JRIIE Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education
Center for Research Implications & Practice
Website: www.jriiejournal.com ISSN 2520-7504 (Online) Vol.9, Iss.4, 2025 (pp. 667 - 678)

Strategic Alliances and Competitive Advantage in Telecommunication industry: A Case of MTN Rwanda PLC

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Abstract: *This study examined the effect of strategic alliances on competitive advantage in MTN Rwanda PLC. The research aimed to assess how knowledge expertise influences competitive advantage in MTN Rwanda. A descriptive research design employing both quantitative and qualitative methods was used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The target population included 496 staff members across executive management, middle management, and operational departments, with a final sample of 186 respondents participating through questionnaires and 7 in interviews. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, applying both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between knowledge expertise and competitive advantage, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.825$ ($p < 0.01$). Regression analysis further confirmed that knowledge expertise is a significant predictor of competitive advantage, highlighting its role in enhancing innovation, decision-making, and operational efficiency. Qualitative insights from interviews indicated that the organization's ability to leverage internal expertise, promote continuous learning, and foster collaboration is critical for sustaining competitive advantage, although gaps exist in knowledge-sharing systems. Based on these findings, the study recommends that MTN Rwanda strengthen knowledge management practices, invest in employee skill development, and implement centralized platforms for knowledge sharing. These insights provide practical guidance for telecommunications firms in Rwanda seeking to maximize the strategic value of employee expertise to enhance competitiveness and organizational performance.*

Keywords: *Strategic Alliances, Competitive Advantage, Telecommunication industry, knowledge expertise and MTN Rwanda*

How to cite this work (APA):

Mugabo, F. & Njenga, G. (2025). Strategic Alliances and Competitive Advantage in Telecommunication industry: A Case of MTN Rwanda PLC. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education, 9*(4), 667 – 678. **https://doi.org/10.59765/xdfx438.**

1. Introduction

Strategic alliances have become a cornerstone for modern organizations seeking to enhance competitive advantage through shared resources, expertise, and market access. By partnering with other firms, organizations can combine their strengths in technology, knowledge, and operational capabilities to innovate more efficiently and respond rapidly to market changes (Kale, 2020). Such alliances enable firms to achieve economies of scale, reduce operational costs, and access markets that might be challenging to penetrate independently, thereby strengthening their competitive positioning (Ireland, 2022). Effective management of alliances requires strong governance mechanisms, alignment of strategic objectives, transparent communication, and mutual trust among partners to maximize value creation (Chin, Chan & Lam, 2022).

Globally, strategic alliances have proven vital in driving competitive advantage across diverse sectors. Joint ventures, partnerships, and consortiums allow firms to

share risks, combine technological expertise, and accelerate product development, leading to faster time-to-market and enhanced operational efficiency (Das & Teng, 2021; Doz & Hamel, 2018). In industries characterized by rapid technological advancement, such as telecommunications, strategic alliances are critical for innovation, cost reduction, and global competitiveness (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 2019). These partnerships enable organizations to integrate complementary resources, streamline workflows, and respond effectively to evolving customer needs, highlighting the strategic importance of collaboration in today's interconnected business environment.

In addition to global benefits, strategic alliances facilitate cost efficiency, operational effectiveness, and knowledge exchange. By pooling resources, sharing infrastructure, and collaborating on research and development, organizations can reduce production costs, enhance innovation capacity, and improve market responsiveness (Gulati, 1998; Hamel, 2021). Industries such as automotive manufacturing, aerospace, and information technology illustrate how alliances enable firms to adopt best practices, learn from partners, and maintain long-term competitive advantage (Kale & Singh, 2009). Alliances also promote organizational learning, enabling companies to adapt quickly to emerging trends, integrate new technologies, and foster sustainable innovation.

In the African context, strategic alliances have become increasingly important for technological adoption, service improvement, and market expansion. Telecommunications and energy sectors, in particular, have leveraged partnerships with global technology providers to strengthen operations. For example, MTN Uganda partnered with Huawei Technologies to deploy advanced 4G and 5G networks, while Kenya Power collaborated with Azuri Technologies to expand access to solar energy (McKinsey & Company, 2020; International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy, 2019). Similarly, South African banks have allied with fintech firms to introduce innovative digital banking solutions, enhancing customer experience and operational efficiency (UNCTAD, 2021). These examples illustrate that strategic alliances in Africa facilitate technological expertise, capacity building, and competitive positioning, enabling organizations to navigate complex and evolving market landscapes effectively.

In Rwanda, strategic alliances have played a pivotal role in shaping competitiveness and digital innovation, particularly in the telecommunications and financial sectors. MTN Rwanda, for instance, partnered with Ericsson to upgrade network infrastructure, improve service delivery, and introduce innovative digital solutions to meet rising customer demands (GSMA, 2020). Similarly, the Bank of Kigali has engaged in strategic collaborations with fintech providers and technology firms to streamline digital banking services, enhance operational efficiency, and strengthen customer experience (Byiringiro et al., 2022). These alliances are aligned with national digital initiatives such as Vision 2020 and the Smart Rwanda program, which emphasize ICT adoption, e-governance, and the development of a knowledge-based economy. By leveraging strategic partnerships, Rwandan firms can accelerate digital transformation, improve strategic management practices, and sustain competitive advantage in a rapidly evolving economic environment.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the popularity and potential advantages associated with strategic alliances, many companies rush to form them without ensuring success. Studies suggest that the failure rate of strategic alliances could be as high as 70% (Bamford et al., 2004). In the telecommunications industry, strategic alliances are a common response to market competition, aimed at accessing larger markets, reducing costs, and sharing risks among partners to enhance productivity (Davidson, 2021).

In Rwanda, similar to global trends, strategic alliances have been a focus area for research, albeit less extensively studied compared to developed countries. Previous studies in Rwanda have explored various sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, and telecommunications regarding strategic alliances. These studies typically examine how partnerships and collaborations in these sectors can enhance efficiency, promote innovation, and achieve sustainable development goals in Rwanda's context but there's a notable gap in research specifically examining the telecommunications sector. For instance, while Wibabara (2023) examined strategic management practices and sustainable competitive advantage in the Manufacturing Industries in Rwanda., Ingabire (2020) conducted a study on the effects of competitive advantage on the performance of local commercial banks in Rwanda. The findings emphasized the significance of conducting further detailed investigations in this area. Kirabo (2023) studied strategic alliance management practice and performance of telecommunication companies in Rwanda. The research highlights the need for deeper exploration into how strategic alliances specifically impact the operational and competitive dynamics of telecommunication firms within Rwanda's unique market environment.

Empirical evidence from developed countries like Europe and the USA has shown the complexities and challenges of strategic alliances, including issues like mismatched strategies, partner distrust, and inadequate management

(Bamford, 2023). These factors are crucial considerations for Rwandan telecom firms like MTN Rwanda engaging in strategic alliances. Therefore, there is a significant opportunity for research to delve into how strategic alliances specifically influence competitive advantage within Rwanda's telecommunications industry.

This study sought to achieve the following research objective:

i. To analyze the effect of knowledge expertise on competitive advantage in MTN Rwanda PLC

2. Literature Review

This section presents a review of existing literature related to the study, focusing on key concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings. It examines how knowledge expertise influence organizational performance and competitive advantage. The review highlights the role of knowledge sharing, governance mechanisms, and resource management in ensuring successful partnerships, providing a foundation for understanding the relationships explored in this study.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Knowledge expertise encompasses the specialized skills, capabilities, and intellectual resources that each partner contributes to a strategic alliance. Firms enter alliances to pool these complementary areas of expertise, enabling them to achieve mutual objectives more effectively and efficiently. In industries such as aerospace and automotive, collaborations between firms with distinct technical skills facilitate the development of advanced products and innovative solutions (Drucker, 2018). Access to knowledge expertise allows organizations to accelerate learning, reduce time-to-market, and enhance overall performance (Forbes, 2021). Moreover, strategic alliances enable the transfer of tacit knowledge practical know-how that is often difficult to codify thereby enhancing collective capabilities. For example, partnerships between pharmaceutical companies and academic research institutions combine industry-specific regulatory knowledge with cutting-edge scientific research, fostering the development of breakthrough therapies (United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO], 2022).

Effectively leveraging knowledge expertise within alliances requires robust management practices, including intellectual property protection, trust-building, and alignment of strategic goals. Without careful governance, alliances risk knowledge leakage, operational conflicts, and diminished performance (OECD, 2020). Establishing clear communication channels, formal governance frameworks, and mechanisms for knowledge sharing is therefore essential to maximize the benefits of expertise exchange. By managing these factors strategically, firms can ensure that alliances contribute to innovation, operational efficiency, and long-term competitive advantage, reinforcing the critical role of knowledge expertise in collaborative business relationships.

There have been numerous studies exploring the intricate relationship between knowledge transfer and competitive advantage across various global contexts. These studies delve into how firms strategically manage knowledge exchange within and across organizational boundaries to enhance their competitive position in the marketplace. Research on global studies has highlighted the critical role of knowledge transfer in fostering competitive advantage. For instance, studies by Tsai and Ghoshal (2021) emphasize how multinational corporations leverage their global presence to transfer valuable knowledge and best practices across different subsidiaries and locations. This strategic dissemination of knowledge enables firms to achieve economies of scale, innovate more effectively, and adapt swiftly to diverse market conditions, thereby strengthening their competitive edge on a global scale.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the foundation for understanding the relationships between key variables in this study. It guides the research by explaining how strategic alliances and organizational practices can influence performance outcomes. This study is informed by three main theories: Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, and Transaction Cost Theory (TCT),

2.2.1 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, developed by Jay B. Barney in 1991, emphasizes that firms achieve sustainable competitive advantage by effectively leveraging their unique resources and capabilities. These resources may include tangible assets, such as technology and equipment, and intangible assets, such as knowledge, skills, and organizational routines. According to RBV, resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) provide firms with the ability to outperform competitors in the market. In the context of strategic alliances, RBV underscores how firms can acquire complementary resources from partner organizations, enhancing their capabilities and competitiveness (Terry, 2020)

In strategic alliances, knowledge transfer plays a crucial role in realizing the benefits of RBV. Through alliances, firms can share best practices, technical expertise, and organizational processes, thereby creating synergies that strengthen each partner's resource base. This collaborative approach allows firms to develop new products, improve operational efficiencies, and enter new markets more effectively than competitors who rely solely on internal resources. Ultimately, RBV highlights that alliances are not only a means of accessing external resources but also a strategic tool for sustaining long-term competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Arregle, & Borza, 2020)

2.4.2 Transaction Cost Theory (TCT)

Transaction Cost Theory (TCT), originally developed by Ronald Coase in 1937, explains why firms exist and how they structure their activities to minimize the costs of market transactions. These costs include searching for information, negotiating agreements, and enforcing contracts. Coase argued that firms internalize certain activities when the transaction costs of using the market exceed the costs of managing those activities internally. In this way, firms can achieve greater efficiency and reduce uncertainty in their operations (Bunley, 2020)

TCT is particularly relevant to strategic alliances, as it provides a framework for understanding the trade-offs between internalization and market-based collaboration. By forming alliances, firms can reduce transaction costs associated with market exchanges, such as negotiation costs, information search costs, and enforcement challenges. For example, in joint research and development (R&D) projects, alliances allow firms to share risks and costs, mitigating uncertainties that would otherwise be borne individually. This theory explains why firms strategically choose collaborative arrangements to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance their overall competitive position (Dennis & Ferrari, 2022).

2.3. Empirical Review

In Asia, a study by Chen and Wang (2020), the impact of knowledge transfer on competitive advantage was examined among manufacturing firms in China. Their research highlighted that effective knowledge transfer through strategic alliances significantly enhances firms' innovation capabilities and operational efficiencies, thereby contributing to competitive advantage through product differentiation and cost leadership strategies. However, the study primarily focused on large manufacturing firms within a specific national context. There remains a gap in understanding how knowledge transfer dynamics vary across different industries and organizational sizes, particularly in service-oriented sectors or among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in global market.

In Africa, Park and Lee (2021) conducted a study exploring the role of knowledge transfer in enhancing competitive advantage among technology firms in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that effective knowledge transfer mechanisms, such as joint ventures and technology licensing agreements, significantly contribute to firms' ability to innovate and adapt to market changes. This adaptation fosters competitive advantage by allowing firms to introduce new products and services ahead of competitors. However, the study primarily focused on technology firms within a single country.

In Uganda, a study by Namara and Kikooma (2022) explored how knowledge transfer impacts competitive advantage in the agricultural sector. Their findings indicated that partnerships with international agricultural research institutions and NGOs facilitate knowledge transfer, enhancing farmers' access to improved agricultural practices and technologies. This knowledge transfer improves productivity and market competitiveness by enabling farmers to produce higher-quality crops more efficiently. However, the study primarily focused on the agricultural sector in Uganda. There is a gap in understanding how knowledge transfer influences competitive advantage in other sectors such as technology, healthcare, or manufacturing across different East African countries.

In Rwanda, recent studies have examined the effect of knowledge transfer on competitive advantage within the local business context. For instance, Uwamariya and Munyankindi (2021) explored how knowledge transfer through partnerships with international NGOs and educational institutions enhances competitive advantage among Rwandan SMEs. Their findings underscored that access to external knowledge and expertise significantly improves innovation capabilities and operational efficiencies, thereby enabling SMEs to differentiate their products and services in the market. However, the study primarily focused on SMEs and partnerships with NGOs, leaving a gap in understanding how knowledge transfer impacts competitive advantage among larger enterprises or across different industries in Rwanda

3. Methodology

This section presents the research methodology employed to examine the effect of strategic alliances on competitive advantage at MTN Rwanda. It outlines the research approach, study population, sampling design, data collection methods, and procedures for data analysis.

Ethical considerations guiding the study are also discussed to ensure the protection of participants' rights and the integrity of the research process.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The mixed approach was selected to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings by capturing numerical data and contextual insights. Specifically, a descriptive research design was adopted to systematically assess the relationships between strategic alliance practices and competitive advantage. This design allowed for the collection and analysis of data to describe trends, patterns, and associations among variables in a clear and organized manner. Quantitative methods measured relationships among variables using structured questionnaires, while qualitative techniques, including interviews, provided deeper insights into perceptions, experiences, and organizational dynamics influencing competitive outcomes.

The target population for the study consisted of all employees of MTN Rwanda, totaling 496 individuals, as indicated in the MTN Rwanda annual report (2022). This population included employees across all levels of the organization, from top-level management to operational staff. The top-level staff comprised 16 senior management personnel responsible for strategic decision-making and policy formulation. Middle-level staff included 98 department heads and supervisors overseeing daily operations and policy implementation. The largest group, 382 low-level staff, consisted of operational and support employees involved in customer service, technical support, and administrative functions.

To select a representative sample from the target population, stratified random sampling was used. This technique ensured that all staff categories were proportionally represented according to their size within the population. Using Slovene's formula with a sampling error of 5%, the sample size was determined to be 222 respondents. These were distributed across the organizational levels as follows: 7 top-level staff, 44 middle-level staff, and 171 low-level staff. This sampling approach provided a balanced representation of the workforce, ensuring that findings reflected the perspectives and experiences of employees across different organizational hierarchies.

Table 1: Summary of Target Population and Sample Size

Category	Total population	Sample Size
Top-level staff	16	7
Middle-level staff	98	44
Low-level staff	382	171
Total	496	222

Source: MTN Rwanda report, 2022

Source: Primary data, 2025

Data collection involved both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires enabled the collection of quantitative data on measurable variables, while interviews provided qualitative insights into organizational practices, employee experiences, and perceptions regarding strategic alliances and competitive advantage. Observational techniques were also used where necessary to capture behavioral and operational patterns relevant to the study objectives. Secondary data were obtained from organizational records, annual reports, policy documents, and credible publications, providing historical context and supporting the triangulation of primary data.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted with 20 employees from Airtel Rwanda who were not part of the selected sample. Test-retest reliability, internal consistency (using Cronbach's alpha), and inter-rater reliability for qualitative instruments were assessed to confirm the consistency and stability of the tools. Content validity was established through expert review by the researcher's supervisor and other specialists, ensuring that the instruments adequately captured the variables under study.

Collected data were carefully processed, coded, and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to summarize and interpret patterns in responses. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis, which involved categorizing information into key themes and

subthemes, thereby enriching the interpretation of numerical findings and providing a deeper understanding of the factors influencing competitive advantage through strategic alliances.

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participants were informed of the study's objectives and provided written consent before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through coded identifiers and secure data storage. Participation was voluntary, with respondents free to withdraw at any stage without consequences. The researcher adhered to professional conduct, maintaining respect, cultural sensitivity, and integrity during all interactions, in compliance with Rwanda's Data Protection Law (No. 058/2021).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Findings

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study in relation to the research hypothesis**.**

4.1.1. Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 222 respondents. A total of 215 respondents were supposed to complete the questionnaires, while 7 senior staff members were interviewed. Out of the 215 questionnaires administered, 186 were returned, resulting in a response rate of approximately 86.5%. Therefore, the final sample size for this study included 186 respondents from the questionnaire and 7 interviewed staff members, leading to a total of 193 participants who contributed to the research. The research finally came up with the response rate of 193 (100%) respondents who participated in this study.

Table 2: Response Rate

Response Detail	Frequency	Percentage
Questionnaires Returned	186	86.50%
Questionnaires Not Returned	29	13.50%
Total Administered	**215**	**100%**

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 2 presents the response rate based on the 215 questionnaires that were successfully administered. Out of these, 186 were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 86.5%, while 29 were not returned, representing 13.5%. This strong response rate demonstrates a high level of engagement and cooperation from the participants, which positively contributes to the validity and credibility of the study's results. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, and a rate of 70% or more is considered excellent for survey-based research. Based on this guideline, the response rate of 86.5% in this study is classified as excellent, demonstrating strong respondent engagement and high reliability of the data collected.

4.1.2 Descriptive Statistics on Knowledge Expertise

Table 3 presented the perceptions of respondents related to the first research objective by assessing how knowledge expertise affects competitive advantage in MTN Rwanda PLC. A scale of 1-5, was used to express the opinion of respondents where 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (A), 3 = Neutral(N), 2 = Disagree (D) 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD). The following table gives details:

Table 3: Level of agreement of Knowledge Expertise on Competitive Advantage

Views of respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization stimulates innovation and growth	186	3.9409	.90747
The organization identifies and fills knowledge gaps	186	4.2957	.87220
The organization nurtures a learning culture	186	4.2957	.90863
The organization provides employees with internal knowledge base	186	1.3871	.65813
The organization enable faster and better decision making	186	4.2742	.93871
Valid N (listwise)	186		

Source : Primary Data, 2025-**Key** : M=Mean ; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 3 indicates the perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of knowledge expertise on competitive advantage at MTN Rwanda PLC. Drawing insights from a sample of 186 respondents, the data reflect varying levels of agreement across key knowledge management practices within the organization, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The results show that MTN Rwanda is generally perceived to foster innovation and growth, as indicated by a mean score of 3.94. This suggests that the company encourages creative thinking and the generation of new ideas, which are critical for staying ahead in a competitive and fast-evolving industry. Although the standard deviation of 0.91 reflects some variation in responses, the majority view supports the notion that innovation is actively promoted within the organization.

A particularly strong area identified is the organization's effectiveness in identifying and addressing knowledge gaps, which received a high mean score of 4.30. This implies that MTN Rwanda takes a proactive approach to assessing areas of limited knowledge and implementing measures to bridge those gaps. In the same vein, the company's efforts in nurturing a learning culture were equally rated highly, also with a mean score of 4.30. These results point to a strong organizational commitment to continuous learning and capacity development, which are essential for sustaining a knowledgeable and adaptable workforce. Furthermore, respondents agree that knowledge expertise within the organization enables faster and better decision-making, as reflected by a mean score of 4.27. This suggests that MTN Rwanda effectively leverages its internal expertise to enhance the quality and speed of decisions, thereby improving operational efficiency and responsiveness to market demands key components of competitive advantage. However, a notable weakness is evident in the provision of an internal knowledge base for employees. This aspect received a significantly low mean score of 1.39, indicating strong disagreement among respondents. The lack of a centralized and accessible knowledge-sharing platform suggests that while the organization values expertise and learning, it may fall short in offering the tools and systems necessary for employees to access and utilize institutional knowledge. This gap can hinder collaboration, reduce knowledge retention, and limit the overall effectiveness of knowledge management initiatives.

4.1.4 Correlation Analysis

The findings of the correlations between the independent variables and the dependent variables are summarized and presented in Table 4

Table 4: Correlation between independent variable and dependent variable

		Knowledge Expertise	Competitive Advantage
Knowledge Expertise	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	186	
Strategic Management	Pearson Correlation	.825**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	186	186

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

Source: SPSS Output, Primary Data (2025)

The correlation analysis in Table 4 reveals a strong positive relationship between knowledge expertise and competitive advantage at MTN Rwanda. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.825 indicates a very high association, suggesting that as employees' knowledge expertise increases, the organization's competitive advantage also improves. The significance level (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.000) confirms that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, meaning there is a less than 1% probability that the observed relationship occurred by chance. With a sample size of 186, the findings highlight the critical role of knowledge expertise in enhancing strategic management and overall organizational performance, emphasizing the value of specialized skills, experience, and know-how in driving sustainable competitive advantage.

4.1.5 Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the key predictors and assess their contributions to the criterion variable. The analysis aimed to determine how well a single dependent variable could be predicted from a set of independent variables, providing insights into the strength and nature of these relationships. All assumptions of multiple regression, including linearity, normality, and multicollinearity, were checked and satisfied to ensure the validity of the results. The model summary presented in Table 4 illustrates the overall fit of the regression model, indicating the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the combined effect of the independent variables.

Table 4: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.866[a]	.750	.744	.23344

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge Expertise

The model summary in Table 4 indicates a strong relationship between knowledge expertise and competitive advantage. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.866 suggests a very strong positive association between the independent variable (knowledge expertise) and the dependent variable (competitive advantage). The R Square value of 0.750 indicates that approximately 75% of the variation in competitive advantage can be explained by knowledge expertise, demonstrating a substantial predictive power of the model. The Adjusted R Square of 0.744 accounts for the number of predictors and provides a slightly more conservative estimate, confirming that the model remains highly reliable. The standard error of the estimate (0.23344) reflects the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, indicating a reasonably good fit of the model to the data.

Table 5. Summary of ANOVA results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	29.576	4	7.394	135.680	.000[b]
	Residual	9.864	181	.054		
	Total	39.440	185			

a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge Expertise

b. Predictors: (Constant), Competitive Advantage.

The ANOVA results in Table 5 assess the overall significance of the regression model predicting knowledge expertise using competitive advantage as the predictor. The regression sum of squares (29.576) and mean square (7.394) indicate the variation in knowledge expertise explained by the independent variable. The residual sum of squares (9.864) and mean square (0.054) represent the variation not explained by the model. The computed F-value of 135.680, with a significance level of 0.000, shows that the model is statistically significant at the 1% level. This implies that the independent variable, competitive advantage, significantly predicts knowledge expertise, and the model provides a strong fit for the observed data, demonstrating that changes in competitive advantage are associated with meaningful changes in knowledge expertise.

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.659	.209		3.155	.000
	Competitive Advantage	.552	.063	.588	8.761	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Knowledge Expertise

Source: SPSS Output, Primary Data, 2025

The regression coefficients in Table 6 show the relationship between competitive advantage and knowledge expertise. The constant (intercept) value of 0.659 indicates the baseline level of knowledge expertise when competitive advantage is zero. The coefficient for competitive advantage is 0.552, with a standard error of 0.063, and a standardized Beta of 0.588. This positive coefficient indicates that for every one-unit increase in competitive advantage, knowledge expertise increases by 0.552 units, holding other factors constant. The t-value of 8.761 and a significance level of 0.000 indicate that this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level. Overall, the results confirm that competitive advantage has a strong and positive influence on knowledge expertise among employees, emphasizing its importance in enhancing organizational capabilities.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of knowledge expertise in enhancing competitive advantage at MTN Rwanda. The qualitative data obtained from interviews with senior staff indicate that employees perceive the organization as actively fostering innovation, supporting continuous learning, and prioritizing skill development. Several respondents emphasized that MTN Rwanda encourages collaboration among departments and invests in employee training programs to build expertise, which they identified as essential for staying competitive in the fast-paced telecommunications sector. One senior manager noted that "our ability to leverage internal expertise effectively allows us to respond quickly to market changes and technological advancements," underscoring the practical value of knowledge expertise in strategic decision-making.

These qualitative insights align with previous research, which emphasizes that knowledge expertise is a strategic resource that enables organizations to improve operational efficiency, innovate, and maintain a competitive edge. Drucker (2018) argues that firms that actively cultivate and manage knowledge resources are better positioned to innovate and respond to market dynamics. Similarly, Forbes (2021) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 2022) highlight that knowledge sharing and the integration of specialized skills across partners or departments are crucial for achieving organizational goals. The findings from this study demonstrate that MTN Rwanda effectively leverages its human capital by combining technical skills, managerial experience, and industry-specific knowledge to strengthen its strategic positioning in the Rwandan telecommunications market.

The correlation analysis further supports these observations, showing a strong positive relationship between knowledge expertise and competitive advantage. This confirms that the specialized skills, know-how, and tacit knowledge possessed by employees contribute significantly to MTN Rwanda's ability to achieve and sustain a competitive edge. This finding is consistent with prior studies, such as those by Hamel (2021) and Kale & Singh (2009), which assert that knowledge-driven practices, including continuous learning and capacity building, enhance both operational and strategic performance. Interview responses also revealed that knowledge expertise enables faster decision-making and more effective problem-solving, illustrating the link between employee capabilities and improved organizational outcomes.

Regression analysis reinforces the qualitative and correlational evidence, indicating that knowledge expertise is a key predictor of competitive advantage. Participants in interviews highlighted that when employees effectively share knowledge across teams, the organization benefits from innovation, efficient processes, and improved customer service. This echoes the observations of OECD (2020), which notes that effective knowledge management practices supported by trust, goal alignment, and clear communication maximize the value of expertise within organizations. However, respondents also identified challenges related to the absence of a centralized knowledge-sharing platform, suggesting that while employees are highly skilled, access to organizational knowledge is sometimes limited. This indicates an opportunity for MTN Rwanda to institutionalize knowledge management practices further to enhance collaboration and retention of critical information.

From the findings, the study demonstrates that knowledge expertise is a central driver of competitive advantage at

MTN Rwanda. Both quantitative correlations and qualitative interviews show that employee skills, experience, and specialized knowledge significantly influence innovation, strategic responsiveness, and overall organizational performance. By building on existing expertise and strengthening knowledge-sharing systems, MTN Rwanda can further leverage its human capital to maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in Rwanda's dynamic telecommunications sector. These results underscore the broader argument in the literature that knowledge expertise is not only a critical internal resource but also a strategic enabler of long-term organizational success

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has established that knowledge expertise is a critical driver of competitive advantage at MTN Rwanda. The findings demonstrate that employees' specialized skills, experience, and tacit knowledge significantly contribute to the organization's ability to innovate, make timely strategic decisions, and maintain operational efficiency. Both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that fostering a culture of continuous learning and collaboration enhances organizational performance, while effective management of knowledge resources strengthens strategic positioning in the telecommunications sector. The study also identified challenges, including limited access to centralized knowledge-sharing platforms, which can hinder the full utilization of employees' expertise.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for Bank of Kigali and MTN Rwanda:

1. Bank of Kigali and MTN Rwanda should continue investing in automation technologies and digital workflows to streamline operations, reduce errors, and improve efficiency. These initiatives should be closely aligned with each company's strategic objectives to maximize their impact on overall performance and decision-making.
2. To ensure the success of business process transformation, Bank of Kigali and MTN Rwanda should provide regular training, workshops, and support systems for their employees. This will enhance staff competency, encourage full adoption of digital tools, and promote a culture of continuous improvement across all departments.
3. Bank of Kigali and MTN Rwanda should establish mechanisms to regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of digital transformation initiatives. Performance metrics, feedback systems, and periodic audits can help ensure that process improvements remain aligned with strategic goals, facilitate timely adjustments, and sustain competitive advantage

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