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INFLUENCE OF E-PAYMENTS ON PERFORMANCE OF EAST AFRICA PORTLAND CEMENT PLC, KENYA

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Abstract: **The use of electronic procurement tactics to increase an organization's productivity has become increasingly mainstream in recent years. Due to the high cost of purchases, organizational performance expectations in the public sector have not been fulfilled, forcing the procurement unit to look for more funding that may not be available and could also take a while to be approved by The National Treasury. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of e-payments on performance of East Africa Portland Cement Plc, Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design with a target population of 111 employees and sample population of 58 respondents was selected using simple random sampling method. Semi-structured questionnaires were employed to collect primary data. SPSS descriptive statistics analysed quantitative data (version 24). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were carried out. Further inferential statistics specifically multiple regression analysis was conducted. Data was presented using tables. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were observed. The findings suggest that East Africa Portland Cement PLC in Kenya has effectively integrated various electronic and web-based technologies in its operations, leading to positive perceptions from respondents across different sections. The use of e-payments, e-tendering, e-ordering and e-sourcing has contributed to improved supply chain processes, enhanced vendor relationships, and increased efficiency in operations. The study recommends for promotion of digital payment adoption, enhancement of e-tendering platforms, investment in e-ordering and inventory management, facilitation of e-sourcing and vendor collaboration, improving the internet infrastructure and provision of training and workshops to enhance their digital literacy and understanding of e-commerce and supply chain technologies.**

Keywords: **E-payments, Organizational Performance.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic procurement is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) enabled by the internet to complete any or all of the steps in the traditional "paper-and-pencil" procurement process, including sourcing, negotiation and ordering (Shale, 2015). Electronic procurement, commonly referred as e-procurement, may also refer to the use of IT to manage buying documents, including communicating with suppliers and making purchase decisions. E-procurement, in its many forms, may be thought of as a system that unifies and simplifies many distinct types of procurement activity within an organisation. E-procurement refers to the sales of goods, services, through the internet and use of information and communication technologies (Shale, 2015). The preparation of bids includes the management of indent, Stadtler (2015). The advantages of e-procurement include reduced lead times, lower procurement costs, and more transparency (Aikins et al., 2014).

The performance of several big organisations was examined in research by Kaufmann and Carter (2014) that was conducted in the US and Europe about the effect of e-sourcing. The survey found that many businesses use reverse e-sourcing, and supply managers anticipate significant growth in the future. Furthermore, it was discovered that reverse e-sourcing involves suppliers bidding down the price of an item to be acquired while they compete dynamically, in real time, for the buyer's

business. Suppliers submit several electronic bids through the internet in a predetermined amount of time, often 30 minutes or less. A study was carried out by Ashlstrom (2010) in the United States of America and showed that cost and time are the two key indicators of an e-procurement process' success. When compared to the manual process of mailing tender papers via the post office, submitting a document online is quicker (Kaali, 2017). Because it is considerably simpler to trace the orders and make the required adjustments in the event that a mistake is discovered in the prior order, it results in improved order tracking and tracing (Cusumano & Selby, 2014).

According to the results of a United Nations study from 2011 on the topic of E-tendering and the transparency and efficiency of service delivery by public sector institutions, the federal government was able to save over $6 million, thanks to electronic tendering. Research revealed that electronic notifications, selection, and awarding were essential to the widespread use of electronic procurement, which has been the norm in recent years.

In the continent, the emergence of e-procurement has gained popularity more so in the public sector to deal with the hitches regarding inadequate commitment to responsibility and openness in all aspects of the sector's purchasing operations. Successful electronic procurement methods have had a positive impact on the effectiveness of services acquired in Africa (Sijaona, 2010). To ensure that all public procurement activities in Tanzania, for example, are carried out online, the country has implemented an electronic procurement system that allows for the, advertising, electronic sharing submission, contacting, evaluation, payment, monitoring and communication and of all such transactions (Tanzania PPOA, 2016).

Electronic sourcing allows suppliers from all over the globe to bid on a buyer's business, which has several benefits including lower pricing, shorter lead times, and less administrative hassles. The Rwanda Revenue Authority commissioned a research on the relationship between electronic sourcing and company success (Munezero, 2015). The study used a descriptive approach, with workers for the Rwanda Revenue Authority. It has been shown that using the Internet to do shopping may save money. If the potential dangers are properly evaluated and electronic auctions are used sparingly, online sourcing may be a useful tool. Organizational performance is improved as a result of electronic sourcing since it opens the market to sellers all over the globe.

Research done by Kamotho (2014) in Kenya looked at the impact of electronic sourcing on the efficiency of procurement by government agencies. The outcomes revealed a robust positive correlation between using online sources and productivity. To a considerable degree, businesses now rely on e-sourcing, which involves finding new suppliers online.

According to Santos and Brito (2012), performance is evaluated by adding external data in the reporting, such as benchmarking against other businesses, as well as multi-dimensional indicators (mixed financial and non-financial metrics). Accordingly, in the context of this research, "organisational performance" refers to the process of carrying out an activity in accordance with what is required by institutional management. The failure to properly implement electronic procurement methods could lead to subpar results. The term "e-tendering techniques" refers to theuuse of computer-based, internet-based systems to carry out specific or groups of the procurement process, including sourcing, ordering, negotiating, receiving, and reviewing the purchase after it has been made (Wangui, 2013). The implementation of e- procurement has been heralded as a "revolution" due to its prospective to reduce the total cost of buying (Barngetuny & Kimutai, 2015).

Adoption of electronic procurement takes into account the whole transformation of the organization's current system in an attempt to influence how activities will moving forward be completed (Soong, Ahmed, & Tan, 2020). The biggest advantage that the user sees in using electronic procurement over other methods is simply how handy it is. The ordering process is one of the most important procurement activities that must be altered in order to implement an electronic procurement system. Creating and submitting orders to numerous vendors is a part of the ordering process. The supplier and ordering employee's impression of the effectiveness and simplicity of the electronic procurement is vital to completely implementing electronic ordering inside the company and reaping its practical advantages (Soong, Ahmed, & Tan, 2020).

Electronic procurement processes in firms are very essential globally. Edquist, Vonortas, Zabala-Iturriagagoitia, and Edler (2015) found that electronic procurement may result in significant savings in Brazil. Salkute and management (2012) discovered that cost advantages impact e-procurement adoption in India. In some nations, such as Chile, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, electronic procurement is required at all steps of the process. Because electronic procurement is not yet completely evolved in the Philippines, it is utilised for transactional and information sharing during procurement. According to Aman and Kasimin (2011), in Malaysia, electronic procurement increased the usage of open electronic procurement competitive tender to minimise corruption, which is believed to have decreased by 5.9% compared to previous numbers of 3.7% when paper work was employed.

However, electronic procurement in Kenya is still in its infancy. However, the nation is reforming public procurement by implementing a variety of measures targeted at increasing procurement efficiency. The implementation of electronic procurement procedures is one of the major improvements. According to Mauti (2013), Kenya has implemented electronic procurement methods such as online tender advertising, online submission of tender bids, and online short-listing of providers. The functioning of the Kenyan supply chain is critical to the country's economic progress. Kenya's aviation business has been striving to be efficient and successful in providing consumers with reasonable prices, high service standards, and innovative in-flight goods and services. B2B e-Business has become the focus of the airline industry leading to the growth of e-Marketplaces. The stakeholders in the aviation industry are welcoming the possibility of joint procurement options and prospective activities in developing consortia-led e-marketplaces as intermediaries for aggregating demand and to ease transactions. According to Barasa (2014), e-Marketplaces have the ability to improve corporate and supply chain performance, changing the structure of the sector.

Electronic Procurement is the practice of reducing the time and money spent on procuring goods and services by the widespread use of Internet and mobile-based communication and collaboration tools for use in all or part of the process (Nyagah et al., 2015). Through the use of integrated procurement services provided by appropriate IT systems, e-procurement truly automates a company's buying operations. With the help of e-procurement software, tasks and transactions, can be handled automatically, freeing up resources that can be put toward other initiatives to increase the company's responsiveness to market demands. E-procurement improves productivity, which results in reduced waiting times. Electronic procurement perks include easier collaboration with vendors, shorter transaction times, more leeway, tighter integration between vendors and buyers, and less overhead. The use of modern procurement technology is considered to boost overall procurement efficiency.

The East African Portland Cement Company (EAPCC) Limited began as a trade firm that brought cement to East Africa for early building projects, mostly from England. Blue Circle Industries, based in the UK, founded it. Due to the colour similarity between set cement and Portland stone, which was quarried on the island of Portland in Dorset, England, the name Portland was given (Ogango, 2014).

The EAPCC is a Kenyan manufacturing firm. Its primary business is the manufacturing and marketing of cement and cement-related goods. Blue Circle Industries established the company in Athi River, Machakos County, in 1933. Under Blue Circle Industries, EAPCC got its start handling English cement imports. Although the main office for EAPCC is in the Republic of Kenya, the firm also has a branch in Uganda. The first EAPCC plant was situated in Nairobi's Industrial Area and had a production capacity of 60,000 tonnes. Its current headquarters building in Athi River was built in 1956 and opened to the public in 1958. By 1958, yearly output had increased from 60,000 to 120,000 tonnes. The annual budget for the enterprise is 1.3 million tonnes and the annual output is 1 million tonnes. The firm has built a 4-megawatt power plant that recycles waste gases. There is an annual savings of 300 million Kenyan shillings, or around US$1 million, thanks to this power plant.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Adopting e-procurement may aid in addressing the issues of corruption and inefficiency in the public sector, which will improve operational efficiency, cost containment, and lead time reduction (Brown, 2015). Due to the high cost of purchases (goods, works, and services), performance expectations in the public sector have not been fulfilled, forcing the procurement body to look for more funding that may not be available and could also take a while to be approved by National Treasury. Additionally, there has been operational inefficiency, which overtime costs money in terms of project completion timeliness. Last but not least, a long lead time results in failure to meet performance goals because of bureaucracy, corruption, political favoritisms, and a lack of transparent and sincere competition (Kipyego, 2012). The answer is to use e-procurement (KIPPRA, 2016).

As they concentrate on gaining a competitive edge, EAPCC should embrace the usage of procurement techniques including electronic procurement and the use of specialists. When information technology is used in procurement, organisational performance is enhanced. Employee reluctance to change, a lack of funding, and a failure by senior management to deploy the necessary resources are a few factors that might impede its adoption. Technology advancements are causing a rapid change in the company environment, and procurement managers must keep up by ensuring that all forms of procurement are environmentally friendly. The rising cost of power, the diminishing supply of raw materials, and the environmental problems brought on by raw material mining are only a few of the difficulties faced by EAPCC. Dust and carbon dusts are

the main pollutants. High levels of procurement best practices, according to Madhavaram and Hunt (2008), result in cost savings, improved inventory, better material flow, financial performance, new product creation in addition to better customer service. The EAPCC has combined the improvement of biodiversity with cement manufacturing. In order to achieve a mutually beneficial balance between nature and development, they consider it is necessary to restore nature to what has been destroyed. In order to restore the mined-out quarries and create green zones that serve as dust-buffers and carbon sinks for gaseous emissions, EAPCC has started greening projects.

Mutuku, Muathe and James (2019) investigated the effect of E-customization Capability on Financial Performance of Commercial Banks in Kenya and that e-commerce customization and found that e-commerce customization capability significantly affected financial performance of commercial banks in Kenya. Waithaka and Kimani (2021) studied effect of e-procurement practices on supply chain performance and noted that while organisations have implemented e-procurement, they still carry out a number of manual tasks. Muriuki et al. (2021) studied effect of electronic procurement technical support staff on procurement performance in energy sector state corporations in Kenya. The results showed that e-procurement improved accountability, lead time, bidding, and internal procedures impacted in energy sector state corporations in Kenya procurement processes. This study aimed to fill the gap left by previous research by concentrating on East Africa Portland Cement and comparing its results to those of other studies.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Resource Based View

The Resource Based View (RBV) idea was founded on Penrose's work in 1959, (Peteraf & Barney, 2012). The resources of the corporation play a pivotal role in the RBV hypothesis. According to the RBV, a firm's resources are the primary factors in its ability to compete and succeed in the market. The study uses two presumptions to dissect potential areas of competitive edge (Peteraf & Barney, 2012). To begin, the model presupposes that businesses in a sector may have varying degrees of influence over a given set of resources. Because the resources that businesses need to put their strategies into action are not fully transferable across enterprises, the model also implies that resource heterogeneity may persist over time. To provide a competitive advantage, a resource bundle must be comprised of resources that are not similar to those held by competitors. According to this line of thinking, "No strategy is available to one firm if all market players have the same resources (Cool, et al., 2012).

In order to be ready to set off a chain reaction in the organization's supply chain, different departments within the company take on their own responsibilities, which are bolstered by the RBV proposition. According to resource-based view (RBV) philosophy, an organization's internal operational processes—such using digital platforms to execute activities like tender invitation—are critical resources. Organizations may benefit from using industry benchmark standards when soliciting suppliers, and doing so can be facilitated by the use of a sophisticated computerized bidding process (Peteraf & Barney, 2003). The platform's impact on the efficiency of each company's procurement operations may be measured and analysed. Once a company realizes that the effectiveness of its procurement process is a key factor in establishing and maintaining its competitive edge, it will use the RBV concept to guarantee that it is managed with great care (Dierickx & Cool, 2009).

Empirical Literature Review

Many academics in the fields of management and information and communication technology have taken an interest in e-payments during the last two decades, and as a result, many diverse points of view on e-payments have been put out in various settings (Kabir et al., 2015). After the advent of e-payment systems, global monetary systems began to conform to the growing preference for cashless transactions among consumers, corporations, and governments throughout the globe (Odi & Richard, 2013). Due to this, the global monetary system is shifting away from coinage and paper currency in favour of electronic versions, which provide a more practical, swift, and safe method of exchanging value between people and businesses (Premchand & Choudhry, 2015). From a financial perspective, the e-payments part of e-procurement increases productivity by lowering transaction costs and cutting direct procurement expenses (Davila et al., 2015).

E-payment systems, as defined by Munyao and Moronge (2018), are legally binding financial commitments in which the buyer and the seller do business with one another via the use of electronic platforms. Mobile payments, online payments, e-cards, PC banking, and e-cash are all examples of electronic technologies used to conduct monetary transactions

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throughout the supply chain. The worldwide market for electronic payments is expanding at a breathtaking rate, and this trend promises to continue its phenomenal expansion for the foreseeable future. Customers benefit from being able to do business whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them, at a lower cost. It also makes the globe seem like a smaller place where everyone can easily communicate with one another. Electronic payment adoption is driven by the convenience, speed, and effectiveness with which new values may be introduced (Singh & Punia, 2011).

A research on the Critical Factors key to the accomplishment of optimum usage of e-payment utilization success in the Public Sector was undertaken by Vaidya, Sajeev & Callender (2014). Researchers discovered that although governments have made measures to encourage the use of e-procurement, many procurement operations still struggle due to a lack of e-payment infrastructure. Additionally, the research showed that effective e-procurement procedures included the implementation of a system and a feedback mechanism. They believed that electronic payments would boost procurement efficiency. The results of a research by Roma and McCue (2012) on e-procurement showed that electronic payment facilitated the bidding process, which improved openness and accounting, particularly in public procurement. The study also found that using electronic payment is linked to faster processing times and better purchasing procedures

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research design with a target population of 111 employees and sample population of 58 respondents was selected using simple random sampling method. Semi-structured questionnaires were employed to collect primary data. SPSS descriptive statistics analysed quantitative data (version 24). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were carried out. Further inferential statistics specifically multiple regression analysis was conducted. Data was presented using tables. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were observed.

5. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics results of e-payments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: E-payments

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Don't Know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	Mean	Std.Dev
The company has ensured that suppliers access to their online supply in day, any time	35.8	52.8	9.4	1.9	0	4.226	.697
The company uses cards for payments (debit/ credit)	32.1	58.5	5.7	3.8	0	4.189	.709
Payments to vendors are made through smart cards at this company.	18.9	66	11.3	3.8	0	4.000	.679
When paying vendors, the firm frequently utilizes electronic bank transfer services.	15.1	75.5	7.5	1.9	0	4.038	.553
The business pays its vendors through digital payment systems.	18.9	75.5	5.7	0	0	4.132	.482
To pay its vendors, the firm relies on mobile money transfer services.	24.5	64.2	7.5	3.8	0	4.094	.687

From the study findings the respondent agreed that the company has ensured that suppliers access to their online supply in day, any time(M=4.226, SD=0.697), the company uses cards for payments (debit/credit) (M=4.189, SD=0.709), the business pays its vendors through digital payment systems (M=4.132, SD=0.482) and that to pay its vendors, the firm relies on mobile money transfer services (M=4.094, SD=0.687). The respondents further agreed that when paying vendors, the firm frequently utilizes electronic bank transfer services (M=4.038, SD=0.553) and that payments to vendors are made through smart cards at the company (M=4.000, SD=0.679). These findings align with Munyao and Moronge's (2018) that e-payment systems are legally binding financial commitments and conducted electronically between buyers and sellers through various electronic platforms. The study's results provide real-world examples of electronic technologies used for monetary

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transactions in the supply chain, including mobile payments, online payments, e-cards, PC banking, and e-cash. The company's adoption of these e-payment technologies reflects a forward-looking approach in embracing modern and efficient payment methods, contributing to a streamlined and technologically advanced supply chain.

6. RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.708[a]	.501	.496	.24339

From the model summary results in Table 2, the R-value of 0.708 shows that E-payments strategies have a high correlation with performance at East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya. The value of R squared is 0.501 revealing that e-payments account for 50.1% of the variance of performance at East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya. The remaining 49.9% variation of performance at East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya is accounted for by other factors not included in the model

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.99	1	10.99	197.147	.002[b]
	Residual	2.843	51	0.059		
	Total	3.833	52			

The ANOVA table shows that, F (1, 52) =197.147, P< 0.05 which is greater than the mean square value of 10.99 (1, 52). The overall regression model is significant. Therefore, E-payments are significant predictors of performance at East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya

Table 4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.070	0.912		3.366	0.002
	E-payments	0.382	0.106	0.039	3.604	0.003

Regression coefficients show that holding e-payments to constant, performance of East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya stands at 3.07. E-payments had a positive and significant effect on performance of East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya (β =.382, p=.003<.05). A unit improvement in E-payments increases performance of East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya by 0.0382 units. These findings align with prior research by Davila et al. (2015), which emphasized the advantages of incorporating e-payments as part of e-procurement practices. According to Davila et al. (2015), the use of e-payments in e-procurement enhances productivity by reducing transaction costs and cutting direct procurement expenses. By adopting e-payments, East Africa Portland Cement PLC was able to streamline financial transactions and optimize procurement expenses, resulting in improved productivity and overall performance.

7. CONCLUSIONS

E-payments, E-tendering, E-ordering and E-sourcing had a positive significant effect on performance of East Africa Portland Cement PLC, Kenya. The findings suggest that East Africa Portland Cement PLC in Kenya has effectively integrated various electronic and web-based technologies in its operations, leading to positive perceptions from respondents across different sections. The use of e-payments, e-tendering, e-ordering, and e-sourcing has contributed to improved supply chain processes, enhanced vendor relationships, and increased efficiency in operations. These findings highlight the importance of leveraging technology in streamlining business practices and achieving higher performance levels. By embracing digital solutions, the company appears to be well-positioned for future growth and competitiveness in the market.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that there is a need to encourage and support the wider adoption of digital payment systems, such as mobile money transfer services and electronic bank transfers, among businesses in the cement industry. Policymakers can offer incentives or create favourable regulations to promote the use of secure and efficient digital payment methods, which can improve cash flow, reduce transaction costs, and enhance financial transparency.

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