



**ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND THE GROWTH OF
USED MOTOR VEHICLE IMPORTING BUSINESSES IN NAIROBI CITY
COUNTY, KENYA**

¹ Okonji Roy Silvanus, ² Dr. Mungai Anne Marie Wairimu

¹Masters Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

²Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine entrepreneurial management practices and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya, in an effort to close the knowledge gap that currently exists. The study adopted strategic leadership and innovation management as the study variables. The study employed descriptive research design and had a population of 264 registered used motor vehicle importing businesses operating within Nairobi, Kenya with a sample size of 157 used motor vehicle importing businesses. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used and data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Quantitative data was arranged into themes/categories based on the study's objectives and were presented in tables as frequencies, percentages, and others measures of central tendency. The pilot study demonstrated the research instrument's validity and reliability for examining entrepreneurial management practices and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The tests for validity revealed that the questionnaire accurately captured the intended components, with high CVI scores. The reliability analysis revealed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values varying between 0.843 to 0.884, indicating that the questionnaire items accurately measured their respective constructs. These findings cleared the questionnaire for collection of data for the main study. The overall regression model explained 94.3% of the variation in growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. The results indicated that strategic leadership, innovation management were highly significant at $p=0.007$, $p=0.000$, respectively. Pearson correlation results indicated that innovation management leads with the highest influence on growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses with a correlation of 0.457, followed by strategic leadership with a correlation of 0.273. The study recommends that strategic leadership should be treated as a key entrepreneurial practice as it is essential in fostering effectiveness and organizational growth and that more emphasis should be on risk analysis and risk control. The study also recommends that used motor vehicle importing business owners/managers can keep up by giving digital solutions to technologically savvy customers and should aim at capitalizing on existing and recognizing new chances as this will better their chances of converting opportunities into above-average financial returns.

Key Words: Entrepreneurial Management Practices, Growth, Motor Vehicle Importing Businesses, Strategic Leadership, Innovation Management

Background of the Study

Undoubtedly, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in a nation's development. Realizing the Strategic Development Goal of eliminating poverty requires the development of the private sector and entrepreneurship. People who are imaginative and entrepreneurial, who can seize chances and are not afraid to take risks, have made enormous contributions to economic advancement (Samuel, Ninan & Ravishankar, 2021). The discipline of using entrepreneurial expertise to increase the efficacy of small and medium enterprises and also new company initiatives is known as entrepreneurial management, according to Henschel, Durst, and Salzmann (2024). The following crucial management concerns are continuously balanced at the heart of entrepreneurial management: What is the venture's specific goal? Where should the mission and values statement go? (objectives and goals): How will it arrive? What is needed to get there? (Growth strategy). What is the most effective structure for people and resources? (Organizational capabilities): When and how much funding is needed? How is the final destination going to be determined by the funding plan? (Success Vision).

In contemporary businesses, when the life cycles of products and business models are reduced, entrepreneurial management practices are positively linked to improved performance. Consequently, one would consider entrepreneurial management practices to be a crucial component of a company's success (Nyello & Kalufya, 2021). The fundamental components of entrepreneurial management practices that promote business success have been identified, among others as innovation management, , managerial competence (strategic leadership) (Yuldinawati, Widyanesti, Wulansari, et al., 2021). High growth would arise from these attributes. Although the notion of entrepreneurial management has been studied for a long time and has expanded in both breadth and depth, empirical research on the phenomena is still in its early stages. Despite the publication of numerous impressive studies, only a small number of explicatory factors have been validated up to this point.

Statement of the Problem

It is commonly acknowledged that small and medium businesses play a significant role in economic development, generating revenue, and reducing poverty (Indrawati, 2017). Malaury, et al. (2021) stated that such businesses accounted for more than 70% of the GDP in developing countries. For example, in Kenya, more than half of the working population is employed in this category. Nevertheless, prior studies on small businesses show that some of them are not performing up to par (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2017). Despite increased targeted government aid that has been simplified to benefit businesses working in this sector, car import enterprises have experienced stunted growth and slow development (OECD, 2018).

The 2017 Kenya Auto Bazaar Associate report states that as more business owners join the market and others leave, a substantial collapse ratio or change of ownership has significantly impacted Kenyan auto dealers (KABA, 2018). Units imported in the third quarter of 2023 declined by 65 per cent in comparison with units imported entered the country in the following quarter of the year, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics' (KNBS) International Trade Report. The sharp decline in car imports from July to September 2023 is a reflection of the difficult times Kenyans were going through. The country imported 64,359 units from April till June, according to the study. 22,271 units were brought into the country in the months that followed, which is a glaring sign of declining demand. Notably, Kenya imported 63,990 cars between January and March of 2023 (Mito, 2024a). Furthermore, because of the difficult economic conditions that characterized 2023, Kenyans were reluctant to import automobiles into the nation. Only 70,275 automobiles were unloaded at the port during the course of the year, according to a study prepared by the Kenya Ports of Authority (KPA). This was a 29% decrease from the 2022 estimates (Mito, 2024b).

The survival and growth of these small and medium businesses has been recognized as being significantly influenced by entrepreneurial management practices (WB, 2019). Although many studies on entrepreneurial management have been done, the scenario in the current study does not lend itself to the conclusions of those studies. In light of this, the current study examined entrepreneurial management practices and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya, in an attempt to close the knowledge gap that currently exists.

General Objective

This study's primary goal was to evaluate the influence of entrepreneurial management practices on the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

- i. To evaluate how strategic leadership affects the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- ii. To ascertain how entrepreneurial innovation management contributes to the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Contingency Theory

According to contingency theory, there is not always a single optimum strategy to achieve organizational success. Situations and circumstances determine this. A method that improves performance in one scenario might not produce the same outcomes in another (Donaldson, 2001). As a result, a number of internal and external factors influence what makes an organization successful. Contingency theory's guiding principles include the following: there is no one best way to manage an organization; an organization's design and its subsystems must meet environmental demands; effective organizations must be properly adapted to their surroundings while making sure that their subsystems are also in harmony with one another; and an organization's design and management style must be suitable for the tasks at hand as well as the type of work group in order to meet its needs (Munge, 2018). According to Taylor and Taylor (2014), its underlying presumptions are as follows: (i) an organization is an open system that depends on its surroundings and serves them; (ii) there is no one ideal way to organize and lead; instead, the best form depends on the task and/or environment; (iii) executives must concentrate on achieving alignment and a good fit between the external environments and internal capacities; and (iv) different types of organizations are needed in different environments.

The goal of the automobile industry is to improve customer service and performance, but environmental considerations are not given much thought. When strategic leadership is adopted, it is crucial to determine how firms combine strategic leadership and performance (in our case, growth). Since strategic leadership integrates planning ahead, building and managing networks, decisiveness, and problem solving with firm performance, contingency theory fits very nicely with strategic leadership. Businesses must adapt to the shifting tastes and preferences of their clientele in order to consistently serve them. It suggests that the services that once impressed people might not do so now. Depending on the scenario or circumstance, they should be conveyed differently.

This theory prompted the first research question: How does strategic leadership affect the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

Schumpeterian Theory of Innovation

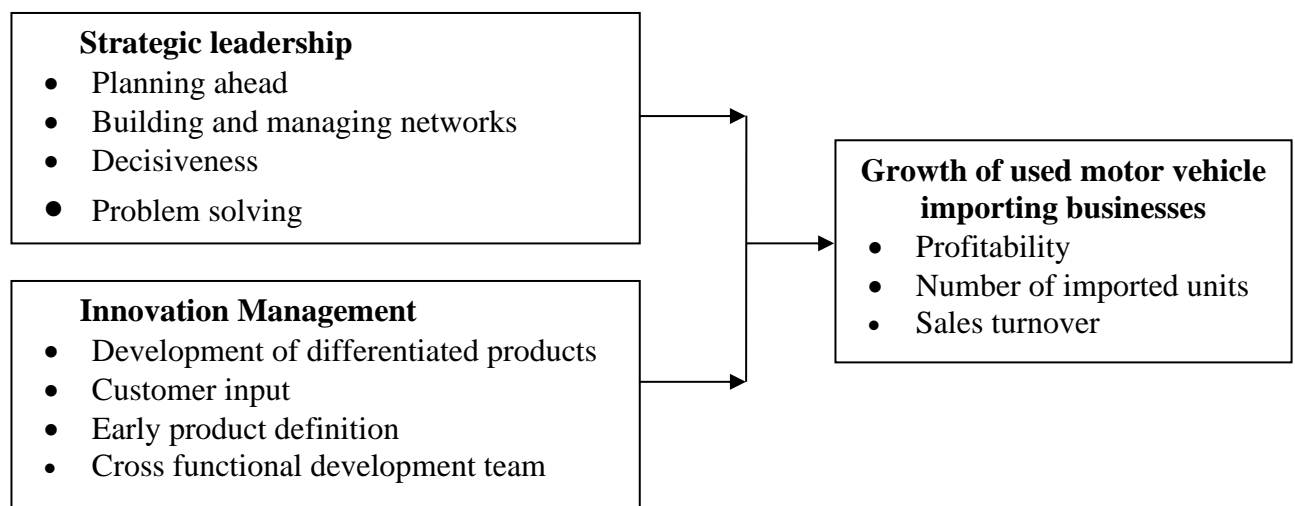
The role of invention in the entrepreneurial process was emphasized by Schumpeter (1934). This invention, referred to as creative destruction, disrupts existing market structures by bringing in new ways of doing things thereby causing a shift of resources away from existing structures to new ones, allowing the business to grow and not be obsolete. The creative destruction process is commenced by entrepreneurs. The findings of Shane, Kolvereid, and Westhead (1991) reinforce the link between entrepreneurship and innovativeness, as they discovered that creativity is one of the primary motivators for starting a business.

The theory of creative profits by Schumpeter (1934) highlighted the entrepreneurship role in pursuing current value-generating endeavours which increase and modify revenue flow through innovation, proactive enterprise leadership and risk taking which seeks to encourage the identification of opportunities using the businessman's intellectual property in order to maximise potential profit and growth. The Schumpeterian theory of growth holds that technological advancement emanates from the inventions by enterprises motivated by profit, which involves what Schumpeter referred to as "creative destruction". Each innovation, in other words, seeks to produce a novel procedure or product that gives its creator a competitive advantage over its competitors. This is accomplished by making an earlier innovation obsolete, which is then inevitably rendered obsolete by succeeding advances (Schumpeter, 1934).

This theory prompted the third study question: How does entrepreneurial innovation management influence the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya?

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a collection of general ideas and principles drawn from relevant disciplines of study and used to structure subsequent presentations. It conceptualizes the link between variables and depicts it graphically or diagrammatically. It is a postulated model that identifies the concepts being studied and their relationships. The study's literature review provided the conceptual foundation for the link amongst both dependent and independent variables, which is shown in Figure 2.1. It assumes that the variables have a linear relationship.



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership refers to a manager's potential to express a strategic vision for the organisation or a part of the organisation and to motivate and persuade others to acquire that

vision. Strategic leadership can also be defined as utilising strategy in the management of employees. It has the potential to influence organisational members and to execute organisational change. Strategic leaders create organisational structure, allocate resources and express strategic vision. Strategic leaders work in an ambiguous environment on challenging issues that influence and are influenced by occasions and organisations external to their own. The main objective of strategic leadership is strategic productivity and to develop an environment in which employees forecast the organisation's needs in the context of their jobs. Strategic leaders encourage the employees in an organisation to follow their ideas. Strategic leaders use reward and incentive systems to promote productive and quality employees to improve organisational performance.

The ability of a manager to articulate a strategic vision for the organization or a portion of it and to inspire and convince others to adopt that vision is known as strategic leadership. Using strategy in personnel management is another definition of strategic leadership. It can execute organizational transformation and have an impact on members of the organization. Strategic leaders articulate their strategic vision, assign resources, and establish organizational structure. Strategic leaders deal with difficult problems in an ambiguous setting that are influenced by and impacted by events and organizations outside of their own (Yuguda et al., 2023). Strategic productivity and creating an atmosphere where workers anticipate the demands of the organization in the context of their work are the primary goals of strategic leadership. Employees in an organization are encouraged to follow the ideas of strategic leaders. In order to increase organizational performance, strategic leaders use incentive and reward programs to encourage high-quality and productive workers. Increasing strategic productivity, encouraging innovation, streamlining procedures, and creating an atmosphere that motivates staff to be autonomous, productive, and forward-thinking are all goals of strategic leadership. Reward or incentive programs are occasionally used by strategic leaders to motivate staff members and assist them in achieving their individual and company objectives (Arijaldi, 2020). objectives of strategic leadership are also to streamline processes, boost strategic productivity, promote innovation and cultivate an environment that encourages employees to be productive and independent and to push forward their ideas. Strategic leaders sometimes use reward or incentive programs to encourage employees and help them reach their goals. Functional strategic leadership is about inventiveness, perception, and planning to assist an individual in realising his objectives and goals.

Strategic entrepreneurial leadership assists the founder in identifying an opportunity and investing significant effort; the managerial role assists in conceptualization, motivation of human resources, and so on; and the technical functional role is the ability to apply tools and methods specific to the area of business (Negeri, Wakijira & Kant, 2023). According to Yuguda et al, (2023), using creativity, observation, and preparation to help in achieving goals and objectives is the essence of functional strategic leadership. Through the implementation of strategy within the organization, strategic leadership is essential to fostering effectiveness and organizational growth. People in the organization are inspired by its role to embrace change and put plans into action in order to realize the strategic vision.

Leadership studies have traditionally focused on the attributes of the individual leader and have been leader-centered. However, several current leadership models have been employed to describe effective leadership, and the level of impact leaders have on followers, such as transformational leadership, strategic leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership. Strategic leadership is becoming a crucial component of organisations' effective and successful development (Calabrò, Torchia, Jimenez, & Kraus, 2021). Strategic leadership is an institution's ability to anticipate, visualise, and preserve flexibility while empowering others to make a strategic chance and a viable future for the organisation (Kjelin, 2009). To set the organisation's direction, strategic leaders look ahead in time. When they scan

and deal with the crucial sectors of their surroundings, their power grows (Hambrick, 2011). They set the organisation's goals and strategies, develop the organisation's structures, processes, controls, and core competencies, manage multiple constituencies, select key executives, groom the next generation of executives, provide strategic direction, maintain an influential organisational culture, uphold a system of ethical values, and represent the organisation to government and other organisations. This type of strategic leadership must deal with uncertainty, complexity, and information overload, necessitating adaptation and timeliness. Strategic executives make and convey decisions about the future of their company (Zaccaro, 2009).

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Effective and successful development of organizations is increasingly dependent on strategic leadership (Calabrò et al., 2021). The ability of an organization to foresee, envision, and maintain flexibility while enabling others to make a strategic decision and ensure the organization's viability is known as strategic leadership. Strategic leaders look to the future to determine the direction of the organization (Bajcar et al., 2015). Strategic leaders get more power when they identify and address the important areas of their environment. In addition to managing different groups, they also choose key executives, train the next generation of executives, set the organization's goals and strategies, develop its structures, processes, controls, and core competencies, provide strategic direction, maintain an influential organizational culture, uphold a system of ethical values, and represent the organization to the government and other organizations (Yuguda, 2023). This kind of strategic leadership deals with complexity, uncertainty, and information overload, which calls for promptness and adaptation. Decisions about the company's future are made and communicated by strategic executives (Giolito & Golsorkhi, 2023).

In order to come up with the best indicators for strategic entrepreneurial leadership, various studies are summarized in the identification of the key strategic entrepreneurial leadership skills by different researchers: The capacity to recognize and take advantage of chances (Gras & Mendoza-Abarca, 2014); it is the ability to convince people that helps for entrepreneurs in several scenarios. Entrepreneurs gain from this leadership entrepreneurial skill while interacting with consumers and staff, as well as when negotiating with other organizations (McClelland, 1987); the ability to plan ahead to reduce risks. This entails transforming their vision into practical and realistic strategies that outline the many actions required to fulfil the objectives (Brinckmann, Grichnik, & Kapsa, 2017); and the capacity to meet complicated

needs successfully in a specific environment. Individuals should be aware of potential returns. Risk and return are exactly proportionate. As a result, the entrepreneur must have a reasonable estimate of prospective returns depending on their risk tolerance (Hill, Mejia-Mantilla, and Vasilaky, 2018); the ability to build and manage networks and be able to convince in order to succeed in business (Davidsson & Honig, 2003); the ability to make timely decisions in order to succeed. Successful entrepreneurs may gather and draw conclusions from information from many sources, as well as expert opinions, to move forward. They make choices even when not everyone concurs with their decisions and the results are not totally foreseeable (Wagener, Gorgievski, & Rijdsdijk, 2010); the ability to make independent decisions about the best course of action (Rauch & Frese, 2007). When opposing viewpoints develop and decisions must be made that are not routine in nature, the entrepreneur must exercise independence in his decision-making.

Market insight helps entrepreneurs analyze probable threats. Entrepreneurs that are successful are aware of existing and potential future rivals, as well as their position in the ever-changing marketplace Chwolka and Raith (2012). Successful entrepreneurs prioritize learning and development through activities related to training and development, staying up to date on new or novel advances, being aware of where to find crucial information and having an interest in novel methods and strategies applicable to their field (Lans, Bergevoet, Mulder, & Woerkum, 2005). Entrepreneurs should have the ability to commit to a task and persevere until success is achieved and tasks completed even in the face of adversity (Valtonen, 2007). Self-knowledge and confidence requires both self-belief and internal locus of control. Successful entrepreneurs acknowledge their flaws and work on them both independently and with the assistance of others (Hayward, Forster, Sarasvathy & Fredrickson (2010). Entrepreneurs are socially and environmentally sensitive. Starting and sustaining a firm is a human and social endeavor, thus entrepreneurs must work in a socially responsible manner that balances economic, social, and environmental interests, as well as future human implications (Lans, Bergevoet, Mulder, and Woerkum (2005). However, according to a study done in Belgium, market knowledge and problem solving, and tenacity are critical for entrepreneurial success (Kyndt & Baert, 2015). In the same study, it was discovered that the strategic leadership including social and environmental conscious behaviour was inversely connected to entrepreneurship.

Innovation Management

Marzi (2022) defined innovation as the effective creation, use and implementation of novel or structurally improved services, products, processes or organizational structures. Innovation is a comprehensive series of interconnected sub processes rather than a single activity. It involves more than just coming up with a novel notion, creating a new gadget, or expanding a market. All of these factors working together is the innovation process Dong (2023) further defined innovation management as the long-term management of a company's resources and the development of competencies that contribute to its capacity for innovation. This includes the perspectives of economics, corporate management strategy, and the way organizations operate, which is concerned with internal operations.

In the dynamic motor vehicle industry, organizations must constantly embrace innovation and technology to meet changing customer needs. This involves managing resources, developing capabilities, and analyzing internal activities. According to Gnammm, Kalmbach and Bürgin (2018), The car industry has an extensive track record of innovation and turbulence, but it has never been as dynamic as it is today. High brand reputation and product quality are imperative. However, their appeal as selling points has diminished whereas traits such as innovative technology and an open cost of ownership quickly ascend to the highest level of what buyers desire in a vehicle. Pfeffermann (2023) posits that to maintain a leadership position in the automotive market and survive for the long haul, companies will have to virtually reinvent

themselves - and quickly. The next generation of leaders have started to embrace some common principles as they reinvent themselves in the face of cost pressures.

Innovation management practices include development of differentiated products with compelling value proposition, building in the voice-of-the customer input, seeking sharp early product definition, relying on an effective cross functional development team, having idea to launch system with appropriate ideation practices and having a product innovation and technological strategy to direct development activities and promote an innovative environment and culture (Baines, Rosengren & Antonetti, 2022).. Good innovation Management practices improve the generation of knowledge from the collaboration of different disciplines, ensure proper allocation of resources and utilization, boost customer satisfaction by integrating feedback from customers in the process of innovation and enforce the ongoing functioning of the management of innovation process

Empirical Literature

Strategic Leadership

Through the implementation of strategy within the business, strategic leadership is essential to fostering effectiveness and organizational growth. Its function incites individuals in the organization to embrace change and put plans into action in order to realize the strategic vision. Choosing a strategic direction, creating an organization, forming a powerful organizational culture, managing the organization's resource portfolio effectively, enforcing ethical compliance, communicating strategy, creating short-term goals and operational plans, and establishing balanced organizational controls are all examples of strategic leadership roles in strategy execution, according to Ulrich (2017).

According to DeLisi (2020), the leadership position is essential because its action plan and decision regarding how quickly or how hard to push for change are crucial in determining the nature of the implementation and advancing the process. In order to successfully implement a strategy, a leader must be able to work through others, organize, motivate, build a culture, establish strategic controls, and create strong alignments between strategy and organizational operations in order to ultimately achieve organizational goals. Strategic leadership is the capacity to influence a group towards the achievement of goals. Numerous studies have found that strategic leadership has a major impact on the performance of a firm.

Using a Korean case study, Shvetsova, Tanubamrungsuk, and Lee (2021) examined the effects of knowledge management-based strategic organizational leadership in Thailand's automotive sector in order to pinpoint the critical elements that directly affect competitiveness and, consequently, performance through organizational leadership initiatives in these two nations. The findings demonstrated the use of organizational leadership in the automotive sector and knowledge transfer procedures; hence, a connection between organizational leadership and knowledge management was identified. The study came to the conclusion that the knowledge management approach may be applied to strategic organizational leadership. Managers can use these insights to create strategic programs that will enhance organizational leadership and the process of knowledge transfer in Asian automakers.

In Uganda, Yuguda et al. (2023) examined strategic leadership as a key to organisational effectiveness and improvement. The principles of strategic leadership, the abilities and traits required of a strategic leader to inspire support, and the requirements for organizational performance and development were all studied in this study. The study analysed strategic leadership by solely qualitative desk research of literature. The study found that leaders need to develop a plan to carry out that vision. The study recommended that the plan should outline

the actions or adjustments that an organization must make in order to move from its current situation to the one it wants to achieve.

Munge (2018) investigated the impact of strategic planning results on the performance of the motor vehicle industry in Kenya following a drop in vehicle sales that had an impact on the sector's performance. A qualitative descriptive research design was used in the investigation. The impact of strategic planning outcomes on performance was ascertained by applying the content analysis method to examine the findings of other researchers. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, and other published materials that discussed the performance of the automobile industry and the results of strategic planning. Following examination, the results showed that the results of strategic planning have an impact on new car sales, which in turn has a negative impact on car sales and, consequently, on performance.

Entrepreneurial Commitment to Opportunity

Without an opportunity, there is no entrepreneurship. A potential entrepreneur can be immensely creative and hardworking, but without an opportunity to target with these Without an opportunity, there is no entrepreneurship. A potential entrepreneur can be immensely creative and hardworking, but without an opportunity to target with these Without an opportunity, there is no entrepreneurship. A potential entrepreneur can be immensely creative and hardworking, but without an opportunity to target with these characteristics, entrepreneurial activities cannot take place. Recognizing this reality has meant that whereas historically entrepreneurship research has tended to center on entrepreneurs and their behaviors in creating new ventures, the role opportunities play has received increased scholarly attention in recent years. As Eckhardt and Shane (2003) note, Researchers have recently shifted attention away from approaches that focus on identifying those people in society who prefer to become entrepreneurs towards understanding the nexus of enterprising individuals and valuable opportunities . . . This new focus has required scholars to explain the role of opportunities in the entrepreneurial process. (p. 333) Indeed, opportunities are one of the key concepts that define the boundary and exchange conditions of the entrepreneurship field. (Busenitz, West, Shepherd, Nelson, Chandler, & Zacharakis, 2003).

Despite the emergence of opportunity as a central concept for entrepreneurship researchers, little agreement exists about the definition and nature of opportunities (Hansen & Shrader, 2007). Our opening quote by Francis Bacon alludes to two popular schools of thought—one contending that opportunities are discovered and another contending that they are created (Alvarez & Barney, 2007). Others view opportunities as products of a creative process that is more gradual, involving a synthesis of ideas over time (Dimov, 2007a). Whereas some definitions focus on the chance to introduce innovative goods, services, or processes (e.g., Gaglio, 2004), others are primarily concerned with the role of opportunities in creating new ventures (e.g., Baron, 2008).

Given the importance of the opportunity concept to scholars and organizations, there is a need to summarize extant knowledge about this concept as the foundation for setting the stage for further advances. We seek to offer two contributions in light of this need. First, we conduct a detailed review of insights about opportunity and the processes surrounding it appearing in entrepreneurship research. This review is intended to consolidate past accomplishments and to set the stage for future developments. More broadly, we believe that insights about opportunities appearing within the entrepreneurship literature could be enhanced by relevant research in other fields, including accounting, anthropology, economics, finance, organizational behavior, human resource management, marketing, operations management, political science, psychology, sociology, and strategic management. Because few collaborative bridges have been built, our second intended contribution is developing ideas that leverage

insights about opportunities offered within other fields to inform entrepreneurship questions and scholarly work.

Without opportunity, entrepreneurship is impossible. Even if a prospective business owner is incredibly innovative and diligent, entrepreneurial activity cannot take place if these skills are not targeted. Recognizing this reality has resulted in greater scholarly attention to the importance of opportunities in entrepreneurship study, which has traditionally focused on entrepreneurs and their behaviours in launching new enterprises (Zempleni & Rodriguez, 2022). Individuals who recognize opportunities have received the majority of empirical attention as opportunity drivers. In general, research has focused on either the knowledge stocks or the actions of entrepreneurs (Nomozov, 2022). Baeta and Andreassi (2021) show that the prior distribution of information influences who discovers opportunities. Also, Shepherd and DeTienne (2015) discover that prior knowledge of client concerns influences the quantity and quality of opportunities found.

Several studies have shed light on when entrepreneurs can harness change and capitalize on the opportunities that arise in order to achieve objectives such as new venture formation and growth. Leatherbee et al. (2021) discovered that entrepreneurs' access to resources shapes their range of opportunity choice. Entrepreneurs are more prone to take advantage of opportunities when they think they have more understanding of client demand, fully developed requisite technology, greater managerial capability, and more stakeholder backing. Finally, Entrepreneurial experience has been shown to be associated with the pursuit of more innovative opportunities with higher wealth potential (Puhakka, 2017).

Empirical attention on the drivers of opportunities has focused primarily on the individuals who recognize opportunities. In general, studies have centered on either the knowledge stocks or the behaviors of entrepreneurs. Shane (2001) demonstrates that prior distribution of knowledge determines who discovers opportunities. Shepherd and DeTienne (2005) find that the prior knowledge of customer problems directly affects the quantity and quality of opportunities identified. Building on human capital theory and social feminist theory, DeTienne and Chandler (2007) found that although men and women use unique stocks of human capital and exhibit different processes of opportunity identification, the innovativeness of the opportunities did not differ. Finally, building on ideas from cognitive psychology, Mitchell et al. (2008) demonstrated that past failures keep opportunity formation processes flexible while commitment emerges. Researchers have also examined the behaviors of those discovering the opportunities. Building on the theory of entrepreneurial alertness, which posits that awareness of opportunities comes from readiness to recognize market disequilibrium (Kirzner, 1973), Kaish and Gilad (1991) suggest that entrepreneurs discover opportunities through more search activities and different analysis of data vis-à-vis nonentrepreneurs. Baron and Ensley (2006) highlight the role of experience by finding that the cognitive representations of opportunities of experienced entrepreneurs differ from those of novice entrepreneurs. Further, they found that pattern recognition is a key component of opportunity recognition. Most recently, using network theory, Dyer et al. (2008) found that one's ability to generate novel ideas for innovative new businesses is a function of questioning, observing, experimenting, and idea networking behaviors. Viewed collectively, the work on individuals and their behaviors illustrate the importance of knowledge, learning, and experience. Although the image of the novice who devises a path-breaking opportunity is a romantic one, the results achieved from extant inquiries suggest that experts are far more likely to be novel.

Several studies shed light on when entrepreneurs are able to harness change and exploit the resultant opportunities in order to reach outcomes such as new venture creation and growth. Entrepreneurs' access to resources was found to shape their range of opportunity choice (Thakur, 1999). Entrepreneurs are more likely to exploit opportunities when they perceive they have more knowledge of customer demand, have more fully developed necessary

technologies, greater managerial capability, and greater stakeholder support (Choi & Shepherd, 2004). Finally, entrepreneurial experience was demonstrated to be linked to the exploitation of more innovative opportunities with greater wealth potential (Ucbasaran et al., 2009). At this point in time, studies that simultaneously consider arrays of these features are needed. Which factors dominate if, for example, an entrepreneur lacks resources and stakeholder support but possesses good technology and managerial skills?

Researchers also investigated the behaviours of persons who discovered the opportunity. Drawing from the concept of entrepreneurial alertness, which states that knowledge of opportunities derives from preparedness to perceive market disequilibrium (Lim, 2019), entrepreneurs uncover possibilities by engaging in more search activities and conducting different data analyses than non-entrepreneurs according to Freeman, Zhu, and Warner (2020). Baron and Ensley (2016) underscore the importance of experience by observing that experienced entrepreneurs' cognitive representations of opportunities differ from those of rookie entrepreneurs. Furthermore, they discovered that pattern recognition is an important aspect of opportunity recognition.

A focus on strategic entrepreneurship also highlights that the skills firms need in order to exploit opportunities are much different than the skills needed to identify opportunities (Hitt, Ireland, Camp, & Sexton, 2001). This leads us to expect that firms' relative ability to meet the dual challenges of strategic entrepreneurship is a key moderator of the links between opportunities and organizational outcomes. Specifically, the better a firm is at maintaining the delicate balance of exploiting old and identifying new opportunities, the better the firm will be at translating opportunities into above-average financial returns. Meanwhile, firms skilled only at exploitation or only at identification will experience weaker outcomes flowing from opportunities, and may ultimately cease to remain competitive with rivals.

The abilities required by businesses to capitalise on opportunities differ significantly from those required to identify them. As a result, a firm's relative ability to address the dual difficulties of strategic entrepreneurship is an important mediator of the relationship between opportunities and organizational outcomes (Maksimovic, Phillips, & Yang, 2019). Specifically, the better a firm is at striking the delicate balance between capitalizing on existing and recognizing new chances, the better it will be at converting opportunities into above-average financial returns. Meanwhile, firms that focus just on exploitation or identification may get poorer returns from opportunities and may eventually cease to compete with rivals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Meredith (2021), Creating an effective study design is a key component of research. The study employed a descriptive research design. It aimed to provide the researcher with a profile that explains pertinent features of the phenomenon of interest from an industry or individual standpoint. Due to the researcher's inability to access the exact number of listed registered used motor vehicle importing businesses from the particular authorities, extrapolation from previous studies was adopted in coming up with the target population. Stemming from Makembo's (2011) study which evaluated the factors affecting the performance of second-hand car importers, the study population was 225 registered used motor vehicle dealers. In 2016, Wanjiru (2016) assessed the international trade obstacles faced by used automobile traders in Nairobi with a population of 240 registered used motor vehicle dealers according to data from the registrar of business and Nairobi City County. Hence, given that there was an increase of 15 used motor vehicle dealers in 5 years and holding all factors constant, extrapolation was done to come up with a further 24 registered used motor vehicle dealers to give a sum total of 264 registered used motor vehicle importing businesses that formed the target population in this study. These made up the study's unit of analysis. Owners and/or managers of these business enterprises made up the study's unit of observation. This is

because they provided well-informed, more representative, accurate, and trustworthy statistics on the influence of entrepreneurial management practices on the expansion of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

According to Chen et al. (2020), a representative sample in a descriptive study is one that represents at least 10% of the target population and is sufficiently big to enable credible data processing and the testing of the significance of variations between estimates.

The study will employ random sampling and the sample size will be determined using the formulas provided by Kothari (2004) and is computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{e^2(N - 1) + z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}$$

In this case, n=sample size. The population as a whole is N. e^2 = allowable error (0.05 is the precision threshold). p is the percentage of the target population that possesses the desired traits. A = 50:50 basis, or a probability of 50% (0.5), is assumed in this study. q is the remaining value from p that adds up to 100%. That is 1- P (1 - 0.5), or 100 - 50 percent (0.5) in this instance. Z^2 is the number of sampling distribution standard deviation units equal to 1.96, the intended 95 percent confidence level. (0.5) is the value of p and q in the formula that will be utilized in the study. This is because according to Fisher et al. (1983), the percentage of the target population that has the characteristics under study should be 50%. The sample size (n) at a 5% significance level and a 95% confidence level will be computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.5^2 * 264}{(0.05)^2 * 263 + (1.96)^2 * 0.5 * 0.5}$$

$$n = 156.7127 = 157$$

The research gathered data from primary and secondary sources. For an in-depth analysis, the researcher used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect the primary data. There were both closed-ended and open-ended questions on the survey. However, secondary data was gathered for the study by means of a comprehensive evaluation of the theoretical and empirical literatures. These helped the researcher to develop the conceptual framework that served as the guide for the study. The unit of analysis was the used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi City County, Kenya while the unit of observation was the owners and managers of these enterprises. The collected data was evaluated using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistical approaches were used to characterize the data and determine the respondents' degree of agreement with the many claims under each factor. Quantitative reports expressed as percentages, tabulations, means and standard deviations were produced by means of data analysis conducted with SPSS version 22 and Microsoft Excel.

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND PRESENTATION

A total of 157 questionnaires were administered and 138 were received as complete, and therefore, all of them were viable for consideration. This translated to 88% percent response rate. The response was considered appropriate since any response above 75% is classified as best. This commendable response rate was made a reality after the study engaged research assistants to administer the questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics for the study variables

Extent to which strategic leadership influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya

The study sought to determine how strategic leadership influenced the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya. To achieve this objective, respondents' opinions were sought on the extent to which strategic leadership influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya. Findings in table 1 showed that majority (35.51%) indicated that strategic leadership influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses to a large extent. This was followed by 28.81% of the respondents indicating that strategic leadership influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses to a very large extent, 26.09% to a moderate extent, 7.24% to a small extent and 4.35% not at all. These findings echoed those of a Ugandan study by Yuguda et al. (2023) which examined strategic leadership as a key to organisational effectiveness and improvement and found that leaders need to develop a plan to carry out that vision and that the plan should outline the actions or adjustments that an organization must make in order to move from its current situation to the one it wants to achieve.

Table 1: Extent to which strategic leadership influenced growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya

Extent	Frequency	Percentage
To a very large extent	37	28.81%
To a large extent	49	35.51%
To a moderate extent	36	26.09%
To a small extent	10	7.24%
Not at all	6	4.35%
Total	138	100.00%

(Source: Study, 2025)

The study also inquired about how often the owner / managers of the used motor vehicle importing businesses evaluate strategic leadership skills and found that majority (135 - 97.82%) of the respondents indicated that they evaluated their strategic leadership skills annually. 2 respondents evaluated themselves biannually (1.45%), 1 respondent did it quarterly (0.72%).

Table 2: Evaluation of strategic leadership

Time	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	0	0.00%
Quarterly	1	0.72%
Biannually	2	1.45%
Annually	135	97.82%

In measuring the extent to which the respondents agreed with the indicators/statements of strategic leadership and its influence on the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya, a 5 point Likert scale was used where the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements provided. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Extent to which indicators of strategic leadership influence Growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya

Strategic leadership	SD	D	U	A	SA	N	Mean
Planning ahead influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	3.62% (5)	5.80% (8)	10.14% (14)	35.51% (49)	44.93% (62)	138	3.95
Building and managing networks influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	2.90% (4)	7.25% (10)	6.52% (9)	43.48% (60)	39.86% (55)	138	3.99
Decisiveness influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	2.17% (3)	7.97% (11)	6.52% (9)	41.30% (57)	42.03% (58)	138	3.97
Problem solving influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	2.17% (3)	13.04% (18)	14.49% (20)	45.65% (63)	24.64% (34)	138	3.90
Grand Mean							3.96

(Source: Study, 2025)

The results show that all the Likert scale items had a mean response score > 3.00 indicating a tendency toward positive responses. In measuring strategic leadership, respondents strongly felt that building and managing networks influenced growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. This item had a mean response score of 3.99 with 83.34% of respondents in agreement. 10.15% of respondents did not agree while 6.52% were undecided. Decisiveness followed closely with a mean response of 3.97 with 83.33% of respondents in agreement. 10.14% of the respondents did not agree while 6.52% were undecided. The third item to be rated highly was planning ahead. This item was rated highly with a mean response score of 3.95 with 80.44% of respondents in agreement. 9.42% of respondents did not agree while 10.14% were undecided. The lowest rated item was problem solving which had a mean response score of 3.90 with 70.29% of respondents in agreement. 15.21% of respondents did not agree while 14.49% of respondents were undecided.

Extent to which innovation management influence growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses

The study sought to establish the extent to which innovation management influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. From the findings in table 4.15, majority (34.06%) indicated that innovation management influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses to a large extent, 26.09% to a very large extent, 16.67% to a moderate extent, 17.39% to a small extent and 5.80% not at all. These findings were in agreement with those of Ellencweig et al. (2019) study who found that the revolution in digital technology is positively altering the sale of used motor vehicles.

Table 4: Extent to which innovation management influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses

Statement	Frequency	Percent
To a very large extent	36	26.09%
To a large extent	47	34.06%
To a moderate extent	23	16.67%
To a small extent	24	17.39%
Not at all	8	5.80%
Total	138	100.00

(Source: Study, 2025)

In measuring the extent to which the respondents agreed with the indicators of innovation management and their influence on growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses, a 5 point Likert scale was used where the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements provided. The results were presented in Table 4.16.

Table 5: Extent to which indicators of innovation management influence growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses.

Innovation management	SD	D	U	A	SA	N	Mean
Development of differentiated products influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	5.07% (7)	10.14% (14)	9.42% (13)	36.23% (50)	39.13% (54)	138	3.96
Customer input influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	2.17% (3)	3.62% (5)	6.52% (9)	63.04% (87)	24.64% (34)	138	3.99
Early product definition influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	7.24% (10)	9.42% (13)	5.80% (8)	46.38% (64)	31.16% (43)	138	3.98
Cross functional development team influences growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	9.42% (13)	10.14% (14)	16.67% (23)	27.54% (38)	36.23% (50)	138	3.95
Grand Mean							3.97

(Source: Study, 2025)

On innovation management, respondents strongly felt that customer input influenced growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. This item was rated highly with a mean response score of 3.99 with 87.69% of respondents in agreement. 5.79% of respondents did not agree while 6.52% were undecided. The second item to be rated highly was early product definition with a mean score of 3.98 with 77.54% of respondents in agreement. 16.66% of respondents did not agree while 5.80% of respondents were undecided. The third item to be rated highly was development of differentiated products with a mean response score of 3.96 with 75.36% of respondents in agreement. 15.21% of respondents did not agree while 9.42% were undecided. The lowest rated item was the cross functional development team with a mean response score of 3.95 with 63.77% of respondents in agreement. 19.56% of respondents did not agree while 16.67% were undecided.

Growth of used motor vehicle importing business (Dependent variable)

Table 6 shows the extent to which the respondents agreed with the measures of growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. Majority of the respondents (81,88%) were in agreement that sales turnover measured growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses as shown by a mean of 4 and that the number of imported units measured growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses as shown by a mean of 3. Profitability measured growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses as shown by 82.6% of the respondents and with a mean of 3.98. The number of imported units was accepted as a measure of growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses as shown by 65.94%

Table 6: Growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
Profitability measures growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	44.20% (61)	38.40% (53)	13.77% (19)	2.17% (3)	1.45% (2)	3.98
Number of imported units is a measure of growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	38.40% (53)	27.54% (38)	23.91% (33)	7.25% (10)	2.90% (4)	3.97
Sales turnover measures growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	45.65% (63)	36.23% (50)	16.67% (23)	1.45% (2)	0.72% (1)	4

(Source: Study, 2025)

Multiple Linear Regression

The study further carried out a multiple linear regression analysis to establish the statistical significance relationship between independent variables notably: strategic leadership, innovation management and their influence on growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses in Nairobi, Kenya. Regression analysis is a statistics process of estimating the relationship between variables.

Coefficient of Determination: Relationship between entrepreneurial management practices and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses

Coefficient of determination explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (Growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses) that is explained by the independent variables (strategic leadership, innovation management). The fitted model was:

$$\gamma = 12.325 + 0.123X_1 + 0.498X_2$$

Table 7: Coefficient of Determination: Relationship between entrepreneurial management practices and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	12.325			
	Strategic leadership	.123	.044	.145	2.684 .007
	Innovation management	.498	.054	.489	8.969 .000

a. *Dependent Variable: Growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses*

b. *Linear regression through the origin*

(Source: Study, 2025)

Correlation Analysis

The study also conducted correlation analysis for the combined variables dependent and independent variables. The results show a positive correlation among the variables of study as shown in Table 8. Pearson correlation results indicated that innovation management lead with the highest influence on growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses with a correlation of 0.457, followed by strategic leadership with a correlation of 0.273. Therefore, the study

concluded that innovation management, and strategic leadership were the most prominent indicators of growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses.

Table 8: Correlation Matrix

		Growth	Strategic leadership	Innovation management
Growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses	Pearson Correlation	1	.273**	.457**
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	138	138	138
Strategic leadership	Pearson Correlation	.273**	1	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	138	138	138
Innovation management	Pearson Correlation	.457**	.383**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	138	138	138

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

Conclusions

The study concludes that strategic leadership is significant and has a positive relationship with growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. This is because using creativity, observation, and preparation to help in achieving goals and objectives is the essence of functional strategic leadership. Through the implementation of strategy within the organization, strategic leadership is essential to fostering effectiveness and organizational growth. People in the organization are inspired by its role to embrace change and put plans into action in order to realize the strategic vision.

Regarding innovation management, the study concludes that it has a significant positive effect on growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses. Practices such as collection of customer inputs, early product definition, development of differentiated products and having cross-functional development teams are all crucial to the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses.

Recommendations

The study recommends that strategic leadership should be treated as a key entrepreneurial management practice in fostering effectiveness and organizational growth. This is because its function incites individuals in the organization to embrace change and put plans into action in order to realize the strategic vision. Also, the study recommends that in order to successfully implement a strategy, a leader must be able to work through others, organize, motivate, build a culture, establish strategic controls, and create strong alignments between strategy and organizational operations in order to ultimately achieve organizational goals.

On innovation management and the growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses, the study recommends that in order to provide a consistently distinctive and distinguishing customer experience, all used-car merchants must identify their target client categories and quickly design the best approaches from a growing set of accessible possibilities. The study also recommends that used motor vehicle importing business owner/managers can keep up by giving digital options to technologically savvy customers.

Areas for Further Research

The four independent variables that were studied, explained 94.3% of the variation in growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses as represented by the R^2 . This therefore means that other factors not studied in this research contribute 5.7% of variance in the dependent variable. Therefore, further research should be conducted to investigate more factors affecting growth of used motor vehicle importing businesses.

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