, and Competitiveness Concepts

The interdependence among KM, OL and QC is evident in how each function addresses a different link in the value-creation chain. Knowledge management supplies structured capabilities for capturing and distributing intellectual assets, which empirical studies link to improved innovation outcomes and operational efficiency (Grant, 1996; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Chen et al., 2019). Organizational learning makes those assets actionable by enabling experimentation, reflection and the codification of routines that realize improvements in service delivery (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990; Cegarra-Navarro et al., 2016). Quality culture consolidates these processes by institutionalizing standards and accountability practices that translate learned improvements into consistent customer value (Denison & Mishra, 1995; European University Association, 2006). Together, these capabilities reduce performance variability and improve adaptiveness in turbulent markets (Kim, Park & Kim, 2019; Faulkner & Tideswell, 2021).

Despite theoretical consensus on their complementarity, implementation often remains fragmented. Firms may invest in KM systems without creating the learning mechanisms required to integrate new knowledge into daily operations; conversely, learning initiatives may lack the infrastructural support and quality control necessary to scale improvements (Anand, Joshi & Yadav, 2022; Ndegwa, 2015). This fragmentation is particularly damaging in tourism, where service quality and experiential consistency determine reputation and repeat business (Ogutu et al., 2023). Therefore, integrating KM, OL and QC into a coherent capability bundle is a practical and theoretical priority.

2.2 Mediating and Moderating Functions Organizational Learning and Quality Culture

Organizational learning functions as the conversion engine through which KM influences performance. By embedding knowledge into social practices, routines and organizational memory, OL enables firms to translate data and information into strategic actions and adaptive routines; empirical studies associate such conversion with enhanced innovation and service responsiveness (Nonaka et al., 1994; Garvin, 1993). From an empirical perspective, mediation can be tested through path analysis or structural equation modelling, where indirect effects of KM on competitiveness through OL are estimated, and bootstrapping provides robust inference on mediation pathways. whereas quality culture operates at the level of organizational context and conditions the effectiveness of KM and OL. Firms with strong QC ensure that learning outputs meet customer expectations and process standards, thereby amplifying the performance impact of knowledge-based interventions (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). Empirically, moderation is examined by testing interaction effects, for example KM by QC, to determine whether the KM–competitiveness relationship varies systematically with QC intensity. In practice, this means that the same KM investments can yield divergent outcomes depending on the extent to which QC structures sustain implementation fidelity.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Resource-based and knowledge-based perspectives justify treating knowledge as a strategic asset whose rarity and non-substitutability can generate sustained advantage (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996). Dynamic capabilities theory complements this view by focusing on processes of sensing, seizing and reconfiguring resources through learning; this emphasis explains why firms must continuously renew routines to remain competitive in changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). Institutional theory explains how external norms, standards and regulatory frameworks shape firms' adoption of quality and knowledge practices by creating pressures for conformity and legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1997). Integrating these perspectives provides a multi-level account: resources (KM), processes (OL) and institutional alignment (QC) jointly explain the emergence of competitive performance. This integrative stance provides theoretical leverage for testing how internal capabilities interact with external pressures. For example, institutional alignment with quality norms can strengthen the internal conversion of knowledge into routines, while dynamic capabilities determine the speed and direction of such conversions. Consequently, hypotheses that specify mediation by OL and moderation by QC are theoretically coherent and empirically tractable within this combined framework.

2.4 The Theoretical Nexus of KM, OL, OC and TBE Competitiveness

Synthesising RBV, KBV, Dynamic Capabilities and Institutional views produces a testable model in which competitiveness is a function of knowledge endowments, conversion capabilities and contextual alignment (Teece, 2007; Scott, 2008; Ogutu et al., 2023). Empirical research increasingly indicates that KM's direct effects on performance are context dependent; mediators and moderators therefore explain much of the observed variance in outcomes (Mosoti & Masheka, 2010; Ndivo et al., 2012). In the tourism sector, customer heterogeneity, seasonality and exposure to external shocks make these moderating and mediating processes especially salient. The regional gap in empirical testing is consequential. Few studies have examined how firm-level characteristics and institutional settings in Sub-Saharan Africa shape the KM–OL–QC nexus, yet these contexts differ in resource availability, regulatory capacity and market structures (Novelli, 2016). By applying the integrated framework to Kenyan TBEs, researchers can refine theory by identifying which mechanisms operate strongly under resource constraints and which institutional interventions are most effective for capability development.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework positions KM as the exogenous driver, OL as the mediating process and QC as the contextual moderator that together determine TBE competitiveness. Operationally, KM includes knowledge creation, acquisition, sharing and retention; OL comprises individual, group and institutional learning supported by systems thinking; QC covers leadership commitment, continuous improvement and customer focus; competitiveness is measured through market share, profitability, productivity and visibility (Grant, 1996; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Deming, 1986). This framing clarifies measurement choices and specifies testable hypotheses about direct, indirect and interactive effects. Testing the framework required both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative analysis relies on

regression techniques to estimate direct effects, indirect effects via mediation analysis, and interaction effects for moderation; hierarchical regression and bootstrapping are used to assess indirect pathways and to test boundary conditions under which KM translates into performance. Qualitative data then supply processual insights into how learning routines and quality practices are enacted in situ, thereby strengthening causal interpretation and external validity. Together, these complementary strands make the model both practically relevant and theoretically robust for tourism research.

As previously stated, the framework (Figure 2.15) positions KM and OL as exogenous drivers, and QC and TBECompe as endogenous outcomes, underscoring the interactive and systemic nature of intangible asset deployment. This systems-thinking approach (Senge, 2010) reframes knowledge not merely as a resource, but as a transformative agent that fosters cultural renewal and strategic agility. Thus, the framework presents a coherent theoretical argument: sustainable competitiveness in tourism enterprises arises not from isolated KM practices, but from their strategic integration with learning capabilities and a robust quality culture. By institutionalizing these interdependencies, the model offers a rigorous pathway through which tourism firms can build resilience, adaptiveness, and long-term strategic advantage.

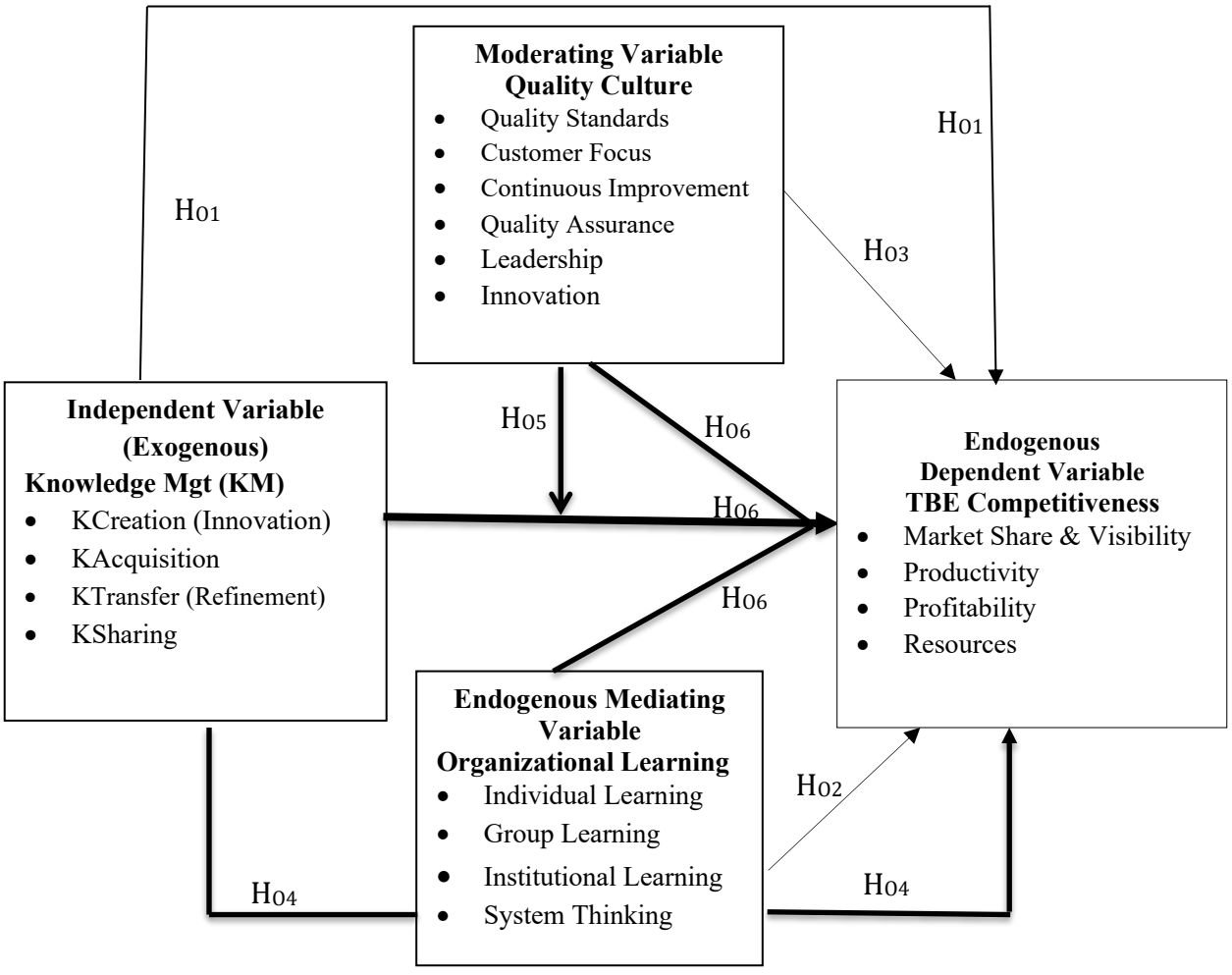

Figure: 2.15 Conceptual Model, Researcher (2024)

Thus, the model advances the academic argument that competitiveness in tourism enterprises is contingent not only on acquiring knowledge but on how that knowledge is internalized, shared, and operationalized through a culture of learning and quality. This integrative perspective offers a robust explanatory lens for understanding how intangible capabilities collectively contribute to strategic advantage in dynamic tourism markets (Kotler et al., 2017; ISO 9001, 2015; Uslay et al., 2022).

CHAPTER 3: MATERIALS, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines a comprehensive research methodology adopted to examine the influence of Knowledge Management (KM), Organizational Learning (OL), and Quality Culture (QC) on the competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises (TBEs) in Kenya. Framed within a pragmatic philosophical paradigm (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016), the study employs a mixed methods design that combines quantitative, qualitative, and bibliometric approaches, ensuring methodological pluralism and a robust analysis of the complex interrelations between organizational knowledge systems and enterprise performance.

3.1 Research Design and Philosophy

Pragmatism informs the concurrent use of positivist and interpretivist tools, enabling the study to map prevalence of KM, OL and QC practices while also interrogating causal mechanisms and organizational processes (Yin, 2014; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006). The design therefore integrates descriptive elements to profile practices and explanatory elements to evaluate hypothesised paths among KM, OL, QC and competitiveness.

3.2 Data Analysis Strategy

The analytical strategy is organized into four integrated strands that together operationalise the study objectives as explained: Science mapping and bibliometrics. A systematic literature review following PRISMA procedures frames the conceptual model and exposes gaps in the extant knowledge base (Moher et al., 2009). Bibliometric mapping of the Web of Science Core Collection using tools such as VOSviewer and R-Bibliometrix identifies co-citation clusters, keyword co-occurrence and thematic evolution, thereby justifying variable selection and hypothesis formulation (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Small, 1973; van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

Descriptive statistics summaries respondent and organisational profiles and document the distribution of KM, OL and QC practices (Kothari, 2005; Babbie, 2010). Inferential analysis tests direct, mediating and moderating effects using regression techniques. Simple and multiple regression assess direct and joint effects; hierarchical regression and interaction tests evaluate moderation and mediation, with bootstrapping used to estimate indirect effects. Diagnostic tests for normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity are applied, and model fit and significance are assessed through R squared, F statistics, t tests and p values at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; Mugenda, 2013). Table 3.1 summarizes how objectives link to hypotheses, measures and analytical procedures. Whilist, qualitative analysis and triangulation utilized semi-structured interviews with purposively selected key informants analysed thematically, using both deductive codes derived from theory and inductive codes for emergent patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Qualitative evidence serves two functions: it explains the mechanisms

implied by quantitative associations and it validates measurement interpretations in the Kenyan tourism context.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to rigorous ethical protocols. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was assured, and formal approval was sought from institutional and

field authorities. Ethical procedures were upheld throughout the data collection and reporting processes (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013).

Table 3.1 Objectives, Hypotheses, Analysis and Model Estimation

Research Objective	**Hypotheses**	**Statistical Analysis and Model Estimation**	**Interpretation of Statistical Analysis**
1. Investigate the influence of knowledge management on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	**H_{o1}:** Knowledge management does not have a significant influence on competitiveness of tourism business enterprise in Kenya	Simple linear Regression analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\varepsilon$ γ=Aggregate mean score of competitiveness, α =Constant, $\beta_1 ... \beta_4$=Regression coefficient, $X_1 ... X_4$= Individual Knowledge management indicators, ε= Error term	Coefficient of determination (R^2) shows the variation in competitiveness explained by knowledge management. - F-test and p-values will help to assess the overall robustness of the regression model t-test and p-values will help determine individual significance of the study variables
2. Establish the influence of organizational learning on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	**H_{o2}:** Organizational learning has no significant influence on competitiveness of tourism business enterprise in Kenya	Simple Regression analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\varepsilon$ γ=Aggregate mean score of competitiveness, α =Constant, $\beta_1 ... \beta_3$=Regression coefficient, $X_1 ... X_3$= Individual indicators of organization learning, ε= Error term	- R^2 shows the variation in competitiveness explained by organizational learning - F test and p-values helped assess the overall robustness of the regression model t-test and p-values helped determine individual significance of the study variables
3. Assess the influence of quality culture on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	**H_{o3}**: Quality culture has no significant influence on competitiveness of	Simple Regression analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\beta_4X_4+\beta_5X_5+\beta_6X_6+\varepsilon$ γ=Aggregate mean score of competitiveness, α =Constant,	R^2 shows the variation in competitiveness explained by quality culture -F test and p-values helped assess the overall robustness of the regression model

	tourism business enterprise in Kenya	$\beta_1...\beta_6$=Regression coefficient, $X_1...X_6$=Individual indicators of Quality Culture, ε= Error term	t-test and p-values helped determine individual significance of the study variables
4. Examine the moderating effect of organizational learning in the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	**H_{04}:** Organizational learning has no moderating effect on the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	Hierarchical Regression Analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\varepsilon$ γ= Aggregate Mean Score of Competitiveness α = Constant B_1, B_2= Regression Coefficient X_1=Aggregate Mean Score of Knowledge Management X_2= Aggregate Mean Score of Organizational Learning ε= Error term	R^2 reveals the variation in tourism business competitiveness, which is due to the introduction of organizational learning - the moderation variable. - F test and p-values shall help assess the overall robustness of the model - T-test and p-values will help to determine individual significance of the study variables
5. Determine the mediating effect of quality culture in the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.	**H_{05}:** Quality culture has no mediating effect on the relationship between knowledge management and competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya	Hierarchical Regression Analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\varepsilon$ γ= Aggregate Mean Score of Competitiveness α = Constant B_1, B_2= Regression Coefficient X_1=Aggregate Mean Score of Knowledge Management X_2= Aggregate Mean Score of Quality Culture ε= Error term	R^2 reveals the variation in competitiveness, which is due to the introduction of quality culture as the mediator variable. - F-test and p-values helped assess the overall robustness of the model - T-test and p-values will help in determining individual significance of the study variables

6. Explore the joint effect of knowledge management, organizational learning and quality culture on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya.	**H_{06}:** Knowledge sharing, organizational learning and firm-level institutions have no significant joint effect on business enterprise competitiveness	Multiple regression analysis $\gamma = \alpha+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\varepsilon$ γ=Aggregate mean score of competitiveness, α =Constant, $\beta_1 \ldots \beta_3$=Regression coefficients X_1= Aggregate mean score of Knowledge management X_2= Aggregate mean score of Organizational Learning X_3= Aggregate mean score of Quality Culture ε=Error term	R^2 shows the variation in competitiveness explained by the joint effect of knowledge management, organizational learning and quality culture on competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises. - F-test and p-values helped assess the overall robustness of the model - T-test and p-values will help in determining individual significance of the study variables

Source: Researcher, (2023)

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND FINDINGS INTERPRETATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and interprets the empirical results of the study, emphasizing the methodological rigor of the research design, the reliability and validity of the measurement instrument, the adequacy of regression diagnostic tests, and the inferential outcomes of hypothesis testing. The analysis underscores that the research framework not only adheres to established psychometric and statistical standards but also provides robust evidence on the relationships among knowledge management (KM), organizational learning (OL), quality culture (QC), and tourism business enterprise competitiveness (TBECOMPE).

4.1 Response Rate and Instrument Reliability and Validity

The study achieved a high response rate of 94% (260 out of 270 questionnaires), which exceeds comparable studies (Bategeka, 2012; Namada, 2013). This exceptional rate reinforces the generalizability of the findings and demonstrates strong engagement with the research process. Instrument reliability and validity were ensured through expert review, pilot testing, and statistical validation. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all constructs surpassed the widely endorsed threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978; Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 1982; George & Mallery, 2003), confirming high internal consistency and reliability of the measures.

Table 4.1: Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Number of Items	Interpretation
KM	0.754	15	Reliable
OL	0.748	15	Reliable
QC	0.764	16	Reliable
TBECOMPE	0.781	10	Reliable

Source: Research Data, (2024)

The methodological rigor embedded in these procedures establishes a credible measurement foundation, thereby reinforcing confidence in subsequent analyses.

4.2 Regression Assumptions Parametric Data Analysis

The section rigorously evaluates the assumptions underpinning parametric regression analysis, namely normality, multicollinearity, and homo/ Heteroscedasticity.

4.2.1 Normality Test

Normality was assessed through the Shapiro-Wilk test and Q-Q plots. While the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated significant values ($p < .001$), suggesting deviation from perfect normality, the Q-Q plots demonstrated that data points closely aligned with the diagonal line, confirming approximate normality (Field, 2009). This dual approach underscores the robustness of the dataset.

Table 4.2: **Tests of Normality**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
TBECompetitiveness2	.223	260	.000	.803	260	.000
KM2	.221	260	.000	.839	260	.000
OL2	.218	260	.000	.887	260	.000
QC2	.227	260	.000	.887	260	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Research Data, (2024)

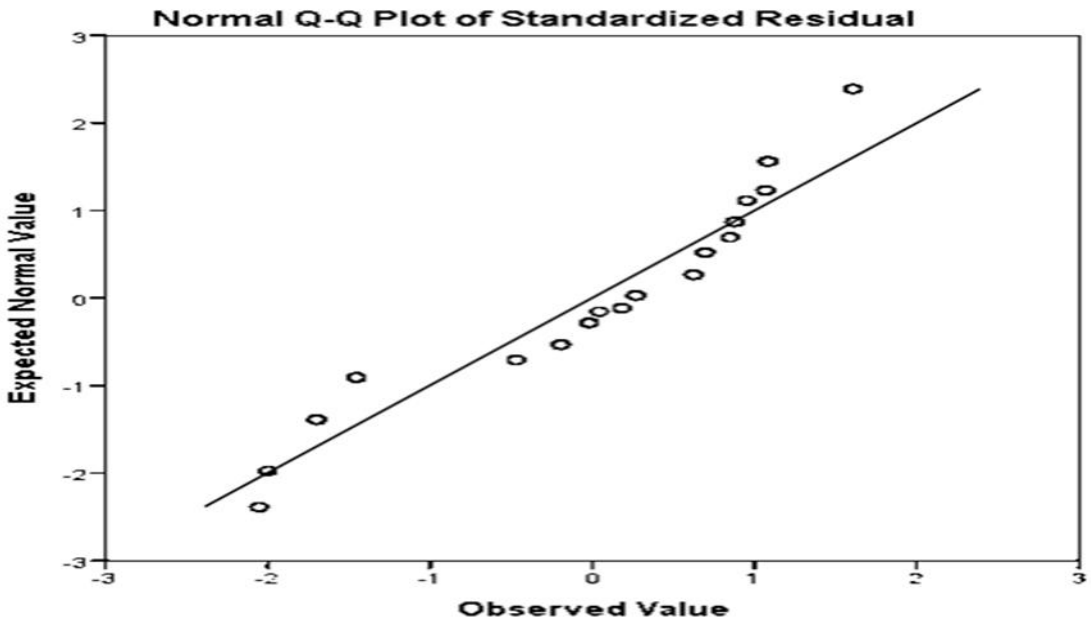

Figure 4.1: Normality Test Q-Q Plot, Research (2024)

4.2.2 Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance values. Results revealed VIF values ranging from 1.00 to 1.59 and tolerance values between 0.63 and 1.00, all within the recommended thresholds (Dennis, 2011; Hansen, 2013). Correlation coefficients further supported the absence of multicollinearity, with all values below the critical 0.7 threshold (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 2010; Kothari, 2010). These results confirm that independent variables are sufficiently distinct and uniquely contribute to the regression model.

Table 4.3 Collinearity **Statistics (Coefficients [a])**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.831	.114		42.372	.000	4.607	5.056		
	KM2	-.163	.028	-.340	-5.801	.000	-.219	-.108	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	3.759	.285		13.202	.000	3.199	4.320		
	KM2	-.102	.031	-.211	-3.250	.001	-.163	-.040	.766	1.306
	OL2	.213	.052	.265	4.085	.000	.110	.316	.766	1.306
3	(Constant)	2.957	.278		10.639	.000	2.410	3.504		
	KM2	-.129	.028	-.268	-4.526	.000	-.185	-.073	.754	1.327
	OL2	.047	.052	.058	.896	.371	-.056	.149	.631	1.585
	QC2	.389	.051	.435	7.651	.000	.289	.490	.816	1.225

a. Dependent Variable: TBECompetitiveness2

Source: Research Data, (2024)

Table 4.4 **Correlations** matrix

		TBECompetiveness2	QC2	OL2	KM2
TBECompetitiveness2	Pearson Correlation	1	.486**	.368**	-.340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	260	260	260	260
QC2	Pearson Correlation	.486**	1	.414**	-.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.106
	N	260	260	260	260
OL2	Pearson Correlation	.368**	.414**	1	-.484**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	260	260	260	260
KM2	Pearson Correlation	-.340**	-.100	-.484**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.106	.000	
	N	260	260	260	260

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data Analysis, Researcher (2024)

4.2.3 Homoscedasticity and Heteroscedasticity Tests

Levene's test (Figure 4.5) yielded statistically significant results ($F = 20.400$, $p < .001$), suggesting possible heteroscedasticity. However, given the test's sensitivity in large samples (Field, 2009), a residual scatterplot was inspected. The residuals displayed a random and uniform distribution (Figure 4.6), confirming that the assumption of homoscedasticity held and that heteroscedasticity was not a concern (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, the regression model was considered robust.

Table 4.5: Homogeneity of Variances. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dependent Variable: TBECompetitiveness2

F	df1	df2	Sig.
20.400	12	247	.000

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance[a] of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
a. Design: Intercept + KNOWLEDGE2MGT + OL2 + QC2

Source: Research Analysis, (2024)

As a precautionary note, if heteroscedasticity had been substantial, corrective measures such as robust standard errors, data transformation, or weighted least squares (Gujarati & Porter, 2009) would have been applied.

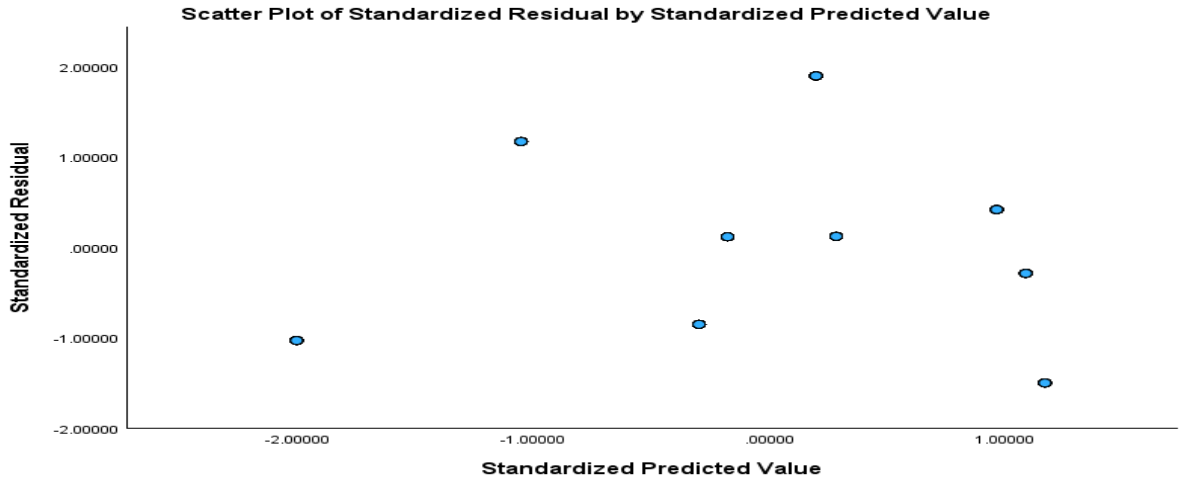

Figure 4.6: Residual Scatterplot, Research (2024)

The residual scatterplot confirms the validity of the homoscedasticity assumption, ensuring that the regression model results are reliable for further interpretation and inference.

4.3 Science Mapping Analysis

The study employed science mapping analysis to examine the interconnectedness of Knowledge Management (KM), Organizational Learning (OL), and Quality Culture (QC) in fostering the competitiveness of tourism business enterprises (TBEs). By integrating four theoretical perspectives Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991), Knowledge-Based View (KBV) (Grant, 1996), Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997), and Institutional Theory (IBV) (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) the findings demonstrate that sustainable competitiveness is not derived from resources in isolation but from their combination with dynamic knowledge-sharing, adaptive learning, and compliance with institutional standards. This integrated framework is expressed through the equation: TBE = f(RBV, KBV, DCBV, IBV) (Ogutu et al., 2023).

For the **bibliometric analysis,** supported by science mapping techniques, highlights intellectual, conceptual, and social structures shaping scholarly discourse in this domain (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

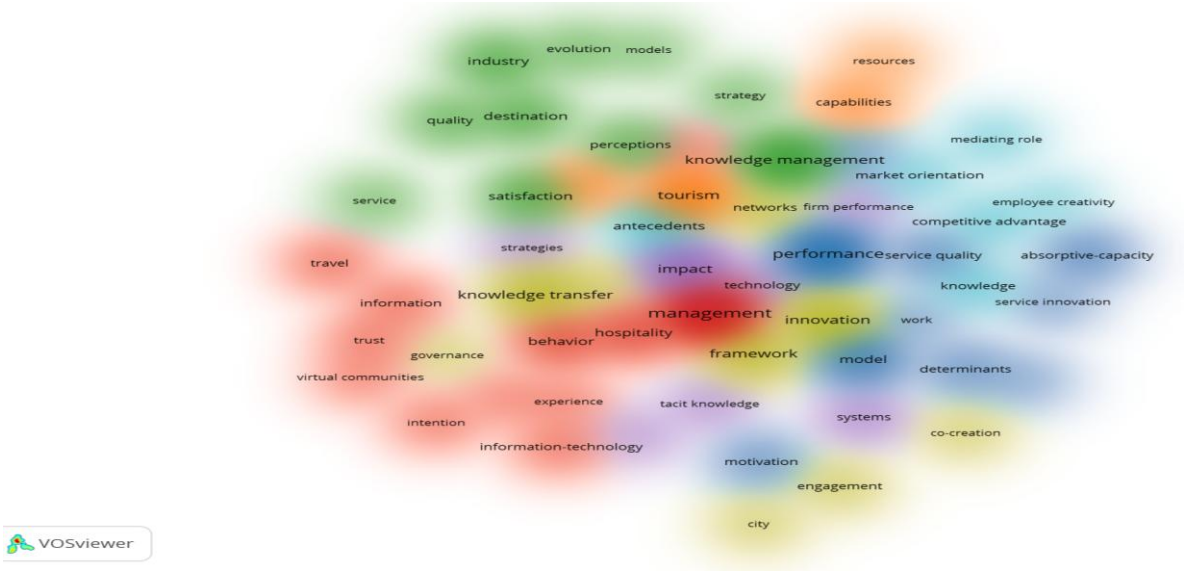

Figure 8: Cluster Density Co-occurrence Network based on Keyword Plus Source: Derived from Vosviewer (2023)

The co-occurrence network as shown in (Figure 8) reveals clusters showing that KM is central to enhancing service quality, customer satisfaction, and innovation; OL is key to absorptive capacity and adaptive processes; while QC reinforces trust, governance, and consistency in service delivery (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Zahra & George, 2002; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Collectively, these dynamics affirm that competitiveness in TBEs results from the synergy between KM, OL, and QC (Ogutu, 2023).

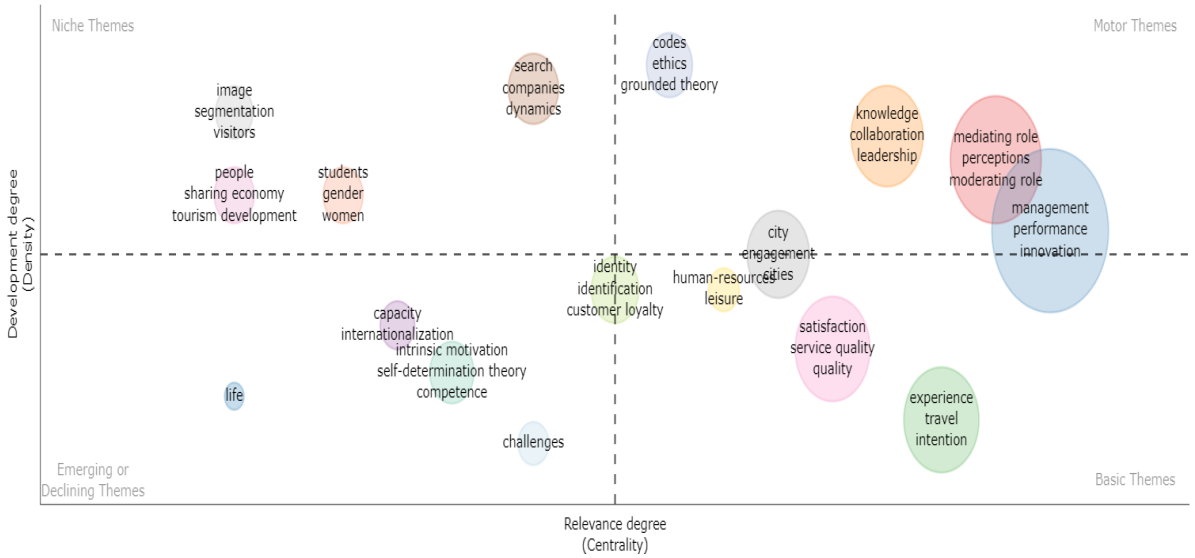

Figure 9: Thematic Map BASED ON KEYWORDS PLUS KM OL TBE KM OL TBE 2001_22 Source: Ogutu, (2023)

The thematic mapping indicated in Figure 9, identifies motor themes such as management and performance as well-developed and highly connected, while service quality and human resources appear as basic but emerging themes with potential for future development. Declining themes such as competence and internationalization reflect underexplored areas, suggesting opportunities for revitalization. Similarly, Figure 10, displays the thematic evolution illustrates a temporal shift in research focus: earlier emphases on trust, behaviour, and capacity systems (2001–2019) have evolved toward strategy, engagement, and perceived value (2020–2023). Despite these shifts, management remains a consistent anchor, underscoring its enduring significance.

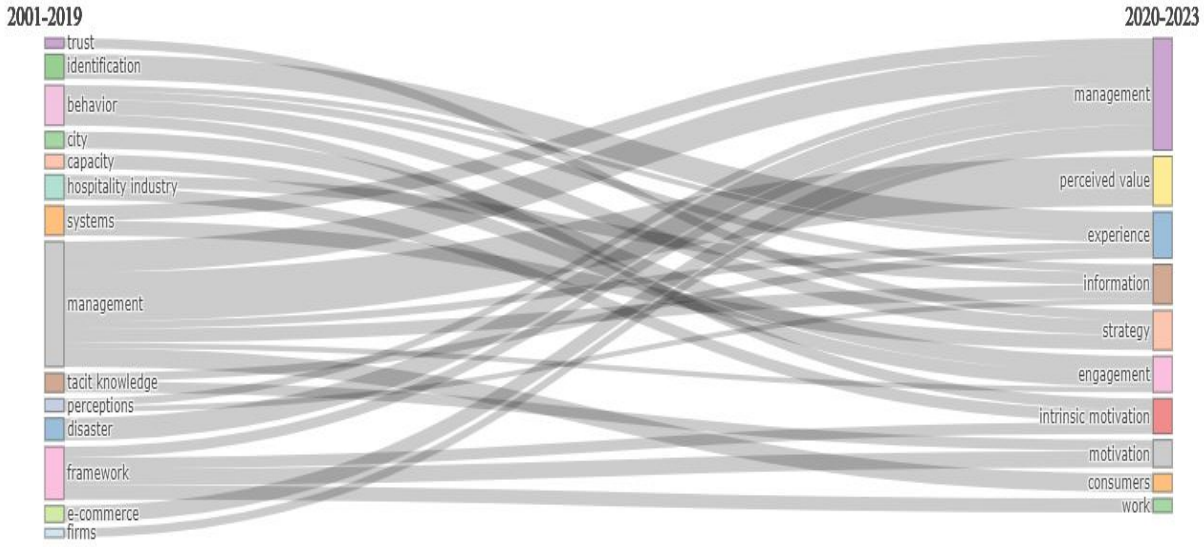

Figure 10: Thematic Evolution KM OL TBE 2001_22. Source: Ogutu, (2023)

Moreover, factorial analysis as presented in Figure 11, further confirms critical drivers of competitiveness, including resources, quality knowledge, firm performance, and capabilities, thus reinforcing RBV and DCT arguments.

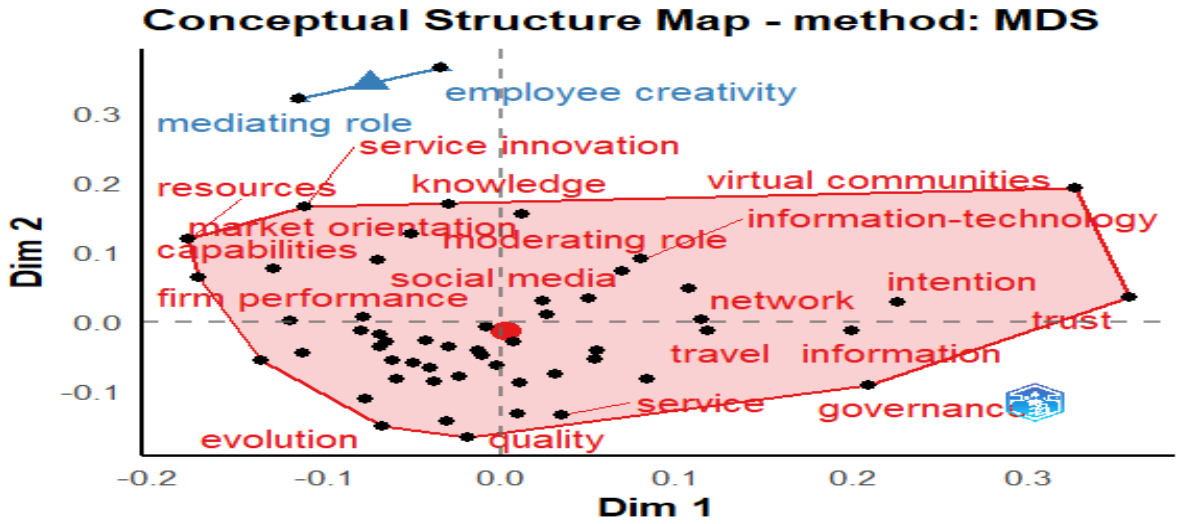

Figure 11: Conceptual Structure of KM OL TBE a Factorial Approach. Source: Ogutu, (2023)

The social structure analysis (Figure 12) on the other hand, highlights that global collaborations are dominated by the USA, China, and Australia, while Africa is significantly underrepresented, with weak intra-African cooperation. This gap underscores the need for capacity building, regional collaboration, and stronger research networks within Africa (Cobo et al., 2011; Ogutu, 2023).

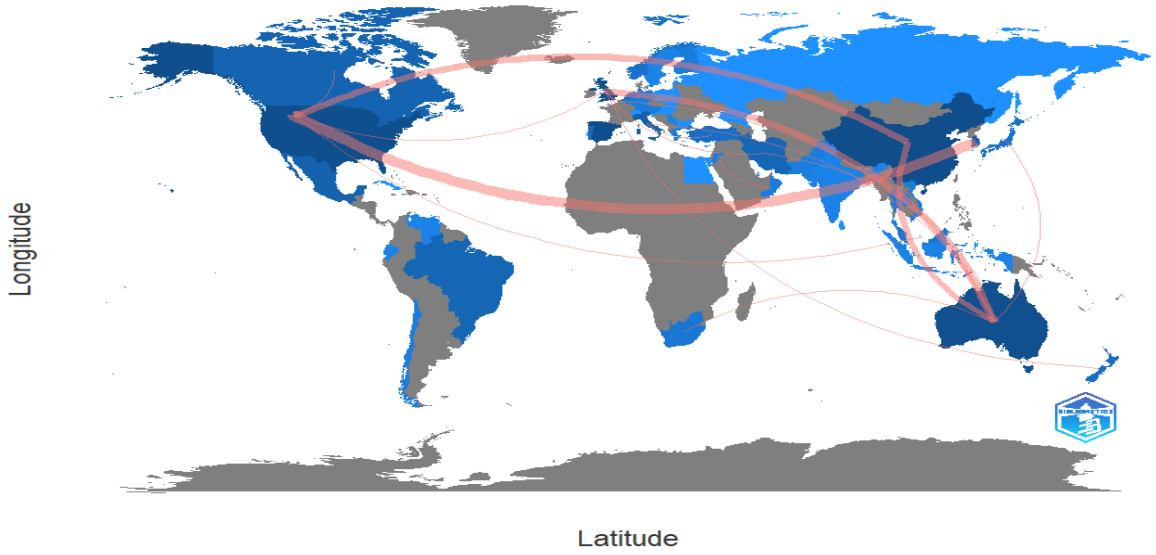

Figure 12: Collaboration World Map of KM OL TBE. Source: Researcher, (2023)

Nonetheless, key findings from the science mapping analysis, highlights the role of QC as an institutionalized mechanism for continuous improvement (Scott & Ding, 2008; (Acevedo et al., 2021; Alejandro et al., 2022), the significance of absorptive capacity in mediating knowledge transfer (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990), and the contribution of employee creativity to

sustaining competitive advantage (Amabile, 1996). In addition, systemic approaches and digital platforms are transforming knowledge-sharing practices, creating new opportunities for innovation (Huang et al., 2009; Garcia-Almeida, 2019). Ultimately, the science mapping demonstrates that sustainable tourism competitiveness is the outcome of a multidimensional integration of KM, OL, and QC. For Kenyan TBEs in particular, this synergy provides a framework for resilience, adaptability, and market positioning in a globalized environment (Anand et al., 2022; Zhang, Li & Wang, 2018). The findings therefore bridge theoretical constructs and practical applications, offering both academic contributions and actionable strategies for advancing tourism competitiveness.

4.4 DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The descriptive findings of the study offer a detailed portrayal of the organizational characteristics and respondent demographics within tourism business enterprises (TBEs), revealing both strengths and critical areas for policy and managerial intervention.

4.4.1 Organisational Profile and Respondents Demographics General Information

This section offers a critical examination of the organizational and demographic landscape of tourism business enterprises (TBEs), arguing that while the sector exhibits signs of vitality and intellectual capital, it remains constrained by structural inefficiencies and policy gaps that undermine its sustainability and competitiveness.

Table 4.6: Organizational Profile and Respondents' Demographics – Summary of Findings and Implications

Dimension	Key Findings	Critical Implications
Gender Representation	Male dominance at 55%; women remain underrepresented in tourism workforce.	Persistent gender disparity undermines diversity and innovation benefits; highlights need for gender-inclusive hiring, leadership development, and equity-driven policies (Baum, 2015; Kusluvan et al., 2010; Campos-Soria et al., 2011).
Nature of Services	Overreliance on traditional services such as tour operations and vehicle hire.	Limited service diversification constrains adaptability and competitiveness in global markets; innovation stimulation is critical (Dwyer et al., 2020; Cooper, 2018; Hall, 2019).
Firm Age	47.7% of TBEs are young (5–10 years); few mature firms evident.	Entrepreneurial dynamism exists but lack of longevity signals vulnerability; policies for resilience and business continuity are needed (Morrison et al., 2022; Thomas & Wood, 2014).
Market Focus	Majority operate nationally; few engage regionally or globally.	Insularity reduces opportunities for growth and competitiveness; enabling policies for cross-border and international engagement are essential (UNWTO, 2020; Gössling & Hall, 2019).

Dimension	Key Findings	Critical Implications
Ownership Structure	70% are sole proprietorships or partnerships.	Indicates fragmentation and informal structures; calls for institutional support for formalization, financing, and capacity building (Novelli et al., 2019; Rogerson, 2013).
Financial Turnover	Most TBEs report modest revenue levels.	Financial vulnerability reflects limited capital access; strategic investment and innovation required for revenue growth (Chen & Soo, 2019; OECD, 2017).
Employment Scale	Dominated by micro-enterprises; limited capacity for large-scale job creation.	Missed opportunities for tourism's labor-intensive potential; requires structural and operational reforms (WTTC, 2021; Baum, 2015).
Respondents' Positions	Majority of respondents hold managerial/top-level positions.	Top-heavy representation risks weak talent pipelines and insufficient leadership grooming; need balanced HR strategies (Mintzberg, 1989; Hjalager, 2015).
Educational Background	High levels of academic attainment (Masters/PhDs common).	Intellectual capital not fully converted into competitiveness; need for applied knowledge, industry–academia linkages, and innovation systems (Hjalager, 2015; Cooper, 2006; Tribe, 2010).
Employee Retention	Weak long-term employee retention undermines institutional memory.	

Source: Compiled from Research Data Analysis (Researcher, 2025)

Therefore, the descriptive findings construct a toned argument that the tourism sector, while buoyed by human capital and entrepreneurial activity, is hampered by systemic gender bias, service stagnation, informal business structures, and limited global orientation. Targeted interventions spanning inclusive hiring, capacity development, innovation stimulation, and strategic internationalization are essential to align the sector with broader goals of sustainable and competitive tourism development (UNWTO, 2020; Gössling & Hall, 2019).

4.4.2 Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning, Quality Culture and Competitiveness Tourism Business Enterprise Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis reveals differentiated but interconnected strengths and weaknesses in the adoption of Knowledge Management (KM), Organizational Learning (OL), Quality Culture (QC), and Tourism Business Enterprise (TBE) competitiveness practices among Kenyan TBEs. Knowledge Management (KM) practices are relatively strong, with a high mean score (M = 4.04), indicating that enterprises actively apply formalized knowledge creation and digital tools for information sharing. However, weaknesses in structured collaboration and service-oriented knowledge transfer highlight the need for deeper institutionalization of KM to sustain competitiveness. Thus, while KM provides a foundation for innovation, its impact remains

contingent on addressing organizational bottlenecks in collaboration and strategic integration. On the other hand, organizational learning (OL) is only moderately implemented (M = 3.65). Firms emphasize innovation policies, teamwork, and systems compatibility, yet critical gaps persist in capturing best practices, managing intellectual property, and embedding systems thinking in daily operations. The analysis demonstrates that OL is underleveraged as a strategic resource, as theoretical awareness has not fully translated into operational practice (Senge, 2006; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Without stronger platforms for knowledge transfer and alignment of individual and organizational goals, OL's potential to drive adaptability and resilience remains under-realized. Likewise, quality culture (QC) exhibits similar moderate adoption (M = 3.63). Strengths are found in monitoring, employee training, and customer feedback utilization, but weaknesses in internal communication, responsiveness, and integration of customer insights limit its strategic contribution. The analysis argues that fragmented and reactive quality practices impede agility in a fast-changing market. For QC to act as a driver of competitiveness, TBEs must institutionalize continuous improvement frameworks, strengthen leadership commitment, and formalize system controls (Deming, 2022; Oakland, 2023). By contrast, TBE competitiveness itself scores relatively high (M = 4.11). Firms demonstrate clear strengths in strategic partnerships, talent acquisition, and positive workplace cultures, which contribute to market positioning and organizational stability. Yet weaknesses in knowledge-sharing, resource management, and employee recognition present systemic risks. Without targeted interventions, these gaps could erode long-term sustainability. The analysis therefore asserts that while TBEs are outwardly competitive, internal inefficiencies limit their capacity to fully translate current strengths into sustainable competitive advantage.

Altogether, the findings collectively underscore that Kenyan TBEs possess a strong foundation of competitiveness, but the long-term resilience depends on optimizing the interplay between KM, OL, and QC. KM provides a knowledge base, OL enables adaptation and innovation, and QC ensures consistency and credibility. However, all three practices are only partially institutionalized, creating misalignments that constrain their full strategic value. Addressing weaknesses in collaboration, knowledge transfer, communication, and employee recognition will be critical if TBEs are to move beyond temporary market gains toward sustained and systemic competitiveness. The descriptive findings of the study offer a detailed portrayal of the organizational characteristics and respondent demographics within tourism business enterprises (TBEs), revealing both strengths and critical areas for policy and managerial intervention.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Analysis Summary of KM, OL, QC, and TBE Competitiveness

Variable	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strategic Implications
Knowledge Management (KM) (M = 4.04)	- Strong formal processes for knowledge creation - Use of digital platforms for knowledge sharing - Support for innovation and problem-solving	- Limited structured collaboration - Gaps in knowledge transfer for service excellence	TBEs must deepen KM practices by integrating structured collaboration, encouraging brainstorming, and investing in digital tools to enhance competitiveness and sustain growth.

Variable	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strategic Implications
Organizational Learning (OL) (M = 3.65)	- Emphasis on innovation policies and teamwork - Recognition of systems thinking - Strong motivation of individuals	- Weak capture and sharing of best practices - Limited intellectual property management - Weak alignment of individual and team goals	TBEs should institutionalize systems thinking, expand training programs, and develop structured platforms for lesson-sharing to foster innovation, adaptability, and sustainable learning cultures.
Quality Culture (QC) (M = 3.63)	-Employee training on quality -Monitoring and revising standards - Use of customer feedback for service delivery	- Weak internal communication - Slow responsiveness to quality deviations - Underutilization of customer insights for innovation	TBEs must adopt integrated quality frameworks, strengthen leadership in quality initiatives, and link customer feedback with continuous improvement to enhance competitiveness.
TBE Competitiveness (M = 4.11)	-Strategic partnerships -Effective talent acquisition and retention -Positive workplace culture and transition planning	- Weak knowledge-sharing systems -Inefficient resource management - Limited employee recognition practices	To sustain competitiveness, TBEs must strengthen internal knowledge-sharing, improve resource allocation, and institutionalize employee recognition programs to foster motivation and productivity.

Source: Data Analysis, Researcher (2024)

4.5 HYPOTHESIS TESTING INFERENTIAL STATISTICAL FINDINGS

This section presents the findings of the study hypotheses testing using inferential analysis depicted in the regression(s) results as model summaries with Pearson correlation moment(r). Showing the nature and strength of the relationship(s) and coefficient of determination (R^2) which explains how much variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. The study employed simple, multiple, and hierarchical regression analyses to test six hypotheses at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$). The results provide insights into the direct, mediating, moderating, and joint effects of knowledge management (KM), organizational learning (OL), and quality culture (QC) on tourism business enterprise competitiveness (TBECOMPE).

Table 4.8: Hypotheses testing, and Inferential Inferences

Construct / Hypothesis	Quantitative Patterns (Inferential Results)	Hypothesis Test Outcome
Ho1:KM → TBECompe (no significant influence)	$R = .451$, $R^2 = .203$, Adj. $R^2 = .191$, $F(4,255) = 16.279$, $p < .001$ → KM explains 20.3% of competitiveness variance; significant predictors (KM_S, KM_T, KM_A, KM_C).	**Reject** Statistically significant KM significantly influences TBE Competitiveness.

Construct / Hypothesis	Quantitative Patterns (Inferential Results)	Hypothesis Test Outcome
Ho2: OL → TBECompe (no significant influence)	$R = .337$, $R^2 = .113$, Adj. $R^2 = .099$, $F(4,255) = 8.145$, $p < .001$ → OL explains 11.3% of variance; significant but modest effect.	**Reject** Statistically OL significantly but modestly influences TBE Competitiveness.
Ho3: QC → TBECompe (no significant influence)	$R = .505$, $R^2 = .255$, Adj. $R^2 = .243$, $F(4,255) = 21.799$, $p < .001$ → QC explains 25.5% of variance; strong positive effect.	**Reject** Statistically QC significantly influences TBE Competitiveness.
Ho4: OL has no mediating effect on KM → TBECompe	Hierarchical regression: Model 1 $R^2 = .115$ (KM only); Model 2 $R^2 = .169$ (KM+OL), $\Delta R^2 = .054$, $p < .001$. OL ($\beta = .265$, $p < .001$) significant; KM effect weakens ($\beta = –.211$).	**Reject** Statistically OL significantly mediates the KM–TBE Competitiveness relationship.
Ho5: QC has no moderating effect on KM → TBECompe	Model 1 (KM only): $R^2 = .115$; Model 2 (KM+QC): $R^2 = .322$, $\Delta R^2 = .206$, $p < .001$. QC positive ($\beta = .457$, $p < .001$); KM negative ($\beta = –.294$, $p < .001$). Interaction (KM*QC) significant ($\beta = .220$, $p < .001$).	**Reject** Statistically QC significantly moderates KM–TBE Competitiveness relationship.
Ho6: No Joint Effect of KM, OL & QC on TBECompe	Multiple regression: $R = .569$, $R^2 = .324$, Adj. $R^2 = .316$, $F(3,256) = 40.881$, $p < .001$. QC strongest predictor ($\beta = .435$, $p < .001$); KM negative ($\beta = –.268$, $p < .001$); OL non-significant ($\beta = .058$, $p = .371$).	**Reject** Statistically KM, OL & QC jointly have a significant effect on TBE Competitiveness.

Source: Research Data Analysis, Researcher (2025)

4.6 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The qualitative findings (Table: 4.23) reveal that while KM, OL, and QC are each acknowledged as important, their application within Kenyan TBEs is fragmented, informal, and reactive. This lack of systemic integration undermines competitiveness, which is often based on static advantages rather than dynamic capabilities. The evidence highlights leadership as both the most critical enabler and the most significant bottleneck: when leaders champion KM, OL, and QC, competitiveness improve s; when they fail to integrate them, practices remain siloed and unsustainable. Thus, the analysis argues that the absence of an integrated strategic framework rather than the absence of individual practices is the primary constraint on TBE competitiveness. Embedding KM, OL, and QC into coherent systems, supported by proactive leadership, is essential for transforming short-term survival into long-term sustainable competitive advantage.

Table 4.9: Summary of Qualitative Analysis Findings (KM, OL, QC, and TBE Competitiveness)

Variable	Strengths (Perceived/Practiced)	Weaknesses (Observed/Reported)	Strategic Implications
Knowledge Management (KM)	- Recognition of KM's importance for competitiveness. - Use of informal networks and interpersonal relationships for sharing knowledge.	- Absence of formal KM systems or documentation. - Heavy reliance on tacit, experience-based knowledge. - Lack of training/support for capturing and using information.	Institutionalize KM through formal systems, structured documentation, and digital platforms. Invest in staff training to move from reactive, individual knowledge reliance to strategic KM that retains organizational memory and enhances decision-making.
Organizational Learning (OL)	- Openness to external learning (competitors, international standards). - Recognition of mistakes as learning opportunities.	- Ad hoc and episodic reviews without documentation. - Leadership does not consistently support reflective learning. - Lack of embedded routines for knowledge conversion into practice.	Embed OL into standard operating procedures (e.g., after-action reviews, knowledge audits). Strengthen leadership capacity to encourage reflection and institutionalize continuous learning. Leverage external learning but convert it into internal operational improvements.
Quality Culture (QC)	- Acknowledgement of quality as important. - Commitment to customer-facing service quality. - When enforced by leadership, staff compliance improves.	- Reactive quality practices triggered mainly by complaints. - Weak internal process quality compared to service delivery. - Absence of performance metrics, audits, and continuous improvement frameworks.	Move QC beyond rhetoric by embedding it as a daily organizational value. Establish proactive quality systems (audits, metrics, feedback loops). Ensure leadership consistently models quality commitment, reinforcing staff engagement and organizational resilience.
TBE Competitiveness	- Competitive edge from location and customer service. - Pricing strategies attract customers.	- Over-reliance on static advantages (e.g., location). - Lack of investment in innovation and staff development. - Price–quality trade-offs undermine brand equity. - Operational inefficiencies hinder long-term competitiveness.	Shift from reactive, survival-oriented competitiveness to strategic differentiation. Invest in innovation, training, and system improvements. Develop integrated pricing-quality strategies that build long-term customer loyalty and sustainable market advantage.

Variable	Strengths (Perceived/Practiced)	Weaknesses (Observed/Reported)	Strategic Implications
Integration of KM, OL, and QC (Mediating/Moderating Effects)	- When aligned, KM, OL, and QC collectively enhance quality and competitiveness. - Recognition that leadership can enable integration.	- Fragmented practices: KM, OL, and QC often operate in isolation. - Leadership bottlenecks hinder system-wide adoption.	Adopt a holistic approach that links KM, OL, and QC under a unified strategy. Strengthen leadership capacity to integrate processes and foster dynamic capabilities. Institutional alignment will transform fragmented practices into sustainable sources of competitive advantage.

Source: Data Analysis, Researcher (2025)

Thus, the most compelling conclusion is that competitiveness in Kenyan TBEs is less about isolated practices and more about the alignment and integration of KM, OL, and QC to continuous improvement frameworks.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the results of the study in line with existing literature to establish whether the results confirm previous studies, or they are inconsistent with existing knowledge. The content of this chapter is based on the research objectives and the hypothesis of the study. The discussion mainly focuses on the study findings, how they compare with existing knowledge, theoretical contribution of the study and the knowledge gap filled.

5.1 Systematic Literature Review and Bibliometrics Science Mapping

The bibliometric and systematic review established the growing scholarly attention on KM, OL, and business competitiveness in tourism, echoing findings from global studies (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Kim, 2013; Zhao, 2016). Increasing annual research output underscores their relevance to sustainability and innovation in the tourism and hospitality sector. However, the underrepresentation of African scholarship (Ogutu, 2023; Ogutu et al., 2023) points to the persistence of regional imbalances. Core theoretical anchors such as the knowledge-based view, resource-based view, and dynamic capabilities were consistently evident, confirming the global consensus that intangible capabilities drive competitiveness (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007). Yet, despite global progress, gaps remain in integrating cultural authenticity, franchise models, and the mediating roles of institutional capacity. By mapping these themes, the study provides a research agenda particularly relevant for African contexts, where structural barriers often inhibit knowledge integration and collaborative innovation.

5.2 The Influence of Knowledge Management on Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya

The discussion confirms the strategic importance of KM as a driver of competitiveness. Prior studies emphasize that knowledge sharing, acquisition, and creation are indispensable in enabling innovation and adaptability (Grant, 1996; Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Gold et al., 2001). This study corroborates these insights, showing that KM strengthens decision-making, fosters innovation, and enhances service quality in TBEs (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Chong, 2006; Wang & Noe, 2010). Nevertheless, consistent with critiques from African contexts (Ogutu, 2023; Ogutu et al., 2023), the research also highlights limitations in codification, structured sharing, and strategic utilization of knowledge. This misalignment suggests that, without deliberate integration, KM may risk becoming a bureaucratic exercise rather than a performance enabler (Jashapara, 2011; Andreeva & Kianto, 2016). The implication is that tourism businesses in Kenya must embed KM within broader learning and quality frameworks if they are to achieve sustainable competitiveness.

5.3 The Influence of Organizational Learning on Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya

Organizational learning is a theoretically central capability (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990), yet empirical studies including this one demonstrate that its contribution to competitiveness is often modest. Weak institutionalization of systems thinking and fragmented learning practices (Garvin, 1993; Marsick & Watkins, 2003) limit OL's transformative potential. The finding aligns with critiques that African tourism enterprises remain reliant on episodic or externally driven learning rather than continuous, embedded reflection (Ogutu, 2023). While OL fosters adaptability and innovation in principle (Crossan et al., 1999; Jerez-Gomez et al., 2005), its limited operationalization means its impact is often indirect, mediated through other capabilities such as quality improvement or customer responsiveness (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011). The implication is that TBEs require deliberate leadership interventions and structured feedback loops to transform OL from a conceptual aspiration into a strategic reality.

5.4 Quality Culture Influence of on Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya

The study affirms QC as a decisive factor in enhancing competitiveness, consistent with prior scholarship on quality management and organizational excellence (Deming, 1986; Juran, 1999; Oakland, 2003; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Unlike OL, QC demonstrates a strong, direct influence on competitiveness by embedding continuous improvement, responsiveness to customer needs, and adherence to quality standards (Evans & Lindsay, 2017; Sadikoglu & Zehir, 2010). These findings resonate with recent African studies (Ogutu et al., 2023), which stress that in service-intensive sectors like tourism, quality culture differentiates enterprises in highly competitive environments. However, challenges remain in sustaining QC beyond surface-level compliance, as weak internal communication and fragmented systems often undermine its full potential (Sampaio et al., 2012; Dahlgaard-Park, 2011). The implication is clear: embedding QC across all levels of TBEs is indispensable for sustainable performance.

5.5 The Mediating Effect of Organizational Learning in The Relationship Between Knowledge Management and Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises in Kenya

Consistent with the knowledge-based and dynamic capabilities perspectives (Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007), this study shows that OL enhances the impact of KM on competitiveness. By acting as a catalyst, OL enables the transformation of knowledge into actionable strategies, fostering innovation and adaptability (Jerez-Gomez et al., 2023; Alegre & Chiva, 2023). The implication is that KM practices are insufficient in isolation; they must be supported by strong learning systems that translate knowledge into operational improvements (Farooq et al., 2023). This resonates with Ogutu (2023), who argues that in African enterprises, OL is a crucial but often missing link in converting knowledge into competitive advantage. Strategically, TBEs should therefore integrate KM and OL to create continuous feedback loops that ensure knowledge utilization and strategic adaptability.

5.6 The Moderating Effect of Quality Culture in The Relationship Between Knowledge Management and Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises

The findings position QC as a powerful moderator that amplifies the contribution of KM to competitiveness, aligning with both resource-based and quality management perspectives (Barney, 1991; Sampaio et al., 2012). By embedding KM within quality-driven systems, TBEs transform knowledge into service excellence and sustainable performance outcomes (Crosby, 1979; Oakland, 2003). This supports Ogutu et al. (2023), who emphasize that in emerging markets, quality culture mitigates weaknesses in knowledge systems and enhances competitiveness. The implication is that QC should not be treated as a supplementary practice but as a strategic framework through which KM is operationalized.

5.7 The Joint Effect of Knowledge Management, Organizational Learning and Quality Culture on Competitiveness of Tourism Business Enterprises

Perhaps the most critical insight is the synergistic effect of KM, OL, and QC when jointly considered. Consistent with the RBV and dynamic capabilities theory (Barney, 1991; Teece, 2007; Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000), the integration of these intangible assets significantly enhances competitiveness. The study highlights QC as the strongest direct driver, but its effectiveness depends on the catalytic role of OL and the knowledge base provided by KM. Yet, the counterintuitive outcome of KM's sometimes negative effect if poorly aligned echoes critiques by Jashapara (2011) and Ogutu (2023), who warn against superficial or fragmented KM initiatives. The implication is that competitiveness in TBEs is not derived from stand-alone practices but from their systemic alignment and orchestration. Ultimately, the discussion underscores that TBEs in Kenya, and by extension in similar emerging markets, must move from reactive and fragmented practices to strategically integrated models. By aligning KM, OL, and QC under coherent frameworks and strong leadership, enterprises can build sustainable competitive advantages, fostering resilience in dynamic and uncertain tourism environments (Ogutu, 2023; Ogutu et al., 2023).

Theoretically, this study advances the understanding of how KM, OL, and QC jointly shape competitiveness in tourism enterprises. It reinforces the knowledge-based view by showing that KM alone is insufficient without the enabling mechanisms of OL and QC. It also extends the dynamic capabilities framework by demonstrating that competitiveness emerges not only

from resources but from their synergistic integration and alignment. Practically, the findings provide actionable insights for tourism businesses in Kenya and other emerging economies. Embedding KM into organizational routines, cultivating robust learning practices, and institutionalizing QC are critical steps for achieving sustainable competitiveness. Policymakers and industry associations can also draw from these insights to design capacity-building initiatives and sector-wide standards that strengthen intangible capabilities across the tourism industry. By bridging conceptual insights with practical imperatives, the study offers a holistic framework for enhancing competitiveness in tourism, addressing both scholarly debates and managerial realities.

CHAPTER 6
RESEARCH NOVELITY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consolidates the study's contributions, highlighting that competitiveness in Tourism Business Enterprises (TBEs) in Kenya is not the product of isolated managerial practices, but of the strategic integration of Knowledge Management (KM), Organizational Learning (OL), and Quality Culture (QC). The synergy of these intangible capabilities underpins the proposed Tourism Business Enterprise Capability Framework (TBECapFrame) (Figure 6.2), which positions competitiveness as an emergent outcome of capability alignment and responsiveness to institutional pressures (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).,

6.1 RESEARCH NOVELTY AND MODEL THEORETICAL GROUNDING

A critical and novel insight is the counterintuitive finding that KM alone exerts a negative effect on competitiveness, challenging conventional assumptions that knowledge accumulation directly enhances performance. Inferential mediating and moderating analysis showed that when KM was introduced in isolation, it weakened competitiveness, but when combined with OL and QC, the overall explanatory power improved significantly. OL mediated the KM–competitiveness relationship, while QC both moderated and mediated the same relationship, underscoring that knowledge only becomes strategically valuable when embedded in learning processes and reinforced by a quality-driven organizational culture (Andreeva & Kianto, 2016). Furthermore, in joint regression, QC emerged as the strongest predictor, while KM remained negative and OL was non-significant, reinforcing the argument that alignment mechanisms, not isolated resources, drive competitiveness. As shown in Conceptual Model: The KM–OL–QC interaction mechanism, (Figure: 6.1) displays OL as a mediator and QC as both mediator and moderator (Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011; Jerez-Gómez et al., 2005).

KM–OL–QC Interaction Mechanism Model

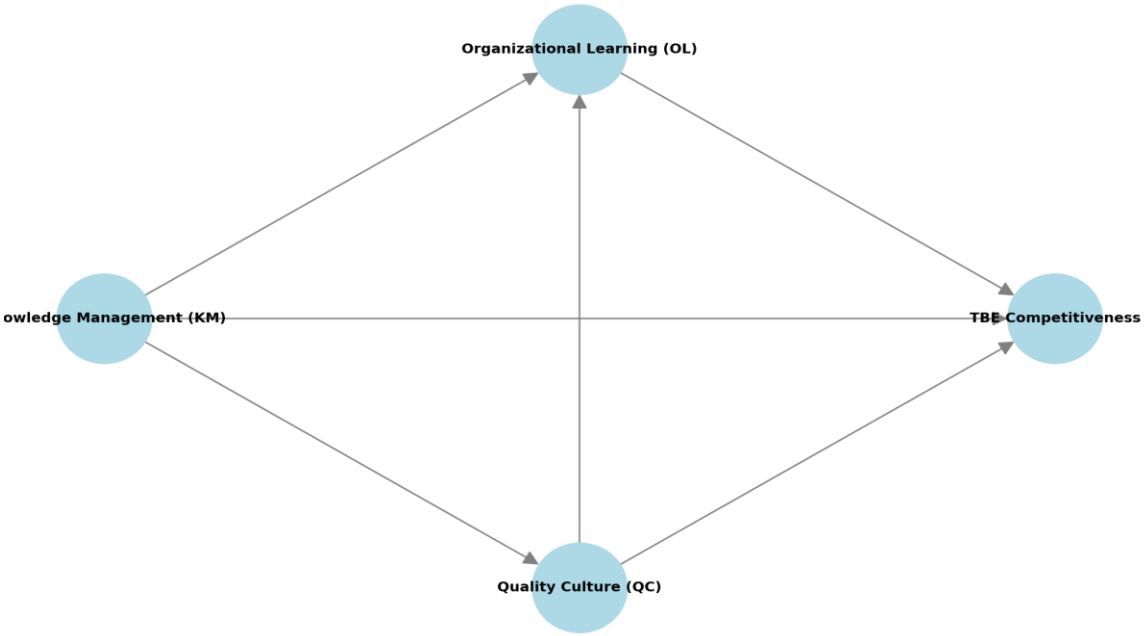

Figure: 6.1: Visualization of the mediating and moderating effects of Organizational Learning (OL) and Quality Culture (QC) on the relationship between Knowledge Management (KM) and TBE Competitiveness. Model Derived from Research findings, Researcher (2025)

Through integration of qualitative themes and quantitative patterns, the study proposes an Integrated Tourism Business Enterprise Capability Framework Model 2 (TBECapFrame) (Figure 6.2) that offers both empirical validity and theoretical depth. The study's theoretical contribution is consolidated in (TBECapFrame) (Figure 6.2), a novel model that formalizes how KM, OL, and QC operate as mutually reinforcing intangible assets. These are activated through Capability Alignment Mechanisms strategic leadership, interdepartmental coordination, feedback systems, and quality routines that synchronize knowledge, learning, and culture into a coherent capability system. This framework positions competitiveness as an emergent outcome of capability orchestration, adaptation, and institutional responsiveness.

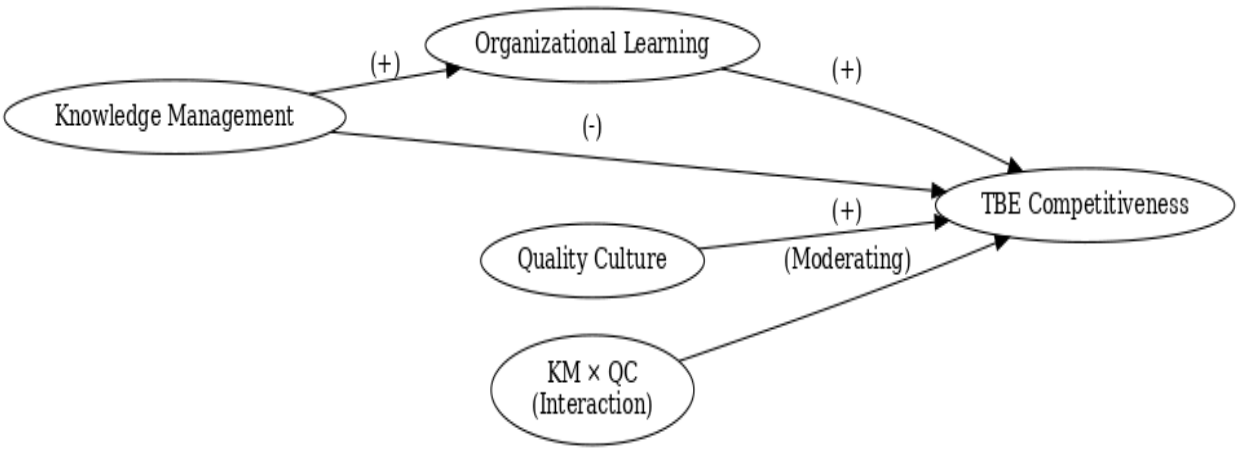

Figure: 6.2: Visual Representation of the Integrated Tourism Business Enterprise Capability Framework (TBECapFrame), Model Derived from Research findings, Researcher (2025)

This framework is grounded in and extends three major organizational theories: Resource-Based Theory (RBT), Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), and Institutional Theory (IT). the unified framework illustrating that competitiveness arises from the orchestrated alignment of intangible resources through leadership, feedback systems, and quality routines (Teece et al., 2016; Munizu, 2019; Andreeva & Kianto, 2016) in response to dynamic external environments (Zollo & Winter, 2002; Kamya et al., 2011). as seen in (Figure: 6.2) the TBECapFrame conceptual model. By synthesizing RBV, KBV, DCT, and IT, the TBECapFrame advances theory by positioning competitiveness not as a static property of resource possession but as a strategically adaptive, institutionally anchored process of capability alignment. This integrative contribution provides a robust conceptual foundation for rethinking how TBEs, particularly in emerging economies, can sustain competitiveness by moving beyond static advantages toward dynamic, coordinated, and legitimacy-driven capability systems.

6.2 TBECAPFRAME GLOBAL RELEVANCE AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The TBECapFrame offers practical pathways for firms to remain competitive in turbulent service environments. It enables enterprises to diagnose capability gaps (Inkinen, 2016; Chen et al., 2019), align operations strategically through leadership and coordination (Garvin, 1993; Obeidat et al., 2020), and institutionalize agility via continuous improvement mechanisms (Crosby, 1979; Nair & Prajogo, 2009). From a global perspective, the model is scalable across different contexts from small family-run guesthouses to multinational hotel chains because it focuses on universal enablers such as knowledge flows, learning systems, and quality management (Kim et al., 2019; Njoroge & Maina, 2021). By embedding sustainability into capability structures, the TBECapFrame strengthens both firm-level performance and sector-wide resilience (Islam et al., 2020; Mariani et al., 2021). The TBECapFrame thus represents a novel conceptual contribution, integrating theoretical strands from RBT, DCT, and IT to demonstrate that strategic integration and institutional responsiveness not just resource possession drive sustainable competitiveness in the tourism sector (Grant, 1996; Teece, 2007; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Ogutu et al., 2023).

6.3 ALIGNMENT WITH THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The TBECapFrame is not only a tool for internal alignment but also a platform for advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the framework supports:

- SDG 4 (Quality Education): Through institutionalized learning mechanisms that promote lifelong learning within enterprise settings (Marsick & Watkins, 2003).
- SDG 5 (Gender Equality): By democratizing access to knowledge and embedding fairness within quality-driven systems (Li & Zhang, 2017).
- SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): Through structured learning and quality frameworks that enhance productivity and professional development (Evans & Lindsay, 2017).
- SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure): By facilitating organizational transformation and technological assimilation (Nguyen et al., 2021).
- SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production): Via knowledge-informed sustainability practices and operational standards (Prajogo & Sohal, 2006).

- SDG 13 (Climate Action): Through adaptive capabilities that enhance environmental responsiveness (Islam et al., 2020).

By embedding sustainability principles within its architecture, the TBECapFrame enables TBEs to serve as both beneficiaries and agents of global development (Islam et al., 2020; Mariani et al., 2021).

6.4 CONCLUSION

The study confirms that competitiveness emerges from the integration of KM, OL, and QC. KM on its own risks redundancy and misalignment, but when mediated by OL which transforms knowledge into adaptive practices (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Crossan et al., 1999) and moderated by QC which anchors processes in customer-oriented and quality-driven cultures (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Zehir et al., 2012) it becomes a robust driver of performance. The TBECapFrame explained 32.4% of the variance in competitiveness, underscoring its explanatory power while leaving room for other external influences such as innovation and policy dynamics (Chen et al., 2016; Goffi et al., 2020). The framework contributes to RBV, KBV, DCT, and IT by empirically demonstrating that competitiveness is contingent upon capability orchestration and institutional fit (Zollo & Winter, 2002; Peng et al., 2009).

6.5 PRACTICE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study calls for a strategic departure from fragmented management systems. Tourism enterprises must transition from viewing KM, OL, and QC as isolated initiatives to adopting an integrated capability alignment approach. Practically, this entails:

i. Embedding learning routines and reflexive mechanisms (e.g., scenario planning, after-action reviews)
ii. Aligning KM systems with quality assurance protocols to ensure knowledge application is performance-relevant
iii. Cultivating a quality-oriented culture that promotes standardization without stifling innovation
iv. At the policy level, governments and tourism regulators should incentivize capability integration rather than piecemeal implementation. Targeted interventions could include:
v. Financial subsidies for certified learning and quality systems
vi. Tax incentives for KM–OL integration platforms
vii. National benchmarking frameworks that reward holistic performance excellence

Such interventions can democratize access to competitiveness-enhancing tools, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises operating in volatile environments.

6.6 FURTHER RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

While the TBECapFrame explains a significant moderation of the variance in TBE competitiveness, important gaps remain. The model does not account for external contingencies such as economic shocks, policy instability, or digital disruption. Additionally, the persistent negative coefficient associated with standalone KM suggests deeper, possibly cognitive or structural, inhibitors. Future research should explore:

- Additional mediators and moderators, including:
- Transformational leadership
- Innovation orientation
- Psychological safety and trust
- Sector-specific case studies (e.g., adventure tourism, cultural heritage tourism) to test the TBECapFrame's contextual robustness.
- Longitudinal research designs to examine the durability of KM–OL–QC interactions over time.
- Mixed-methods research, combining SEM with qualitative inquiry, to capture the behavioral and cultural nuances that underlie capability development.

Such investigations will not only validate and refine the TBECapFrame but will also offer deeper strategic guidance for tourism enterprises navigating complex, fast-changing environments.

6.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter highlights the study's core novelty: competitiveness in TBEs emerges not from KM alone, but from its integration with OL and QC. When strategically aligned, these three elements form a synergistic triad that enhances agility, innovation, and sustained performance. By validating the TBECapFrame, the study advances theory (RBV, KBV, DCT, IT), aligns with the SDGs, and provides practical policy guidance for tourism competitiveness in volatile contexts.

CHAPTER 7: NEW SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This study advances a substantive rethinking of how competitiveness emerges within tourism business enterprises arguing that competitiveness is generated not by individual practices but by the systemic alignment of knowledge management, organizational learning, and quality culture. The empirical evidence demonstrates that knowledge management can undermine performance when it operates in isolation, thereby challenging long-standing assumptions in the field. The research made the following contributions based on the findings:

1. ***Introduced the TBECapFrame Model***: Developed an ***Integrated Tourism Business Enterprise Capability Framework*** (TBECapFrame), redefining competitiveness in tourism as a product of systemic alignment among Knowledge Management (KM), Organizational Learning (OL), and Quality Culture (QC), rather than isolated practices.
2. ***Theoretical Innovation***: derived a ***Mediated–Moderated Competitiveness Model*** challenging the traditional view that KM alone drives competitiveness, showing instead that OL mediates and QC moderates the KM–competitiveness relationship.
3. ***Synergistic Capability Triad***: Positioned KM, OL, and QC as interdependent capabilities forming a synergistic triad that enhances agility, innovation, and sustainable performance outcomes.
4. ***Cross-Theoretical Insight*****:** Combined Resource-Based View, Knowledge-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities Theory, and Institutional Theory to explain how capabilities interact and evolve within complex organizational contexts.

5. ***Methodological Advancement***: Used a mixed-methods approach bibliometric analysis, qualitative interviews, and quantitative regression modelling to validate the framework and reveal alignment mechanisms such as leadership, learning routines, and integration processes.
6. ***Empirical Contribution with Contextual Evidence from Kenya:*** Found that KM alone can negatively affect competitiveness in resource-limited tourism enterprises unless integrated with OL and QC.
7. ***Actionable, Policy-Relevant Model:*** Offered a scalable model aligned with six SDGs, providing actionable guidance for managers and policymakers to embed capability alignment into tourism strategies that foster inclusive, resilient, and sustainable competitiveness.

In conclusion, these findings mark a significant advancement in the understanding of how intangible resources drive competitiveness in tourism enterprises. By bridging theory, method, and practice, the study not only challenges prevailing assumptions but also delivers a validated, scalable, and sustainability-oriented model that can guide managers, researchers, and policymakers alike. The TBECapFrame stands as both a scholarly contribution and a practical tool, offering a transformative lens through which tourism enterprises especially in emerging economies, can achieve resilience, innovation, and sustained competitive performance in a rapidly evolving global market.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Kibe, J., Ogutu, H., & Kasanzu, W. (2021). Strategies Adopted by Airlines to Sustain Ticket Sales Performance Post the Zero Commission Policy: A Case of Kenya Airways (KQ). *UNIVERSAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT*, *9*, 52–61. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujm.2021.090204
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