



Full length article

# Internal core Competencies and Competitive Advantage in Telecommunication Industry. A case of Mobile Telecommunication Network

## Rwanda

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### ABSTRACT

In the current demanding economic landscape, organizations must consistently reassess and innovate to stay pertinent in their operational sphere, particularly in highly competitive environments. This study aimed to investigate the influence of internal core competencies on organizational competitive advantage, focusing specifically on MTN Rwanda. Guided by three specific objectives, this research assessed the influence of management qualifications, the perception of innovation, and intellectual capital on the organizational competitive advantage of MTN Rwanda PLC. The study employed a descriptive and correlational research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaires. Key findings indicated that management capabilities, including education level, experience, training, leadership, and decision-making skills, significantly influence MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage, with means ranging from 3.17 to 3.85 and standard deviations from 0.54 to 0.78. Attitudes towards risk-taking, willingness to adopt new technologies, creativity, problem-solving skills, culture of innovation, and implementation of innovative ideas are crucial factors in MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage, with mean scores ranging from 4.45 to 4.48 and low standard deviations of 0.70 to 0.71. Intellectual capital, encompassing human, structural, and relational capital, plays a key role in MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage, with means ranging from 4.55 to 4.58 and standard deviations from 0.63 to 0.64. An ANOVA test revealed a significant difference in competitive advantage between groups ( $F(0.12) = 474.605, p = .000$ ). Additionally, strong positive correlations were found between management capabilities and competitive advantage ( $r_s = .752, p = .000$ ), innovation capacity and competitive advantage ( $r_s = .904, p = .000$ ), and intellectual capital and competitive advantage ( $r_s = .876, p = .000$ ). The findings emphasize the critical role of internal core competencies in driving competitive advantage. Management capabilities, a proactive approach to risk-taking, innovation, and leveraging intellectual capital are pivotal in shaping MTN Rwanda's competitive position in the

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telecommunication industry. Internal core competencies, including management capabilities, innovation, and intellectual capital, significantly influence MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage. It is recommended that the company prioritize education, training, leadership, risk-taking, and technology adoption while fostering a culture of innovation and leveraging intellectual capital.

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## 1. Introduction

The concept of internal core competencies and their role in shaping organizational competitive advantage has garnered significant attention in the global business landscape. Scholars and practitioners alike have studied and debated the intricate relationship between a firm's unique capabilities and its ability to outperform competitors. In examining this relationship, it is essential to consider the global perspective, drawing insights from various regions such as China, Japan, and India. A study by Prahalad and Hamel (2019) highlighted the importance of core competencies in achieving competitive advantage, using examples from companies like Honda and NEC in Japan, which leveraged their technological prowess to dominate markets. Similarly, Chinese firms like Huawei have showcased the power of internal capabilities in driving global expansion and competitiveness[1].

Internal core competencies are the unique strengths and capabilities that an organization possesses, which differentiate it from its competitors and provide a basis for creating a sustainable competitive advantage. Organizational competitive advantage refers to the strategic advantage that an organization gains over its rivals, enabling it to outperform them and achieve superior performance in the market. In Africa, the telecommunications sector has been a hotbed for examining internal core competencies and competitive advantage. MTN Rwanda PLC stands out as a case study, with its market leadership and innovative service offerings. A study by Aremu and Bamidele (2015) examined the impact of core competencies on the competitive advantage of telecom companies in Nigeria, providing insights applicable to MTN Rwanda PLC[2].

Within the East African region, countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have witnessed similar trends in the telecommunications sector. For instance, Safaricom in Kenya has utilized its M-Pesa platform to not only drive financial inclusion but also establish a strong competitive position in the market. Such examples underscore the importance of internal capabilities in achieving organizational goals[3]. MTN Rwanda's organizational competitive advantage on the similar note as exemplified by Muhawenimana (2020) is underpinned by several internal core competencies. One key strength lies in its strong brand reputation, known for reliability and customer-centric services. Additionally, the company has made significant investments in network infrastructure, particularly in 4G connectivity, ensuring high-quality services. Technological expertise is another pillar, with skilled professionals driving innovation and service excellence. MTN Rwanda's customer-centric approach, evidenced by tailored solutions and engagement efforts, has fostered customer loyalty. Furthermore, strategic partnerships with industry players have expanded its service offerings. These competencies collectively enable MTN Rwanda to maintain a competitive edge in the telecommunications market[4].

In recent years, policies promoting innovation and technology adoption have further emphasized the importance of internal core competencies. For example, Rwanda's Vision 2020 places a strong emphasis on leveraging ICT to drive economic growth, highlighting the strategic role of companies like MTN Rwanda PLC in realizing these goals (Republic of Rwanda, 2012). According to a report by MTN in 2023, A multinational

telecommunications organization called Mobile Telephone Network (MTN) Group Limited was established in 1994 and is currently providing voice and data communications goods and services to people and companies (MTN, 2023). MTN serves three regional areas: MTN South and East Africa (MTN SEA), MTN West and Central Africa (MTN WECA), and MTN MENA, or MTN Middle East and North Africa. MTN has GSM licenses in 22 countries and internet service provider operations in 14 countries (MTN, 2023). With a market share of 38% in the Rwandan mobile market, the firm is second only to Vodacom, which holds a 90% market share, and Airtel, which holds a 10% market share (MTN, 2022). Airtel takes up the remaining market share (MTN, 2023) and Telecom Week. According to the December 2022 audited financial statements, MTN had positive results[4]. According to Barney (2019) The Rwandan telecommunications industry is extremely competitive, with many providers providing distinctive service offers and lower call prices. In order to preserve the company's market share, MTN must ensure that they strengthen their competitive advantage[5]. There are factors that need to be looked at; with internal factors needing to be critically analyzed and a functional strategy to be developed to ensure that MTN survives in this challenging market. The organization has been fairly successful at generating money, according to the most recent research utilizing the organization's publicly available financial documents, and the market share has been stable over the past 10 years[4]. Scholars such as Barney (2019) have argued that sustained competitive advantage is derived from valuable, rare, and inimitable resources and capabilities. This perspective aligns with the notion of internal core competencies, suggesting that firms must continuously develop and nurture these competencies to stay ahead[5].

## 2.0 Problem Statement

Despite the growing body of literature on the relationship between internal core competencies and organizational competitive advantage, a significant gap exists in understanding the specific core competencies that contribute to the competitive advantage of companies in the telecommunications industry, particularly in the case of MTN Rwanda PLC. While scholars like Barney (2016), as cited in (Al-Swidi, 2021) argue that resources such as intellectual capital, entrepreneurial inclination, and innovation are crucial for achieving a competitive advantage, there is limited research that identifies the specific competencies within these broader categories that drive competitive advantage in the telecommunications sector[6].

Furthermore, while some studies highlight the importance of core competencies like innovation, strategic entrepreneurship, effective leadership, and intellectual capital[7], there is a lack of empirical evidence and a comprehensive understanding of how these competencies manifest and contribute to competitive advantage in real-world scenarios, such as the operations of MTN Rwanda PLC. The situational gap is further emphasized by the complex nature of the telecommunications industry, characterized by rapid technological advancements, intense competition, and evolving consumer demands.

Reports from MTN Rwanda's auditing team and other relevant sources indicate that while the company has made significant investments in technology and infrastructure, achieving a competitive advantage remains challenging. For example, in the past fiscal year, MTN Rwanda's revenue growth was 7%, below the industry average of 10%, indicating a potential inefficiency in capitalizing on its core competencies to drive revenue (MTN Rwanda Annual Report, 2023). Additionally, customer satisfaction scores have shown a marginal improvement of only 2% over the same period, despite the company's efforts to enhance its service offerings and customer experience (MTN Rwanda Customer Satisfaction Survey, 2023).

This suggests a disconnect between the company's core competencies and its ability to deliver value to customers, highlighting the need for a more nuanced understanding of how internal competencies translate into competitive advantage in the telecommunications sector. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap by conducting a detailed analysis of MTN Rwanda's internal core competencies and their contribution to the company's competitive advantage. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis of key performance indicators and financial data. The findings not only provided valuable insights for MTN Rwanda but also contribute to the broader understanding of how internal core competencies can be leveraged to achieve competitive advantage in the telecommunications industry.

### **3.0 Research purpose**

The overall objective of this research study is to assess the influence internal core competencies on competitive advantage with a specific focus of MTN Rwanda as a case study.

#### Methods

##### Research Design

Glass and Hopkins (2015) defined a research design as a design plan for the purpose of answering the research questions and responding to the research objectives and hypothesis. A research design gives a plan for collecting and analyzing data[8]. A research design describes the procedures or steps help researcher in completion of the study. It shows the plan of the researcher to respond to the research questions ([9] ).The suitable research design for this study were descriptive and correlational research design. The study employed qualitative which included interview through quantitative approach research used frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, correlational and regression analysis.

##### Target Population

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014) population is defined as a group of objects or people from which generalization of findings made[9]. The target population of the research was 16 project staffs, 90 employees of service providers from MTN, Airtel, Canal Box, Broadband System Corporation, Korea Telecom Rwanda Networks and Liquid Company while 38 beneficiaries from Kimironko Primary School, Kagugu Health Centre and Gisozi Sector therefore total was 148 participants.

##### Data Collection Techniques and Data Sources

Data were collected using a combination of interviews and questionnaires, targeting employees and management of MTN Rwanda PLC. These methods provided comprehensive insights into the influence of internal core competencies on the organization's competitive advantage.

##### Ethical considerations

Before conducting field data collection, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from Mount Kenya University and a research authorization letter from the postgraduate school. With these letters, the researcher distributed the questionnaires directly to the respondents.

During data collection, ethical principles were strictly observed. According to Polit and Beck (2015), research ethics encompass the principles that must be considered at all stages of data collection and analysis, emphasizing that the researcher-participant relationship should remain professional. In this study, privacy was maintained

by explaining the study's purpose and obtaining permission to access the site[10]. Respondents' names and personal information were kept confidential, ensuring anonymity. The collected information was used solely for academic purposes.

#### 4. Results

This section systematically addresses the study's objectives and research questions by gathering insights from both participants and the researcher. It aims to enhance understanding of the subject by providing detailed, structured answers that align with the research goals.

##### Management Capabilities and MTN Rwanda's Competitive Advantage

In this investigation, this study examines how internal core competencies influence competitive advantage in the telecommunications industry, focusing on Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) Rwanda. It aims to evaluate the relationship between management capabilities and MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage.

Table 1: Management Capabilities and MTN Rwanda's Competitive Advantage

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean	Std
The education level of MTN Rwanda's management positively impacts its competitive advantage.	5 (4.63)	12 (11.11)	15 (13.89)	40 (37.04)	36 (33.33)	3.17	0.78
The years of experience in the industry of MTN Rwanda's management is a key factor in its competitive advantage.	3 (2.78)	10 (9.26)	14 (12.96)	38 (35.19)	43 (39.81)	3.35	0.74
Specialized training in relevant areas significantly contributes to MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage.	2 (1.85)	8 (7.41)	11 (10.19)	34 (31.48)	53 (49.07)	3.67	0.64
Effective leadership within MTN Rwanda enhances its competitive advantage.	1 (0.93)	6 (5.56)	9 (8.33)	33 (30.56)	59 (54.63)	3.81	0.57
Management's strategic decision-making skills positively influence MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage.	1 (0.93)	7 (6.48)	10 (9.26)	30 (27.78)	60 (55.56)	3.85	0.54

**Source:** Primary Data (2024)

The findings from Table 1 on Management Capabilities and MTN Rwanda's Competitive Advantage indicate several key factors. The table shows that the education level of MTN Rwanda's management positively impacts its competitive advantage, with 36% strongly agreeing and 33.33% agreeing, totaling a mean of 3.17 (SD = 0.78). Additionally, the years of experience in the industry of MTN Rwanda's management is identified as a key factor in its competitive advantage, with 43% strongly agreeing and 35.19% agreeing, resulting in a mean of 3.35 (SD = 0.74). Furthermore, specialized training in relevant areas significantly contributes to MTN Rwanda's

competitive advantage, with 53% strongly agreeing and 31.48% agreeing, leading to a mean of 3.67 (SD = 0.64). Effective leadership within MTN Rwanda is also highlighted as enhancing its competitive advantage, with 59% strongly agreeing and 30.56% agreeing, resulting in a mean of 3.81 (SD = 0.57). Lastly, management's strategic decision-making skills positively influence MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage, with 60% strongly agreeing and 27.78% agreeing, leading to a mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.54). These results suggest that management capabilities, including education level, experience, training, leadership, and decision-making skills, play significant roles in shaping MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry.

#### Effect of Innovation Capacity on the Organizational Competitive Advantage

This study investigated the effect of innovation capacity on the organizational competitive advantage of MTN Rwanda PLC. It examined how MTN Rwanda's ability to innovate influenced its competitive position within the telecommunications industry.

Table 2: Effect of Innovation Capacity on the Organizational Competitive Advantage

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	Mean	Std
MTN Rwanda's attitude towards risk-taking enhances its competitive advantage.	-	3 (2.78)	2 (1.85)	49 (45.37)	54 (50.00)	4.45	0.70
MTN Rwanda's willingness to adopt new technologies strengthens its competitive advantage.	-	2 (1.85)	5 (4.63)	50 (46.30)	51 (47.22)	4.47	0.71
Creativity and problem-solving skills within MTN Rwanda contribute significantly to its competitive advantage.	-	1 (0.93)	4 (3.70)	51 (47.22)	52 (48.15)	4.48	0.70
Innovation is deeply embedded in the culture of MTN Rwanda, leading to a competitive edge.	-	2 (1.85)	3 (2.78)	52 (48.15)	51 (47.22)	4.47	0.70
The implementation of innovative ideas is a priority for MTN Rwanda, giving it a competitive advantage.	-	3 (2.78)	4 (3.70)	50 (46.30)	51 (47.22)	4.47	0.70

**Source:** Primary Data (2024)

The findings from Table 2 of the research study indicate that MTN Rwanda demonstrates a strong attitude towards risk-taking, with 54% of respondents agreeing that this enhances its competitive advantage. Additionally, 51% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda's willingness to adopt new technologies strengthens its competitive advantage. Creativity and problem-solving skills within MTN Rwanda are perceived to contribute significantly to its competitive advantage, with 52% of respondents acknowledging this. The culture of innovation within MTN Rwanda, as indicated by 52% of respondents, is deeply embedded, leading to a competitive edge.

Moreover, the implementation of innovative ideas is seen as a priority for MTN Rwanda by 51% of respondents. Overall, the mean scores for these statements range from 4.45 to 4.48, indicating a high level of agreement among respondents. The standard deviation for each statement is relatively low, ranging from 0.70 to 0.71, suggesting a high level of consensus among respondents regarding the impact of innovation capacity on MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage.

### Intellectual Capital and Organizational Competitive Advantage

This study also examined the influence of intellectual capital on the organizational competitive advantage of MTN Rwanda PLC. It aimed to understand how internal core competencies contributed to the company's success in the telecommunications industry. By examining the relationship between intellectual capital and competitive advantage, this research provided insights into how MTN Rwanda PLC could enhance its organizational performance and maintain a competitive edge.

Table 3: Intellectual Capital and Organizational Competitive Advantage

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean	Std
The human capital within MTN Rwanda is a key driver of its competitive advantage.	-	-	5 (4.63)	38 (35.19)	65 (59.26)	4.55	0.64
MTN Rwanda's structural capital positively impacts its competitive advantage.	-	-	4 (3.70)	37 (34.26)	67 (61.11)	4.58	0.63
The relational capital of MTN Rwanda plays a significant role in its competitive advantage.	-	-	4 (3.70)	36 (33.33)	68 (62.96)	4.56	0.63
The knowledge and skills of employees at MTN Rwanda are a valuable asset for its competitive advantage.	-	-	4 (3.70)	35 (32.41)	69 (63.89)	4.56	0.63
MTN Rwanda's ability to leverage its intellectual capital gives it a competitive edge in the market.	-	-	5 (4.63)	35 (32.41)	68 (62.96)	4.55	0.64

**Source:** Primary Data (2024)

The table 3 presents the findings on the relationship between intellectual capital and organizational competitive advantage within Mobile Telecommunication Network Rwanda (MTN Rwanda). The results, based on primary data from 2024, indicate that the human capital within MTN Rwanda is perceived as a key driver of its competitive advantage, with 65% of respondents expressing agreement (mean = 4.55, SD = 0.64). Additionally, 67% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda's structural capital positively impacts its competitive advantage (mean = 4.58, SD = 0.63). Furthermore, the relational capital of MTN Rwanda is seen as significant, with 68% of respondents acknowledging its role in the company's competitive advantage (mean = 4.56, SD = 0.63). The knowledge and skills of employees are also recognized as valuable assets for competitive advantage, with 69% of respondents in agreement (mean = 4.56, SD = 0.63). Lastly, 68% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda's

ability to leverage its intellectual capital gives it a competitive edge in the market (mean = 4.55, SD = 0.64). These findings highlight the importance of intellectual capital, including human, structural, and relational capital, in enhancing MTN Rwanda's competitive position in the telecommunication industry.

#### Organizational Competitive Advantage

Table 4. Organizational Competitive Advantage of MTN Rwanda PLC

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	%	%	Mean	Std
The core competencies of MTN Rwanda PLC are well-defined and leveraged effectively.	1 (0.93)	2 (1.85)	4 (3.70)	57 (52.78)	44 (40.74)	4.31	0.68
MTN Rwanda PLC has a distinct competitive advantage in the market.	1 (0.93)	1 (0.93)	5 (4.63)	55 (50.93)	46 (42.59)	4.33	0.67
MTN Rwanda PLC fosters a culture of innovation and creativity.	1 (0.93)	2 (1.85)	6 (5.56)	52 (48.15)	47 (43.52)	4.32	0.70
Management qualifications at MTN Rwanda PLC are key drivers of competitive advantage.	1 (0.93)	3 (2.78)	4 (3.70)	53 (49.07)	47 (43.52)	4.31	0.71
MTN Rwanda PLC effectively leverages its intellectual capital to stay competitive.	1 (0.93)	2 (1.85)	3 (2.78)	58 (53.70)	44 (40.74)	4.32	0.67
MTN Rwanda PLC faces significant challenges in maintaining its competitive advantage and has strategies to overcome them.	1 (0.93)	2 (1.85)	7 (6.48)	54 (50.00)	44 (40.74)	4.28	0.71

**Source:** Primary Data (2024)

The findings from Table 4. Revealed that MTN Rwanda PLC has effectively leveraged its core competencies, with 57% of respondents indicating that these competencies were well-defined and effectively utilized, supported by a mean score of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.68. Additionally, 55% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda PLC possesses a distinct competitive advantage in the market, reflecting a mean score of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.67. The organization also fosters a culture of innovation and creativity, as indicated by 52% of respondents, with a mean score of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.70. The management qualifications at MTN Rwanda PLC are perceived as key drivers of its competitive advantage, with 53% of respondents acknowledging this, supported by a mean score of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.71. Furthermore, 58% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda PLC effectively leverages its intellectual capital to stay competitive, as indicated by a mean score of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.67. These findings showed that MTN Rwanda PLC has a strong foundation in core competencies and competitive advantage, supported by its management practices and innovative culture, although ongoing efforts are required to address challenges and sustain its competitive edge in the market.



## ANOVA

Table 5: ANOVA

### Competitive Advantage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Source:
Between Groups	124.999	0.12	3.906	474.605	.000	Primary Data (2024)
Within Groups	.617	0.57	4.018			
<b>Total</b>	<b>125.616</b>	<b>108</b>				

The re- search study conducted an ANOVA test to analyze the competitive advantage of Mobile Telecommunication Network Rwanda (MTN Rwanda). The results from Table 5. indicate that there is a significant difference in competitive advantage between groups ( $F(0.12) = 474.605, p = .000$ ). The between-groups variance (124.999) is much higher than the within-groups variance (.617), suggesting that the differences in competitive advantage are not due to random error but are likely attributed to the core competencies of MTN Rwanda. These findings underscore the importance of internal core competencies in fostering competitive advantage within the telecommunication industry, highlighting the strategic significance of MTN Rwanda's internal capabilities in driving its competitive position in the market.

### Correlation Analysis of Internal Core Competencies and Competitive Advantage in Telecommunication Industry

In the investigation to analyze the relationship between internal core competencies and competitive advantage within the telecommunications sector, with a specific focus on Mobile Telecommunication Network Rwanda. This study also It seeks to uncover how management capabilities, innovation capacity, and intellectual capital influence the company's competitive standing, the results and findings are presented in the table below

Table 6: Correlation between Internal Core Competencies and Competitive Advantage

		Competitive Advantage
Management Capabilities	Pearson Correlation	.752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	108
Innovation Capacity	Pearson Correlation	.904**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	108
Intellectual Capital	Pearson Correlation	.876**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	108

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

Source: SPSS Results, 2024

Note:  $rs = 1$ : Perfect Correlation,  $0.9 \leq rs < 1$ : Strong Correlation (very high),  $0.7 \leq rs < 0.9$ : High Correlation,  $0.5 \leq rs < 0.7$ : Moderate Correlation,  $rs < 0.5$ : Weak (low) Correlation,  $rs = 0$ : Absence of Correlation (Saunders,

2004)

Table 6, based on the research study reveals significant correlations between various internal core competencies and competitive advantage. The Pearson correlation coefficient between management capabilities and competitive advantage is  $r_s = .752^{**}$ , indicating a strong positive correlation at a significance level of (2-tailed)  $sig. = .000$ , with a sample size  $N = 108$ . Similarly, the correlation between innovation capacity and competitive advantage is even stronger, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r_s = .904^{**}$  and a significance level of (2-tailed)  $sig. = .000$ , also based on a sample size  $N = 108$ . The correlation between intellectual capital and competitive advantage is also strong, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r_s = .876^{**}$  and a significance level of (2-tailed)  $sig. = .000$ , again based on a sample size  $N = 108$ . These findings suggest that a higher level of management capabilities, innovation capacity, and intellectual capital within Mobile Telecommunication Network Rwanda is associated with a greater competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry. The high correlation coefficients indicate that these internal core competencies play a significant role in determining the competitive advantage of the company, highlighting the importance of focusing on these competencies to maintain or improve competitiveness.

### Discussions

The findings from the research study provide empirical support for the role of management capabilities, innovation capacity, and intellectual capital in shaping MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry. These findings align with established theories such as the RBV and KBV, highlighting the strategic importance of internal core competencies in driving firm performance and competitive advantage. The findings from Table 1 highlight the significance of management capabilities in shaping MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage. The education level of MTN Rwanda's management positively influences its competitive advantage, with 69.33% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This finding aligns with the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, which suggests that firm resources, including human capital, contribute to sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). According to Barney (1991), valuable, rare, and inimitable resources are key sources of competitive advantage. In this context, the education level of MTN Rwanda's management can be viewed as a valuable resource that is not easily replicable by competitors, thus contributing to its competitive advantage.

Table 2 highlights the strong correlation between innovation capacity and MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage. The willingness of MTN Rwanda to adopt new technologies and its culture of innovation are perceived as key factors contributing to its competitive advantage. This finding resonates with Schumpeter's theory of innovation (Schumpeter, 2022), which posits that innovation is a driver of economic growth and competitive advantage. Schumpeter (2019) argues that firms that innovate and introduce new products, processes, or services gain a competitive edge in the market. Therefore, MTN Rwanda's emphasis on innovation aligns with this theory and likely contributes to its competitive advantage in the telecommunication industry.

Table 3 underscores the importance of intellectual capital, including human, structural, and relational capital, in enhancing MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage. The high agreement among respondents regarding the role of intellectual capital in driving competitive advantage aligns with the knowledge-based view (KBV) of the firm (Grant, 1996). According to Grant (2016), the KBV emphasizes the role of knowledge assets in creating

competitive advantage. In this context, the knowledge and skills of MTN Rwanda's employees, its structural capital, and relational capital are valuable knowledge assets that contribute to its competitive advantage[11].

The findings from Table 4 reveal that MTN Rwanda PLC has effectively leveraged its core competencies, with 57% of respondents indicating that these competencies were well-defined and effectively utilized, supported by a mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.68). Additionally, 55% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda PLC possesses a distinct competitive advantage in the market, reflecting a mean score of 4.33 (SD = 0.67). The organization also fosters a culture of innovation and creativity, as indicated by 52% of respondents, with a mean score of 4.32 (SD = 0.70). The management qualifications at MTN Rwanda PLC are perceived as key drivers of its competitive advantage, with 53% of respondents acknowledging this, supported by a mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.71). Furthermore, 58% of respondents believe that MTN Rwanda PLC effectively leverages its intellectual capital to stay competitive, as indicated by a mean score of 4.32 (SD = 0.67). These findings show that MTN Rwanda PLC has a strong foundation in core competencies and competitive advantage, supported by its management practices and innovative culture, although ongoing efforts are required to address challenges and sustain its competitive edge in the market.

The ANOVA test results (Table 5) indicate a significant difference in competitive advantage between groups, suggesting that the differences in competitive advantage are likely attributed to the core competencies of MTN Rwanda. This finding is consistent with the RBV, which suggests that firm-specific resources and capabilities contribute to competitive advantage [5]. According to Barney (2021), firms with valuable, rare, and inimitable resources are likely to outperform competitors, which aligns with the significant difference in competitive advantage observed in MTN Rwanda.

The correlation analysis (Table 6) further confirms the relationship between internal core competencies and competitive advantage. The strong positive correlations between management capabilities, innovation capacity, intellectual capital, and competitive advantage indicate that these internal factors play a significant role in determining MTN Rwanda's competitive advantage. This finding is consistent with the RBV and KBV, which emphasize the importance of firm resources and knowledge assets in driving competitive advantage [5] .[11]

## 5. Conclusions

The study highlights how internal core competencies shape MTN Rwanda's competitive edge in telecommunications. Management capabilities strongly influence this advantage, evident from high mean scores and low standard deviations among respondents. MTN Rwanda's proactive approach to innovation, risk-taking, and technology adoption underscores its adaptability in a dynamic market. Moreover, investments in intellectual capital human, structural, and relational have proven critical in enhancing competitiveness.\

## Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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