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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The general objective of this study was to establish the effect of niche marketing on performance of international courier companies in Kenya

**Methodology:** The study adopted a descriptive research design using survey method. The study targeted an estimated population of 55 international courier companies in Kenya by targeting the operations managers. The researcher used purposive sampling technique through census. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources using questionnaires. The questionnaires were pre-tested with five national courier firms within Kisumu town and analyzed using SPSS. This study used both descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression and Pearson's correlations) to analyze quantitative data.

**Findings:** The results from multiple linear regression indicated that concentrated marketing ( $B_1=0.384$ ,  $P=0.003$ ), Customization ( $B_2=0.197$ ,  $P=0.024$ ); Positioning ( $B_3=0.345$ ,  $P=0.000$ ) have positive and significant effect on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. Niche marketing significant accounted for 66.4% ( $R^2=0.664$ ) variance in organizational performance. Organizational factors had significant moderating effect on the relationship between niche marketing and organizational performance. The hierarchical regression moved r square from 66.4% ( $R^2=0.664$ ) to 78.8% ( $R^2=0.788$ ) significantly explaining addition 12.4% change in r square. Therefore, the study concluded that organizational factors moderate the relationship between niche marketing and performance of international courier companies in Kenya.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The study was anchored on market segmentation theory. The study recommends that the management should enhancing seeking of feedback from their clients on their satisfaction level of their services so as to note areas of improvement. The study recommended that management should strive to ensure that the company's brand positions the organization far above its competitors. This study recommends that courier companies should be market oriented besides embracing niche marketing; this will enable the companies to get insights on the actual needs and wants that customers have.

**Keywords:** *Niche Marketing, Performance, International Courier Services*

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## INTRODUCTION

Marketing generally has two meanings (Lynn, 2011). First, it is a business concept that emphasizes that the primary objective of the company must be to satisfy customers. The second idea in marketing refers to a separate set of actions that are centered on determining how to segment a market and where to place a products or services inside that market. As a result, without it, the company will not be able to thrive in cutthroat markets. According to Kotler (2001), a marketer can very seldom please each and every customer in a market. This is because individuals have varying preferences for items like soda, cars, universities and films. Therefore, the first step that marketers do is to segment the market, which involves identifying and profiling diverse groups of customers who may have different preferences or requirements for goods and marketing mixes.

The strategy for a project is more than just a declaration of the project's overarching aims; it also describes the range of possible courses of action that may be taken to reach those goals (Omalaja and Eruola, 2011). At the core of each business strategy is the decision of where to put items in the market. The company's marketing and product focus (choice of product marketing mix), intended path of development, profit and growth targets, relationship with the external factors (the world at large or environmental domain), and internal adjustment policies and programs are all part of this. According to Whalley (2010), one of the most basic ideas of marketing is that businesses flourish and continue to exist by catering to the requirements and preferences of their target audiences. Matching a company's resources with the demands of its intended market is the essence of the "marketing idea." The marketing environment is where this kind of matching occurs; here, both strategic and tactical marketing are included into the overall framework of the business.

Market, commercial or personal incidents often force manufacturers to make decisive decisions about the future of their firm operation, as stated by Akbar, Razak, Omar and Wadood (2017). To compete in today's highly competitive market, businesses need to devise novel approaches to attracting and retaining customers. Companies often choose to specialize their offerings and tailor their manufacturing to meet the requirements of certain niche markets. According to Echols and Tsai's (2005) research, a corporation that operates in a market that is generally uncontested is able to generate economic benefit. They concentrated on two separate facets of a company's "earning its living": its product offers and its operational operations. A company that has established itself in a product niche position is one that sells goods or services that, in comparison to those of the company's competitors, are markedly distinct in ways that are of significant economic import. When it comes to business operations, a company that occupies a process niche position participates in activities that provide value for the company as a result of the significant and relevant ways in which they vary from those of the company's competitors.

Niche marketing has become a widely accepted marketing approach for modern business practice since it assists companies in identifying and targeting their ideal clientele (or "niche") within a larger market (Jarvis and Goodman, 2003). In order to maximize market opportunities, businesses can use specific product, market, or company-based characteristics to differentiate their offerings and attract a specific target audience, resulting in higher profits, happier customers, and a stronger position in the market. This is what we call "niche marketing." Alternatively, the method might be used by businesses to increase their consumer base by targeting a previously unrecognized

demographic and catering to their needs with a specially designed set of advertising and promotional initiatives (Howard, 2008).

Selecting the pockets, sectors, or markets to focus on is the first and most crucial step in the niche marketing approach, as stated by Hooley, Saunders, and Piercy (2004). The second and equally crucial step is devoting all available resources to satisfying the chosen targets. For any attempt to define niche marketing, Toften and Hammervoll (2013) propose looking at three significant differences between niches and segments. It's common to hear "small" and "narrow" used interchangeably, but "narrow" seems more appropriate; a niche market is defined by its restricted focus. To be successful in niche marketing, you need specialized knowledge, abilities, or assets that allow product distinction (perceived uniqueness), as well as greater value for consumers; If you find the right kind of niche market, you may be able to defend yourself by erecting strong entry barriers. Such obstacles to competition could include superior quality or characteristics of the product, interactions with clients on a personal and ongoing basis, patents, a system of certificates and protected geographical characteristics for items that are organic or environmentally friendly, collective identity, strong reputation or worth among consumers as a recognized expert in their field, target industries that have a greater dependence on both capital investment and technological advancement, and directing one's attention to markets that are subject to seasonality.

Due to the growth of other sectors, more companies in Kenya are now in a position to provide courier services. Another study (Mbogo & Lati, 2009) claims that despite the economic recession and the dangers presented by technological innovation, mail and courier services are still expected to have a successful year. This is because more businesses are outsourcing their mail delivery so that they can focus on their core businesses. According to a recent analysis published by PWC, the global logistics business expanded, particularly among the major players, as a greater number of customers looked for one-stop shopping. This evaluation made by CCK is consistent with the findings of the PWC report. Changes in consumer tastes are helping to drive mergers and acquisitions, which are also being bolstered by the fact that only large firms in the West and China have been able to weather the shocks of the global economic slump. "When it comes to the postal and logistics industries, it's typically the case that more is better. According to the PWC research, "critical mass has the potential to provide meaningful economies of scale." At the time when the courier sector was liberalized in the late 1990s, there were a total of 21 firms providing courier services that had been licensed up until the beginning of the year 2000. According to the numbers provided by CCK, there are now over 200. Courier services were worried about the rise of the internet, which allowed for the instantaneous transmission of electronic documents and conversations. The business has survived, however, because of the need for physical proof of information on papers.

According to a post by (Elimu center, 2020), there are more than 50 International courier companies in Kenya. These postal and courier services in Kenya are provided by regional, national, and international firms that also provide postal and courier services. You may also locate shipping and freight firms in Kenya, which move a significant number of packages each and every day. The Kenyan firms that specialize in international courier service transfer packages and papers all over the globe. The local courier services in Kenya always work hand in hand with the international

courier companies in Kenya to ensure that your parcel is delivered on time and to the right destination. Among major industry players in the Kenyan Courier Industry include large corporations with international networks, with their headquarters in the West. These companies have the biggest machineries, many huge tracks, a lot of staff and employ the best technology, which has helped keep them at the top of the industry, controlling the global express mail and delivery business. Some of the international delivery have the largest delivery networks in the country and even offer home delivery services to their clients in the upcountry. Most of the deliveries these companies make are imports from other countries sent to Kenyans. Some of the companies operate in the country through partnerships and collaborations with local courier companies, which enables them to expand their networks across the country. Others are fully owned companies stationed in the country with offices in various parts of the country.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Previous research into niche marketing includes: (Akbar, 2015) "Niche marketing strategy and firm success: review of SME's in Peninsular Malaysia," which argued that Peninsular Malaysia's small and medium-sized furniture businesses should adopt a niche marketing strategy in order to increase their market share and thereby their economic impact; According to research by Echols and Tsai (2005) titled "niche and performance: the moderating role of network embeddedness," it is more probable that a Venture capital company will make money in a certain market if it is surrounded by other Venture capital companies that are entrenched in the network in strong ways, rather than if its neighbors are spread out and less connected; The authors Hernandez (2008), Toften and Hammervoll (2009), and Zhao (2017) all argue that construction-related businesses whose strategy is on capitalizing on a certain niche market are more likely to succeed than those that attempt to cater to everyone. Local research includes: (Wayua, 2020) on niche marketing strategy and firm performance of Bamburi Special Products Ltd, which found that market segmentation, market positioning, and product differentiation positively impacted Bamburi Special Products Limited's performance in Kenya; (Nyaga, 2017) on factors affecting performance of courier service industry: a survey of courier firms in Kenya, which found that most respondents are motivated on the basis of a desire to increase their firm's profitability. None of these researches has been done on courier companies and for that matter international courier companies to establish if utilization of niche strategies (with concentrated marketing, positioning and customization as the variables under study) will influence their performance. Furthermore, these international courier firms, who have come to do business in a foreign country need to stay competitive by adopting marketing strategies that will allow them have sustained competitive edge and outsmart the local companies in the same industry and thus need to embrace niche marketing. It's in light of these reasons that the above study will be conducted.

Through discussions of concentrated marketing, positioning, and customization as niche marketing components, this research aimed to determine the effect of niche marketing on the performance of international courier companies in Kenya. To help close the current knowledge vacuum, this article explores the effect of international couriers' adoption of niche marketing strategies on their bottom lines.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Market Segmentation Theory**

Market segmentation based on customers' descriptive characteristics is an example of traditional criteria. The term "market segmentation" refers to the practice of dividing potential buyers into subgroups based on demographic, economic, sociological, or psychological characteristics (Marii, 2010). Those who meet the criteria are assumed to be similar to one another in at least some respects (such as in their expectations and preferences) because they share a characteristic that the criteria are based on (such as a high level of education). Both in theory and practice, behavioral segmentation is used in addition to segmentation based on more conventional criteria; this segmentation divides customers according to their perspectives on the value they derive from particular products, the ease with which they can make purchases, and the brands they prefer. The cornerstone of this type of segmentation is the preferences and expectations of the target market. The core concept stems from the observation that consumers might have varying distinguishing traits while yet having commonality in their expectations and preferences (Marii & orevi, 2012).

According to Chernev (2012), companies use market segmentation to "optimize the effectiveness of their business actions by focusing on business activities," "optimize the cost efficiency of their business activities by rationalizing business activities," and "direct resources toward the needs and preferences of a specific market segment". Market segmentation relies heavily on a measurement of consumer tastes in terms of product features and buying patterns. Long-term segmentation success requires constant monitoring and adjustments to tactics. Since the aforementioned variables are in flux throughout time as a result of many influences, it was determined that a continuous procedure was required. Newly accessible market data, according to certain studies, may have a major effect on the evolution of the aforementioned factors (Ma, Zhang, Wang and Lee, 2014). Consumers' preferences and priorities in terms of monetary and non-monetary benefits are very responsive to a wide range of circumstances, including the availability of new information. The complexity of client needs further complicates the task of market segmentation. When making a purchase, buyers place a high premium on a product or service's value. According to academics (Marii & orevi, 2012), value is the "difference between the advantages gained by consumers and the sacrifice placed in it."

This theory was relevant to this study because market segmentation, at its heart, is the act of separating a market into smaller, more manageable groups of consumers with common requirements and desires. Therefore, by dividing, it's easier to apply niche marketing by focusing on these segments. More importantly, by understanding segmentation, the researcher will know instances of the market that courier services are aiming for which is key information in niche marketing. Amplify XL (2022) lists them as: people in remote locations that aren't served by regular postal trucks need an alternative method of communication; those who must move bulky or heavy objects; those in need of a trustworthy delivery service; international shippers and receivers; victims of disease or infirmity who are unable to carry their own loads; companies that have urgent deliveries or document submissions; people who have time-sensitive materials to mail or deliver and rural residents that have trouble getting their mail on a regular basis.

## Conceptual Framework

### Independent variables

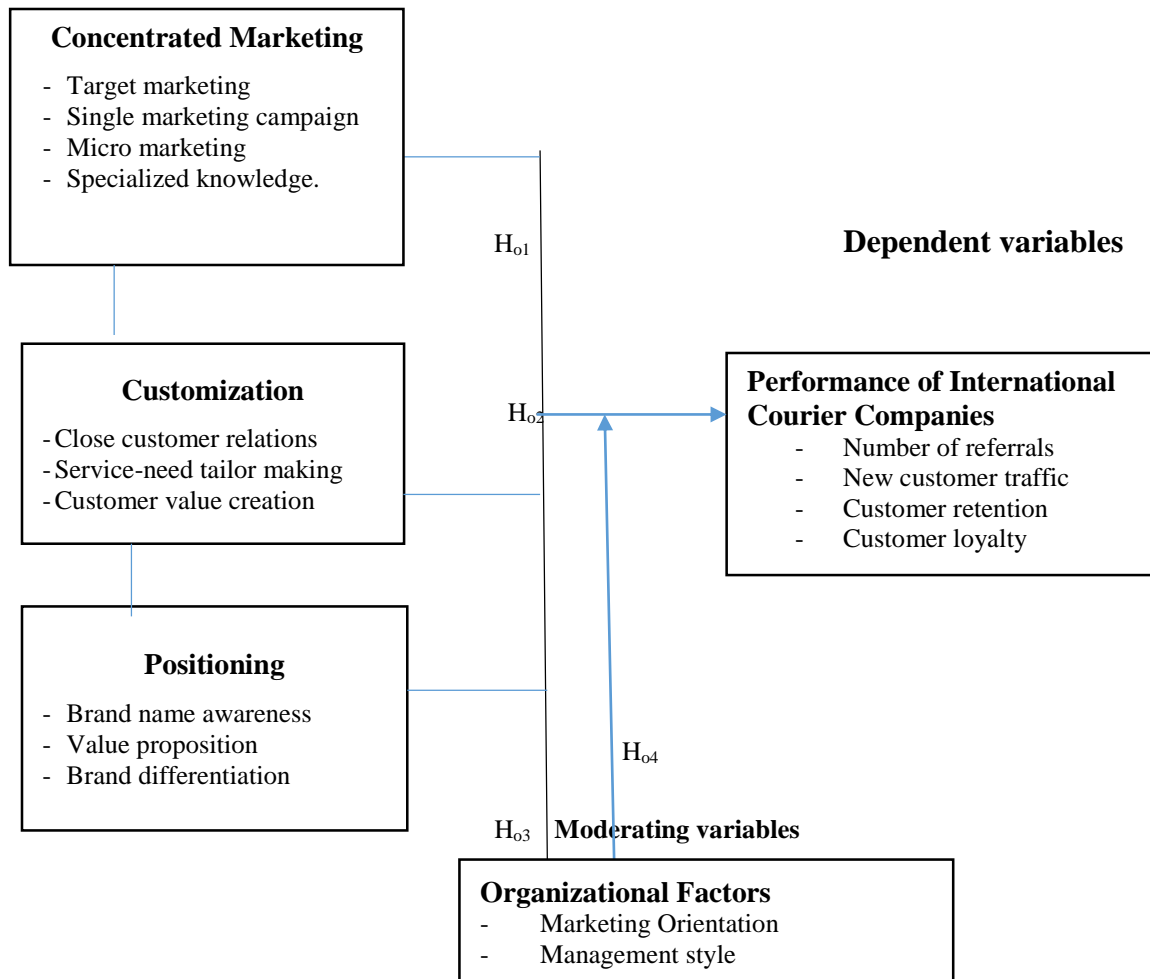


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher Own Self Conceptualization (2020)

## METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research method. Purposive sampling technique was used through census method. The study targeted a population of 55 with the operations managers as the respondents who constituted of stakeholders in the international courier companies in Kenya. The primary data was collected using questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to examine the quantitative data collected for this study. Descriptive analysis used percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation to show the response from the respondents. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis test were also used. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was conducted and the results are presented in tables.

## FINDINGS

### Descriptive Statistics

#### Concentrated Marketing

The sampled respondents were provided with 9 statements related to concentrated marketing. The results are as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Concentrated Marketing**

No	Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Our company has chosen specific market segments for some of its service offerings	41	1	5	4.51	.952
2	Focusing on specific market segments has enabled our company to deliver high-quality services	41	2	5	4.44	.838
3	The company focuses on differentiating its service packages from those of its competitors	41	2	5	4.41	.948
4	The company focuses on competitive pricing to remain competitive in the market	41	1	5	4.02	1.151
5	Our company focuses on service innovations to remain competitive in the market.	41	1	5	4.44	.923
6	We focus on our key customer segments where we have competitive advantage so as to satisfy their unique needs more than our competitors.	41	1	5	4.44	1.097
7	Our company offers services that are not available elsewhere (service specialist)	41	1	5	3.49	.978
8	Our company concentrates on supplying one or two major firms with specialist services. (specific-customer specialist)	41	1	5	3.24	1.220
9	Our organization places a greater emphasis on allocating resources to improve customer service, such as hiring individuals with strong interpersonal skills and providing them with appropriate training.	41	1	5	4.02	1.405

Source: Research Data (2022)

#### Customization

The sampled respondents were provided with 9 statements related to customization. The results are as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Customization**

No	Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Our company classifies customers according to services required by maintaining a customer database.	41	1	5	3.71	.918
2	Several methods are used by our firm in order to ascertain and foretell consumer requirements.	41	1	5	3.98	1.214
3	We involve our customers in the service delivery process to ensure their needs are met.	41	1	5	3.83	1.430
4	Our company uses the customer needs to review its services.	41	1	5	4.02	1.275
5	We provide different service packages for our clients.	41	1	5	3.80	.942
6	Our customers enjoy and are satisfied with our service packages.	41	1	5	3.90	.631
7	We frequently seek feedback from our clients on their satisfaction level of our services so as to note areas of improvement.	41	1	5	4.41	.840
8	Our pricing is determined by the needs of the segmented market	41	1	5	4.02	.712
9	Our source of customized services is drawn from and through service innovation and brand marketing	41	1	5	3.95	1.303

From Table 2, respondents agreed that their companies classify customers according to services required by maintaining a customer database as indicated by mean of 3.71 with insignificant S.D of 0.918. Respondents also agreed that their organization makes use of a variety of methods to



ascertain consumer requirements and to forecast both their current and future requirements as indicated by an average of 3.98 and significant S.D of 1.214. Similarly, respondents agreed that they involve their customers in the service delivery process to ensure their needs are met as shown by an average of 3.83 with a S.D of 1.430. This implied that not all international courier companies involve their customers in the service delivery process to ensure their needs are met.

Further, respondents agreed that their company uses the customer needs to review its services as provided by an average of 4.02 with significant S.D of 1.275. This implied that not all companies used the customer needs to review its services. The respondent agreed that they provide different service packages for their clients as shown by an average of 3.80 and insignificant S.D of 0.942. Similarly, respondents agreed that their customers enjoy and are satisfied with their service packages as indicated by an average of 3.90 with insignificant S.D of 0.631.

The results also revealed that respondents agreed that they frequently seek feedback from their clients on their satisfaction level of their services so as to note areas of improvement as indicated by an average of 4.41 with insignificant S.D of 0.840. Similarly, the respondents agreed that pricing is determined by the needs of the segmented market as shown by an average of 4.02 and insignificant S.D of 0.712. Lastly, with significant S.D of 1.303, respondents agreed that their source of customized services is drawn from and through service innovation and brand marketing as shown by an average of 3.95. This implied that there is variation in the source of customized services is drawn from and through service innovation and brand marketing.

### Positioning

The sampled respondents were provided with 9 statements related to positioning. The results are as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Positioning**

No	Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The company's brand positions the organization far above its competitors	41	1	5	3.68	1.213
2	Our service quality attributes are our major marketing points	41	1	5	4.20	.898
3	The firm employs various technologies to vary quality of services for various markets	41	1	5	4.10	1.136
4	Our firm is keen on speed of service delivery to its customers.	41	1	5	4.37	.779
5	Our company provides additional value-added services to entice customers	41	1	5	4.15	.947
6	The management are keen on ensuring very high service innovation strategies that are aimed at making the company better	41	1	5	4.39	.870
7	The company has provided many payment methods for our customers' convenience	41	1	5	4.51	.952
8	Our service provisions are consistently available in the market and at the company	41	1	5	4.32	1.213
9	We have or are working on customer incentive programs	41	1	5	4.12	1.249

Source: Research Data (2022)

As shown in Table 3, respondents were in agreement that their company's brand positions the organization far above its competitors as shown by an average of 3.68 with significant S.D of 1.213. Significant standard deviation indicated that not all companies' brand positions the organization far above its competitors. On the other hand, respondents agreed (Mean=4.20) that their service quality attributes are their major marketing points with insignificant S.D of 0.898.

Respondents also agreed that their firm employs various technologies to vary quality of services for various markets as indicated by an average of 4.10 and significant S.D of 1.136. This suggested that not all firms employ various technologies to vary quality of services for various markets.

The respondents also agreed that their firm is keen on speed of service delivery to its customers as shown by an average of 4.37 with insignificant S.D of 0.779. Similarly, the respondents were in agreement that their company provides additional value-added services to entice customers as shown by an average of 4.15 and insignificant S.D of 0.947. Further, respondents confirmed that management are keen on ensuring very high service innovation strategies that are aimed at making the company better as shown by an average of 4.39 with insignificant S.D of 0.870.

The respondents were strongly in agreement that their companies have provided many payment methods for their customers' convenience as shown by an average of 4.51 with insignificant S.D of 0.952. The respondents also agreed that their service provisions are consistently available in the market and at the company as shown by an average of 4.32 with significant S.D of 1.213. This implied that not all service provisions are consistently available in the market and at the company. Finally, the results revealed that respondents were in agreement that they have or are working on customer incentive programs as shown by an average of 4.12 with significant S.D of 1.249. This implied that not all international courier companies have or are working on customer incentive programs.

### Organizational Factors

The sampled respondents were provided with 9 statements related to organizational factors. The results are as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Organizational Factors**

No	Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Marketing orientation has an effect on the successful application of niche marketing strategies	41	1	5	4.24	.943
2	Management style affects the application of niche marketing strategies	41	1	5	4.13	1.044
3	Motivation of employees leads to better overall company performance	41	1	5	4.46	1.027
4	Inter-functional coordination leads to improved company performance	41	2	5	4.34	.990
5	Our company emphasizes on transformational leadership for better management	41	1	5	3.76	1.300
6	We focus more on training our staff and managers for better managerial skills to improve our performance	41	1	5	3.41	.772
7	Our philosophy is to ensure that customers' needs are satisfied	41	1	5	4.51	1.098
8	The mission we have been given is to make marketing the dominant business culture.	41	1	5	3.93	.832
9	The customers and their needs form the nucleus of all the activities of our organization i.e. All the activities and tasks are organized around the customer	41	2	5	4.44	.950

Source: Research Data (2022)

From Table 4 respondents agreed that marketing orientation has an effect on the successful application of niche marketing strategies as indicated by mean of 4.24 with insignificant S.D of 0.943. Respondents also agreed that management style affects the application of niche marketing

strategies as indicated by an average of 4.13 and significant S.D of 1.044. This implies that not all management style affects the application of niche marketing strategies. Similarly, respondents agreed that motivation of employees leads to better overall company performance as shown by an average of 4.46 with a S.D of 1.027. This implied that not all motivation of employees leads to better overall company performance.

Further, respondents agreed that inter-functional coordination leads to improved company performance as provided by an average of 4.34 with insignificant S.D of 0.990. The respondent also agreed that their company emphasizes on transformational leadership for better management as shown by an average of 3.76 and significant S.D of 1.300. This implied that not all companies emphasize on transformational leadership for better management. Respondents were neutral whether they focus more on training their staff and managers for better managerial skills to improve their performance as indicated by an average of 3.41 with insignificant S.D of 0.772.

The results also revealed that respondents strongly agreed that philosophy is to ensure that customers' needs are satisfied as indicated by an average of 4.51 with significant S.D of 1.098. This implied that there is variation in regard to ensuring that customers' needs are satisfied. Similarly, the respondents agreed that our mission is to give marketing the highest possible priority in order to make it the dominant culture of the organization. as shown by an average of 3.93 and insignificant S.D of 0.832. Lastly, respondents agreed that the customers and their needs form the nucleus of all the activities of our organization i.e. All the activities and tasks are organized around the customer as shown by an average of 4.44 and insignificant S.D of 0.950.

### Firm Performance

The sampled respondents were provided with 9 statements related to firm performance. The results are as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Firm Performance**

No	Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Niche marketing leads to increased number of customer referrals.	41	2	5	4.37	.915
2	Niche marketing lead to increased new customer traffic to the firm	41	3	5	4.44	.634
3	Niche marketing leads to high customer retention	41	3	5	4.51	.637
4	Niche marketing ensures customer loyalty to the firm	41	3	5	4.59	.631
5	Niche marketing leads to enhanced customer relationship	41	3	5	4.51	.637
6	Niche marketing leads to increased customer satisfaction	41	4	5	4.51	.506
7	Niche marketing leads to improved brand image of the company	41	2	5	4.51	.840
8	Niche marketing ensures less competition	41	2	5	3.44	1.077
9	Niche marketing ensures efficiency in serving customers	41	3	5	4.29	.716

Source: Research Data (2022)

As shown in Table 5 respondents were in agreement that niche marketing leads to increased number of customer referrals as shown by an average of 4.37 with insignificant S.D of 0.915. Similarly, respondents agreed that niche marketing lead to increased new customer traffic to the firm as shown by an average of 4.44 with insignificant S.D of 0.634. Respondents strongly agreed that niche marketing leads to high customer retention as indicated by an average of 4.51 and significant S.D of 0.637.

The respondents also strongly agreed that niche marketing ensures customer loyalty to the firm as shown by an average of 4.59 with insignificant S.D of 0.631. Similarly, the respondents were strongly in agreement that niche marketing leads to enhanced customer relationship as shown by an average of 4.51 and insignificant S.D of 0.637. Further, respondents strongly agreed that niche marketing leads to increased customer satisfaction as shown by an average of 4.51 with insignificant S.D of 0.506.

The respondents were strongly in agreement that niche marketing leads to improved brand image of the company as shown by an average of 4.51 with insignificant S.D of 0.840. However, the respondents were neutral on whether niche marketing ensures less competition as shown by an average of 3.44 with significant S.D of 1.077. This implied that not all niche marketing ensures less competition. Finally, the results revealed that respondents were in agreement that niche marketing ensures efficiency in serving customers as shown by an average of 4.29 with insignificant S.D of 0.716.

### Inferential Analysis

#### Concentrated Marketing and Firm Performance

The purpose of the research was to determine whether or not there is a connection between intense marketing and the performance of organizational firms. In order to accomplish this goal, the Pearson correlation analysis test was carried out, and the findings are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Correlation Analysis Concentrated Marketing**

		Concentrated marketing	Firm performance
Concentrated marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
Firm performance	Pearson Correlation	.628**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

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

Source: Research Data (2022)

Table 6 shows that there is a significant relationship between targeted advertising and the success of international courier companies in Kenya ( $r = 0.628$ ,  $P 0.000$ ). There seems to be a robust correlation between the two factors. It follows that more investment in targeted marketing will boost the efficiency of Kenya's international courier services. The study set out to assess the extent to which targeted advertising helped international courier businesses in Kenya. This was possible because of the following initial null hypothesis:

**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between concentrated marketing and performance of international courier companies in Kenya**

This was tested using simple regression analysis, and the findings are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Model Summary; Concentrated Marketing and Firm Performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.628 <sup>a</sup>	.394	.379	.45469	1.401

a. Predictors: (Constant), Concentrated Marketing  
b. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

The data were summarized in Table 7, which revealed that focused marketing had a value of  $r$  squared = 0.394, which was equivalent to 39.4% of the total. This is the percentage of a company's performance that can be attributed to concentrated marketing, while the remaining 60.6% can be attributed to other factors that were not explained in the study because it focused on the relationship between concentrated marketing and the performance of international courier companies in Kenya.

The purpose of this research was to determine how strong of a connection there is between intense marketing and the level of performance achieved by international courier firms in Kenya. A test of analysis of variance was carried out, and the findings are reported in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: ANOVA; Concentrated Marketing and Firm Performance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.246	1	5.246	25.377	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8.063	39	.207		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.309</b>	<b>40</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Concentrated Marketing

Source: Research Data (2022)

According to the findings, the table 8 revealed that the  $F(1,40)$  value was 25.377, and the P value was 0.000. The significance threshold used in the tests was either 0.5 or 5%. According to the findings, targeted marketing has a statistically significant impact on the profitability of international courier firms operating in Kenya.

The findings of the research, which can be seen in Table 9, were also aimed at determining the regression coefficient that exists between focused marketing and the performance of international courier firms in Kenya.

**Table 9: Regression Coefficient; Concentrated Marketing and Firm Performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	1.538	.565		2.720	.010
Concentrated Marketing	.687	.136	.628	5.038	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

Based on the value of the regression coefficient B, which was found to be 0.687 in table 6, it could be deduced that an increase in one unit of focused marketing was related with an increase in 0.687 units of firm performance. As a consequence of this, the initial null hypothesis was shown to be incorrect as a result of the findings, and it was determined that focused marketing had a statistically

significant impact on the performance of international courier businesses in Kenya. The equation for the basic linear regression model was developed as follows on the basis of the findings of the regression coefficients:

$$Y = 1.538 + 0.687X_1$$

Where

Y = represents Firm performance

X<sub>1</sub> = represents Concentrated marketing

From the results, it is evident that concentrated marketing has positive influence on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. This implies that when concentrated marketing increases, firm performance also increases. These results are also supported by Pearson correlation analysis whereby, concentrated marketing had significant positive relationship with performance of international courier companies in Kenya. This supports the assertion that firm performance depends on niche marketing such concentrated marketing at organizational level.

### Customization and Firm Performance

The purpose of the research was to determine whether or not there is a connection between customization and the performance of organizational firms. In order to accomplish this goal, the Pearson correlation analysis test was carried out, and the findings are described in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Correlation Analysis Customization**

		Customization	Firm performance
Customization	Pearson Correlation	1	.506**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
Firm performance	Pearson Correlation	.488**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

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

Source: Research Data (2022)

It can be observed from table 10 that the significant positive link between customization and performance of international courier firms in Kenya was  $r = 0.488$ ,  $P = 0.000$ . This proved the existence of a strong correlation between customization and performance. This indicates that improved performance from international courier companies in Kenya would follow from a greater degree of customization. The study's objective was to look at how customization affects international courier companies' productivity in Kenya. Following is the second null hypothesis that guided the studies:

**H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Customization and performance of international courier companies in Kenya**

The results of this effort, which relied on a straightforward regression analysis, are shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Model Summary; Customization and Firm performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.488 <sup>a</sup>	.238	.218	.50997	2.451

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customization  
b. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the Table 11, the findings indicated that customization had a value of r squared = 0.238 which translated to 23.8%. This was the percentage of firm performance caused by customization, while 76.2% was responsible by other factors not explained because the study focused on customization and performance of international courier companies in Kenya.

The study also sought to find out the direct effect of customization on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. Analysis of variance test was undertaken and the results are presented in Table 12.

**Table 12: ANOVA; Customization and Firm Performance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.166	1	3.166	12.175	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	10.143	39	.260		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.309</b>	<b>40</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customization

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the Table 12, the results showed that  $F(1, 40) = 12.175$  and P value was 0.001. Tests were done at 0.5 or 5% level of significance. The results indicated that customization had a statistically significant effect on performance of international courier companies in Kenya and therefore, good predictor of firm performance

The study further sought to find out the regression coefficient between customization and performance of international courier companies in Kenya and the results are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13: Regression Coefficient; Customization and Firm performance**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.792	.457		6.104	.000
	Customization	.397	.114	.488	3.489	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

With the regression coefficient B calculated in table 10 to be 0.397, it was observed that a one-unit increase in customization was associated with a 0.397-unit improvement in business outcomes.

The results showed that the second null hypothesis was false, and the findings led to the conclusion that customization had a statistically significant impact on the success of international courier services in Kenya. Based on the data from the regression coefficients, the following equation for the standard linear regression model was derived:

$$Y = 2.792 + 0.397X_2$$

Where

Y = represents Firm performance

X<sub>2</sub> = represents Customization

From the findings, customization positively and significantly influences performance of international courier companies in Kenya. This implies that when customization increase, firm performance also increases. This supports the assertion that firm performance depends on niche marketing such as customization at organizational level. Allowances such as medical allowance, car allowance to employees improve their input which results to increase in firm performance especially in regards to customer satisfaction.

### Positioning and Firm performance

The purpose of the research was to investigate the connection that exists between positioning and the overall performance of an organization. In order to evaluate the nature of the connection, a Pearson correlation analysis test was carried out, and the findings are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14: Correlation Analysis Positioning**

		Positioning	Firm performance
Positioning	Pearson Correlation	1	.588**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	41	41
Firm performance	Pearson Correlation	.715**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	41	41

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

Source: Research Data (2022)

It can be observed from Table 14 that there was a strong positive link between positioning and organizational performance of International courier firms in Kenya. This was demonstrated by the fact that the r value was 0.715 and the P value was 0.000. This suggests that an improvement in positioning would result in an improvement in performance for foreign courier firms operating in Kenya. The purpose of this research was to determine how much of an impact placement had on the success of international courier firms operating in Kenya. This was accomplished by putting the following third hypothesis to the test;

**H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant relationship between positioning and performance of international courier companies in Kenya**



This was tested using simple regression analysis, and the findings are presented in Table 15.

**Table 15: Model Summary; Positioning and Firm performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.715 <sup>a</sup>	.512	.499	.40818	2.017

a. Predictors: (Constant), Positioning  
b. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the Table 15, the findings indicated that positioning had r squared value of 0.512 which deciphered to 51.2%. This was the percentage of firm performance caused by positioning, while 48.8% was accounted for by other factors not captured because the study focused positioning and performance of international courier companies in Kenya.

Moreover, the study sought to find out the direct relationship of positioning on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. ANOVA test was undertaken and the results are presented in Table 16.

**Table 16: ANOVA; Positioning and Firm performance**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.812	1	6.812	40.884	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.498	39	.167		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.309</b>	<b>40</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Positioning

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the Table 16, the results showed that  $F(1, 40) = 40.884$ ,  $P = 0.000$ . Tests were done at 0.5 or 5% level of significance. The results indicated that positioning had a statistically significant effect on performance of international courier companies in Kenya and therefore, good predictor of firm performance.

The study also sought to find out the regression coefficient between positioning and performance of international courier companies in Kenya and the results are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17: Regression Coefficient; Positioning and Firm performance**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.081	.363		5.742	.000
	Positioning	.543	.085	.715	6.394	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

The result of the regression coefficient  $B = 0.543$ , which was shown in Table 17, showed that an increase in one unit of positioning was linked with an increase of 0.543 units of firm performance.

As a consequence of these findings, the third of the null hypotheses was refuted, and it was shown that placement had a statistically significant impact on the performance of international courier

businesses operating in Kenya. On the basis of the findings of the regression coefficients, the equation for the basic linear regression model was formulated as

$$Y = 2.081 + 0.543X_3$$

Where

Y = represents Firm performance

X<sub>3</sub> = represents Positioning

The study established that positioning has positive and significant influence on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. This implies that Positioning increases, firm performance also increases. This supports the assertion that firm performance depends on niche marketing such as positioning.

**Table 18: Model Summary; Niche Marketing and Firm Performance**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.815 <sup>a</sup>	.664	.637	.34774	1.717

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customization, Positioning, Concentrated Marketing  
b. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

Table 18 displays the results of the analysis of the relationship between niche marketing and the performance of international courier companies in Kenya. The results show that  $r = .664$ , which indicates that 66.4% of variations in firm performance were caused by niche marketing, while 33.6% of variations in firm performance were caused by other unexplained factors.

The goal of this research was to determine whether or not niche marketing had a significant impact on the success of international courier firms in Kenya. The results of the analysis of variance test are shown in Table 19.

**Table 19: ANOVA; Niche Marketing and Firm Performance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	8.835	3	2.945	24.355	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	4.474	37	.121		
Total	13.309	40			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Customization, Positioning, Concentrated Marketing

Source: Research Data (2022)

From the findings, the results showed that  $F(3, 40) = 24.355$  and  $P = 0.000$  which indicated that niche marketing had statistically significant effect on performance of international courier companies in Kenya.

Table 20 displays the findings of the research, which included an examination of the relationship between niche marketing and the success of Kenya's international courier firms. Table 17 shows that concentrated marketing had a regression coefficient of  $B = 0.384$ ,  $t = 3.204$ , which means that a one-unit shift in concentrated marketing is correlated with a 0.384-unit improvement in company performance.  $B = 0.197$ ,  $t = 2.359$  for customization suggested that a one-unit shift in customization

was related to a 0.197-unit improvement in firm performance. The regression coefficient for Positioning was  $B = 0.345$ ,  $t=3.970$ , indicating that for every one unit shift in Positioning, there was a corresponding shift in firm performance of 0.345 units. Consequently, the research found that concentrated marketing, customization and positioning significantly boosted company output.

**Table 20: Regression Coefficients; Niche marketing and Firm performance**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	.554	.485		1.140	.261
1 Concentrated marketing	.384	.120	.351	3.204	.003
Customization	.197	.084	.242	2.359	.024
Positioning	.345	.087	.455	3.970	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Firm performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

Based on the beta coefficient results, the equation of Multiple Linear Regression model was written as,

$$Y = 0.554 + 0.384X_1 + 0.197X_2 + 0.345X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Performance of international courier companies in Kenya (Dependent variable)

X<sub>1</sub> = Recognition

X<sub>2</sub> = Customization

X<sub>3</sub> = Positioning

#### Moderating Effect of Organizational factors on the Relationship between Niche marketing and Organizational Firm performance

The research also aimed to determine whether or not there was a moderating effect of organizational characteristics on the connection between niche marketing and organizational firm performance. In order to do this, it applied the fourth null hypothesis, which is as follows:

**H0<sub>4</sub>: Organizational factors have no significant moderating effect on the relationship between niche marketing and performance of international courier companies in Kenya.**

To achieve the moderating effect of organizational factors, hierarchical regression analysis test was for each moderating variable. In this analysis, niche marketing was added in the model, thereafter, the interaction of niche marketing and moderator were added in the model. The study observed change in R square, F and significance level. The study also observed the regression coefficients. The results are presented in Table 21.

**Table 21: Moderating Effect of Organizational Factors (OF)**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.815 <sup>a</sup>	.664	.637	.34774	.664	24.355	3	37	.000
2	.840 <sup>b</sup>	.705	.673	.33009	.041	5.063	1	36	.031
3	.887 <sup>c</sup>	.788	.743	.29265	.083	4.266	3	33	.012

a. Predictors: (Constant), Customization (C), Positioning (P), Concentrated Marketing (CM)  
b. Predictors: (Constant), C, P, CM, Organizational Factors (OF)  
c. Predictors: (Constant), C, P, CM, OF, COF, POF, CMOF

Source: Research Data (2022)

The analysis produced two r square values per each model. The first r square is for independent variables  $r^2=0.664$  (66.4%) which is before interaction of organizational factors as a moderating factor. The introduction of interaction terms of organizational factors and niche marketing moved R squared from 0.664 to 0.788 (78.8%). The change (12.4%) in R square was significant as indicated by  $P=.012$  implying that organizational factors are a significant moderating factor between niche marketing and performance of international courier companies in Kenya. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 22: Regression Coefficient for Moderating Variables**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.554	.485		1.140	.261
	Concentrated Marketing	.384	.120	.351	3.204	.003
	Positioning	.197	.084	.242	2.359	.024
	Customization	.345	.087	.455	3.970	.000
2	(Constant)	.657	.463		1.418	.165
	Concentrated Marketing	.259	.126	.237	2.047	.048
	Positioning	.145	.083	.178	1.754	.088
	Customization	.318	.083	.419	3.806	.001
3	Organizational Factors	.170	.076	.263	2.250	.031
	(Constant)	-1.571	.787		-1.997	.054
	Concentrated Marketing (CM)	1.489	.878	1.362	1.697	.099
	Positioning (P)	3.809	1.351	4.681	2.820	.008
	Customization (C)	-.005	.532	-.006	-.009	.993
	Organizational Factors (OF)	4.569	1.254	7.059	3.645	.001
	CM*OF	1.474	.614	2.803	2.402	.010
P*OF	1.287	.308	7.846	4.182	.000	
C*OF	.282	.838	.374	.337	.738	

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Research Data (2022)

In model 1, concentrated marketing had a regression coefficient of  $B = 0.384$ ,  $t=3.204$ , which means that a one-unit change in Concentrated marketing is correlated with a 0.384-unit improvement in performance.  $B = 0.197$ ,  $t=2.359$  for Customization suggested that a one-unit change in customization was related to a 0.197-unit improvement in firm performance. The regression coefficient for Positioning was  $B = 0.345$ ,  $t=3.970$ , indicating that for every one unit change in positioning, there was a corresponding shift in firm performance of 0.345 units.

In model 2, when organizational factors were entered in the model, it also had a positive and significant effect on performance ( $\beta=0.170$ ,  $P=0.031$ ). This implies that if organizational factors

change by one unit, the performance significantly change by 0.170 units in same direction. However, in the same model, positioning had insignificant predicative power on performance ( $\beta=0.145$ ,  $P=0.088$ ) while concentrated marketing  $\beta=0.259$ ,  $P=0.048$ ) and customization ( $\beta=0.318$ ,  $P=0.001$ ) had significant positive predictive power.

In model three, upon the introduction of the interaction term (cross-product between niche marketing and organizational factors), Organizational factors remained its significant predictive power although the power and significance increased from ( $\beta=0.170$ ,  $P=0.031$ ) to ( $\beta=4.569$ ,  $P=0.008$ ). However, concentrated marketing lost its positive significant power ( $P=0.099$ ) while customization lost its positive significant power ( $P=0.993$ ) in comparison to model 1.

Based on the beta coefficient results, the equation of hierarchical multiple linear regression models was written as

$$Y = 0.554 + 0.384X_1 + 0.197X_2 + 0.345X_3$$

$$Y = 0.657 + 0.259X_1 + 0.145X_2 + 0.318X_3 + 0.170X_3 M$$

$$Y = -1.571 + 1.489X_1 + 3.809X_2 - 0.005X_3 + 4.569M + 1.4746X_1M + 1.287X_2 M + 0.282X_3 M$$

Where;

Y = Performance of international courier companies in Kenya (Dependent variable)

$X_1$  = Recognition

$X_2$  = Customization

$X_3$  = Positioning

M = Organizational factors

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

The study concluded that concentrating on a niche allows firms to understand customer problems and thus making them engage them in their services. Focusing on a narrow market enables the firms to also develop expertise which leads to customer loyalty, retention and increased referrals. The expertise leads to professionalism which will lead to many customers highly relying on the firms for their services. The study also led to conclusions that customized services or products can ensure courier firms have competitive advantage as they will help them meet the unique needs of their customers. It will ensure the firms become innovative by ensuring that they come up with varieties of products and services based upon customer's tastes and preferences. It will also ensure the firms have a good and closer relationships with their customers.

The study concluded that positioning has significant influence on performance of international courier companies in Kenya. The study established that international courier companies are keen on speed of service delivery to its customers; the management is keen on ensuring very high service innovation strategies that are aimed at making the company better. Further, the companies have provided many payment methods for our customers` convenience and service provisions are consistently available in the market and at the company. Positioning helps firms to differentiate its

service offering from those of its competitors. It creates a positive image of a firm's brand. To achieve positioning, firms need to capitalize on their unique selling position and deliver on their promises. It ensures the firms offer superior value to customers in relation to their competitors. The study concluded that organizational factors namely, marketing orientation and management style had statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between niche marketing and performance of international courier companies in Kenya. Improvement in management style and market orientation would results to increase in the effect of concentrated marketing and positioning on performance of international courier companies while the increase would have insignificant effect of customization on firm performance. The study also concluded that niche marketing has significant positive influence on the performance of international courier companies in Kenya. The influence is significantly moderated by organizational factors implying that observing marketing orientation and management style while implementing niche marketing would results to improvement in firm performance.

### **Recommendation**

According to the conclusions of the study, concentrated marketing has a significant impact, both positively and negatively on the performance of businesses. As a consequence of this, the findings of the study indicated that the management of courier companies operating in Kenya should target certain market segments with some of the services that they provide. Doing so would help the company to provide services of a high quality. In addition, while utilizing concentrated marketing, the managers of courier companies find it much simpler to become experts in their respective fields. This is because concentrated marketing teaches them how to advertise to customers in their particular business in the most effective way possible. The development of client trust and loyalty, which is essential to a company's long-term success, would be facilitated for courier firms by this measure.

Customization has a significant and positive effect on the efficiency of Kenya's courier businesses, the study's results indicate. According to the study's findings, management should devote more effort to gathering consumer feedback on their level of satisfaction with the company's services in order to pinpoint spots for improvement. On top of that, the administration might utilize the comments made by consumers to make their advertising strategy more efficient. The improved consumer comprehension would give them a leg up on the competition.

The study of firm performance of courier companies operating in Kenya is significantly influenced by positioning. The study recommended that management should strive to ensure that the company's brand positions the organization far above its competitors. This may be accomplished by considering the strengths and weaknesses of the company, the requirements of the clientele, and the claims made by the rival companies. When they accomplish this, positioning will make it possible for them or their brand to shine a light on areas in which they may outshine the competitors.

This study recommends that courier companies should be market oriented besides embracing niche marketing; this will enable the companies to get insights on the actual needs and wants that customers have. As a consequence of this, they are able to design goods and services that are

suitable for the requirements of the market. According to the findings of this research, courier businesses should consider adopting transformational leadership since it gives them the ability to choose their level of market concentration, positioning, level of customization, and amount of resources allocated. It is most effective when it is an integrated component of the overall market niche strategy, which defines how the firm will effectively engage customers, prospects, and rivals in the market arena.

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