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ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF LEVEL FOUR HOSPITALS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study was establish the relationship between electronic procurement practices and performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega County government, Kenya. The specific objective were: E-sourcing and E-Awarding and performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega county government, Kenya. This study was anchored on different theories relevant to the specific variables in this study. The research design was descriptive research design. The target population was 144 respondents from all senior managers in Kakamega County. This study preferred a census survey meaning purposive sampling techniques was used. The research instruments was both open and closed ended questionnaire. The researcher's collected data by dropping questionnaire and picking the same after two weeks. 10 % of the respondents were pilot tested from the entire study. The collected data was analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science version 28 and the same is now presented in a form of tables and figures. The pilot result was over 0.7 for reliability and 0.5 for content validity. The study concludes and recommend that the new knowledge to be used in implementing the results in all level four hospitals in Kenya.

Key Words: Electronic Procurement Practices, Performance of Level Four Hospitals, E-Sourcing, E-Awarding

Background of the Study

The supply chain management includes manufacturer, suppliers, transporters, warehouses, wholesalers, retailers, other intermediaries and even customers themselves. Any product traded on the consumer goods market, in its evolution from raw material to finished products, undergoes a series of successive transactions on the business-to-business market. For example, when a final consumer purchases a bottle of Coca Cola, he/she does not buy directly from Coca Cola, but from an intermediary (for example the hypermarket or neighborhood store) and the product goes through several transactions on the business-to-business market on the circuit Coca-Cola wholesaler; retailer and final consumer (Kalpande & Toke, 2021). This supply chain believes that "a supply chain consists of all parties involved, directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a customer request. Within each organization, such as a manufacturer, the supply chain includes all functions involved in receiving and filling a customer request. These functions include, but are not limited to, new product development, marketing, operations, distribution, finance, and customer service (Jo & Kwon, 2021).

Supply Chain Management (SCM) is the science that discusses suppliers and customers from upstream to downstream to get lower costs and superior value for customers. As defined by the supply chain council, supply chain is a network of organizations that work together, and are connected to control, manage, and improve the flow of materials, and information from suppliers to end customers. Supply Chain Management can also be defined as the strategic and systematic coordination of traditional business functions which facilitate the distribution network between customers, and the company's internal activities. Changes in the distribution of supply chains are very dynamic, the things that affect it include direct customers and also announcements of new regulations. From the statements that have been mentioned, the changes in the supply chain distribution are very dynamic, making the SCM topic will continue to evolve and continue to adapt as needed in an effort to provide better alternative solutions. For this reason, it is obligatory to know any new concepts in the discussion of SCM scientific concepts. Supply chain practices greatly influence company or organizational performance (Jiang, Han & Huo, 2020).

Competitive advantage shows that the supply chain is correct, because it includes supplier management, customer management, inventory management, distribution, development, and design of new products. SCM in manufacturing occupies a position that is widely studied by researchers compared to SCM in other fields. Of the 100 articles reviewed, 39% study SCM in manufacturing. However, it should also be noted that the facts show that in theory, SCM lags behind in developing its scientific base compared to other scientific disciplines. So that, a systematic review is needed to add theoretical shared insights in the field and sub-field of SCM science. Therefore, in this paper, we try to write down terms or theories from the scientific development of SCM (Jemai, Do Chung & Sarkar, 2020).

The field of logistics, introduced the concept of Supply Chain Management (SCM) in literature at the beginning of the 1980s. However, the research undergone in the field of integration and coordination of different functional units began long before the term SCM appeared. In literature, these research efforts could be identified in different fields such as logistics, marketing, organizational theory, management and operational research, through focused theoretical contributions, mentioned such as: channel sear location and control in production–distribution networks bullwhip effect" in production-distribution systems. Theorists' interest and practitioners' concern regarding supply chain management have steadily increased since the 1980s, when firms found that they can no longer compete effectively isolated from their suppliers or other entities in the supply chain and saw the benefits of collaborative relationships within and beyond their own organization (Jemai, Do Chung & Sarkar, 2020).

Applicability of SCM has been widely researched in numerous application domains during the last decade and a number of definitions of supply chain management have been proposed in the literature. Despite the popularity of SCM in academic and business environment, there remains considerable confusion regarding its meaning because, some authors defined SCM in operational terms involving the flow of raw materials and products, while some viewed it as a management philosophy and some others viewed it in terms of a management process or as integrated system. Author have even conceptualized SCM differently within the same article: on the one hand, as a management philosophy, and on the other as a form of integrated system (Iqbal, Kang & Jeon, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Most organizations spend more than 30% of their income dollars on purchasing goods and services. There has been non-performance of level four hospitals Kakamega county government, Kenya and the causes is attributed to be electronic procurement practices. According to Suleiman (2020) "e-procurement plays a key role that helps reduce the operation costs, increase efficiency and significantly reduce lead times. Private health care providers like other organizations have embraced e-procurement practices to take advantage of the accruing benefits. As a step to achieving this, the Government moved to set up electronic procurement practices. A full electronic procurement practices has been set up by the government to spearhead the FBMF change in the country which is a positive signal to e-procurement (Obwocha and Osoro, 2023). The government of Kenya is currently advocating for e-procurement by all public procuring entities to enhance transparency, effectiveness, accountability and reduction in corruption. Further, it is argued that there is need to have a robust automated procurement system which is interlinked and this will lead to enhanced competitiveness and lowered costs (Al-khawaldah et al, 2022).

According to Obwocha and Osoro (2023), while public procurement is one of the cores functions of the government, it has been and continues to be neglected by academicians and researchers. This creates a knowledge gap making it a challenge for governmental entities, policy–makers, and public procurement professionals to make decisions relating to adoption of new technologies and emerging procurement trends. E-procurement is one of the reforms that will be adopted by the government of Kenya to enhance public procurement operations. In ideal conditions, adoption of e-procurement is expected to bring sanity in the procurement operations, reduce costs and enhance efficiency. For many organizations, including public organizations, the objectives of adoption of e-procurement include: enhance efficiency; improved accountability, transparency and reduced costs (Obwocha & Osoro, 2023).

There have been efforts to ensure that government agencies implement e-procurement, Procurement Regulation (2013) and not long ago, initiatives of implementing e-procurement by the government of Kenya were hailed as a success. The lack of transparency in the manual procurement process has made it impossible for the government and state corporations to realize their objectives leaving e-procurement as the major alternative. Despite all this, procurement function in Kenya has been characterized by decline of performance of level four hospital sFBMF which have been attributed to poor handling of FBMF thus leading to excessive corruption. According to Novitasari, Alshebami and Sudrajat (2021), the devolved units in Kenya are now advocating for the suspension of the implementation of e-procurement systems and Performance of level four hospitals FBMF citing its ineffectiveness in service delivery due to lack of the required infrastructure. Currently, the performance of level four hospitals the devolved units in delivering services to the stakeholders is minimal due to the numerous challenges they are facing and complaints on their procurement processes. In view

of the foregoing, therefore designed to do a study in the Kenyan Context so as to bridge the existing gap.

Objectives of the Study

General Objectives of the Study

The general objective was to establish the relationship between electronic procurement practices and performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega County government, Kenya.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

i. To examine the effect of e-awarding on performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega County government, Kenya.
ii. To assesses the effect of e-sourcing on performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega County government, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory is based in the social construct of reality concept. It was brought into view in the late 1970s by John Meyer and Brian Rowan to "help understand how organizations fit with, are related to and are shaped by their societal, state, national and global environments" (Knoblauch & Wilke, 2016). The institutional theory has increasingly been used by scholars to explain the complex relationship between the institutions and their dynamic environment. Proponents of this theory argue that the environment within the institution can profusely influence the development of the organization's formal structures and operations (Scott & Levitt, 2017). Organizational fields and populations are the units of analysis for the institutional theory (Scott & Davis, 2008). Scott (2004) argued that institutions are made up of regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements which alongside related activities and resources define life. The regulatory elements apply laws, rules and sanctions to enforce compliance. The normative element uses the norms and values, social responsibilities to ensure compliance. The cultural-cognitive element is based on common beliefs, symbols and shared understanding.

The theory is anchored on am alternative set of assumptions centered around the idea of social construct of reality, that is, the perception and subjective understanding that create the external and internal environment organization. Managers besides being shaped by social norms and expectations, they are further; their behavior is also shaped by how they perceive the world (Raymard, Gerry & Greenwood, 2020). The theory has been criticized by subsequent scholars. Munir (2020) identified one blind spot on the theory. He argued that when examining on the legitimization of practices or the influence of institutions on our actions, there is a tendency to take the powers of those higher in authority in the organizations as absolute. Scott & Levitt, (2017) noted that the theory gives little recognition to the fundamental role of power.

Problems bedeviling project procurement span beyond technical issues; there must be recognized as socio-technical endeavors attached to institutional complexity (Biesenthal et al., 2022). Procurement works to achieve compliance to relations, wise application of public resources and supplier delivery of goods and services contracted (Russell and Meehan, 2024). As guised by the theory of independent economic institutionalism, procurement process in public entities is understood to be a set of institutions bearing outstanding inter-relationship

This theory applies well to the implementation of sustainable procurement policies and practices in public serving organizations and projects. It is about how the organizational culture and the extent of the current climate in procurement support sustainability ant the extent of change (Brammer & Walker, 2022). This theory creates an understanding technology on procurement process so as effectively execute a procurement process from supplier evaluation, award, and procurement performance.

Resource Base View Theory

The focus of RBT on the firm's performance based on Meso perspectives was a reaction to the earlier managerial interest in the industry. Structure, a more macro perspective. RBT addresses an internally-driven approach by focusing on internal organization resources, as opposed to externally driven approaches to understanding the accomplishment or failure of leveraging organizational activities. It aims to elaborate on imperfectly imitable firm resources that could potentially become the source of sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Some confusion persists concerning the label for the theory, whether to appropriately use the term resource-based theory (RBT) or resource-based view (RBV). Some research papers refer to the theory as RBT based on the evidence that the view has evolved into a theory, but some others refer to RBV. However, reflecting on the research community's perspective, several research assessments support the RBT's credentials (Barry, 1996).

Resource-Based Theory (RBT) was first put forward by Penrose (2009), who proposed a model on the effective management of firms' resources, diversification strategy, and productive opportunities. Penrose's publication was the first to propose conceptualizing a firm as a coordinated bundle of resources to address and tackle how it can achieve its goals and strategic behavior (Barry, 1996). RBT began to take shape in the 1980s.The antecedent of RBT was the Theory of the Growth of the Firm. Later, during the 1990s, Jay Barney's work was critical to the emergence of RBT and became the dominant paradigm in strategic management and strategic planning. RBT provides a framework to highlight and predict the fundamentals of organization performance and competitive advantage (Barney, 2007).

Theory assumptions of RBT begin with the assumption that organizational characteristics are not merely modified. The organization needs to correct its orientation if it is to succeed and achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The dominant paradigm in determining a company's profits potential, such as the view of Porter (1989), suggests that a firm's internal factors, such as resources and capabilities, determine a firm's profit. The seminal work about strategic resources by Barney (1991) became the fundamental contribution to RBT, guiding the transformation perspective of the resource-based view into a developed theory as RBT. However, the traditional RBT does not elaborate on why and how some firms gain a competitive advantage in circumstances of unpredictable and rapid change (Barry, 1996). The development of a broader RBT perspective suggests that firms can achieve competitive advantage not only by utilizing critical assets, but also by building new potential capabilities via learning, skill acquisition and the accumulation of tangible and intangible assets over time. The resource-based logic suggests that if valuable resources (i.e. resources that are costly and difficult to imitate) are possessed by few firms, those firms that are able to control these resources potentially to generate sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Hence, firms can achieve an advantage by continually recombining or reconfiguring diverse types of resources and by creating new applications to meet market demand.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an underrated methodological approach that should be paid attention to before embarking on a research journey in any field, be it science, finance, history

and psychology. A conceptual framework sets forth the standards to define a research question and find appropriate, meaningful answers for the same (Yin, 2022). It connects the theories, assumptions, beliefs, and project behind your research and presents them in a pictorial, graphical, or narrative format. Your conceptual framework establishes a link between the dependent and independent variables, factors, and other ideologies affecting the structure of your research.

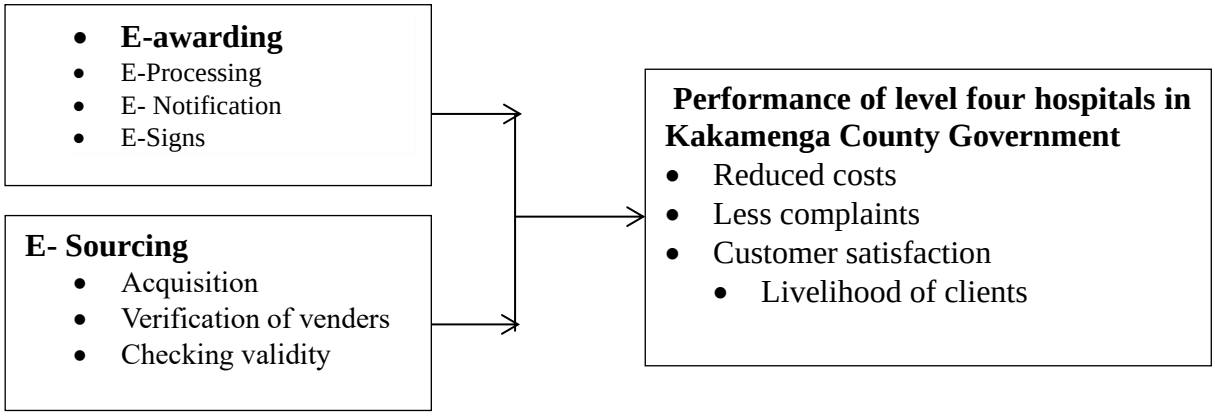

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

E-Awarding

The literature on e-Procurement is rich with estimates of its benefits (financial and non-financial, stra-tegic, tactical and operational) such as: Accelerated flow of information and improved collaboration between supply chain members, reduced paperwork and administrative hours, reduced ordering costs, reduced purchasing cycle times, higher price transparency, improved accuracy, improved auditing and security controls, simplified fund transfers, reduced inventory levels and associated inventory costs (Bof & Previtali, 2007; Min & Galle, 2003; Zheng et al., 2006; Davila et al., 2003; Gunasekaran & Ngai, 2008; Panayiotou et al., 2004; Calipinar & Soyzal, 2022). According to a survey by Gunasekaran, 66,7% of surveyed companies believe that successful e-Procurement implementation can improve long term organizational performance and 34,8% believe that successful e-Procurement implementation can improve short term organizational performance (Gunasekaran & Ngai, 2008). Furthermore, technology usage in purchase activities is inevitable due to the globalization, the increasing number of suppliers with the expanding complexity of products and the growing use of outsourcing and due to the fact that technology usage in procurement activities plays a pivotal role in determining the performance of firms (Batenburg, 2007). These developments towards better cost consciousness and process reengineering is expected to also affect the procurement activities in the healthcare sector. A survey in Germany revealed that approx. 70% of the hospitals and medical products suppliers utilize e-Purchasing solutions (BVMed Survey, 2007). The same survey identified reduced order cycle times (60% of respondents), less errors due to automation of processes (59%) and procurement process optimization (42%) as the top three benefits, whereas the price transparency was deemed as less important.

Web-based systems is about identifying suppliers who can provide goods and services via electronic means. The web-based systems activity is fitted into a software application in a manner that permits buyers and suppliers to meet and engage online through electronic request for quotations and subsequent evaluation. The platform also allows invitation for contracts bids in which the lowest bidder as identified by the system is award then contract or business opportunity at the end of the process (Nur, 2022). Maalim, Magutu and Mose (2019) avers that web-based systems is the “the process of identifying new supplier to deliver goods or services

in a specified category through electronic means." The internet powered application facilitates a technology based full cycle procurement process between buyers and suppliers in an efficient and cost effective manner (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021).

Web-based systems, is described as "the Sourcing process enabled with the appropriate web-based, collaborative technology in order to facilitate the full life-cycle of the procurement process for both buyers and suppliers" (Oona, 2017). More particularly web-based systems is the "strategic activity conducted by the procurement professional to establish, manage and monitor a compliant contract and covers the buying process including specification, e-RFx, e-Tender, e-Auction, contract evaluation/ negotiation, tracking, forecasting and monitoring savings. The technologies within the web-based systems platform are at the disposal of organizations to utilize in a way that consistent and sustainable competitive edge" Tsuma & Kanda, 2017). It can be safely concluded that web-based systems is "considered to be the backbone of modern strategic sourcing as it automates and streamlines strategic sourcing processes such as RFx's and reverse auctions. Furthermore it enhances flexibility and transparency in the buyer-seller relationship" (Kisimbii & Maalim, 2019).Of all the many forms of web-based systems, two are most common namely online request for quotation (e-RFQ) and electronic auction (e-auction). e-RFQ entails identifying needs, the buyer asks pre-qualified suppliers to tender their proposed quotations for the products or services which are then subjected to an online evaluation and subsequent award and ordering . The second one is e-auction in which possible buyers are invited to ender for the contracts on offer. An online evaluation is done and the lowest tender is contracted to supply good and services as needed (Kimutai & Ismael, 2016).

In an ever evolving business environment with an acute focus being efficient and excellent customer service and overarching business goals, web-based systems has provided a realistic springboard in that direction (Chikwe & Obi, 2016). Web-based systems offers benefits such as coast reduction, expenditure visibility and economies of scale. According (Ateto, Ondieki, & Okibo 2013) web-based systems lowers the costs of operation, guarantees product and service quality to customers. Web-based systems has played is good part in reaching the ultimate goal of a fast, reliable and efficient sourcing process. Through it, organizations have benefited from economies of scale though bulk buying, expenditure visibility, transparent transactions and low lead time on goods and services opines that "web-based systems added great value to both the client and the supplier (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021).".

E-Sourcing

The use of electronic media in procurement activities can lead to a significant cost and time reduction compared to managing the purchasing process by traditional means, as it involves the streamlining of the procurement process by eliminating paper–based documents and conducting the purchasing process via web-based systems (Zunk et al., 2024). DeBoer et al. consider e-Purchasing as the application of web based technology throughout the purchasing process (DeBoer et al., 2002). A more comprehensive definition is given by Tatsis et al., who define e-Procurement as "the integration, management, automa-tion, optimization and enablement of an organization's procurement process, using electronic tools and technologies, and web-based applications" (Tatsis et al., 2006).

In the healthcare industry, e-Purchasing typically allows for automated drug-inventory reporting and control, drug replenishment alerts, online purchase of drugs and related medical supplies (Smith & Flanegin, 2004). Nowadays almost anything can be purchased online, from large medical equipment to rubber gloves and pharmaceuticals. The days of leafing through outdated paper catalogues are over as online ordering gives the purchaser real-time information

on any given product (Ketikidis et al., 2010). As the healthcare industry is increasingly looking for innovative technologies and creative management solutions to handle the procurement processes in a competitive manner, e-Purchasing has gained strategic visibility and has emerged as the driving force behind several supply chain practices (Nzuve, 2013), as it offers to healthcare establishments notable advantages such as convenience, efficiency, broad selection, favorable pricing, information on new products and others (Ketikidis et al., 2010).

The forward steps in technology have enabled businesses to run technology powered operations. The technology powered operations, in the contemporary business environment has proved to be a game changer (Tran & Huang, 2024). Laudon, (2022) "Information technology always develops in line with developments in human civilization. Development of information technologies covers the development of information technology infrastructure, such as hardware, software, technology data storage, and communication technology." The marriage between traditional commerce and internet has given birth to business opportunities to develop new business models to benefit from globalization" (Restanto, Ghozali, Purwanto & Januarti, 2022).

E-payment remains one of the fast growing e-business technology application across all supply chains courtesy of the internet facility and has revolutionized business operations because it's in payments where the rubber meets the road in business (Kumar & Rakshit, 2020). Imafidon, "2013) defines e-payments as the "instruments, organizations, operating procedures, information and communication systems employed to initiate and transmit payments from a payer to a payee and for settling payments that is, transfer money." Oloruntoyin and Olanloye, (2022) further notes that "The E-payments channels are the apparatus used to safely and efficiently transfer monetary value in exchange for goods and services as well as financial assets." According to Laudon, (2022) e-payments cover payments for public services for people, banks and businesses which have been done and supported by technology (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021).

E-payments includes debit and credit cards, mobile payments platforms, electronic fund transfer (EFT) and internet banking have been implemented in the Kenyan market. However, it's worth to note that e-payment application, though in use in Kenya, the adoption is at different levels both in public and private sector (Kelvin, 2022). E-payments have generated manifold benefits of business and supply chains especially. The benefits include "speeding up the process of transactions; the parties involved in the process of the transactions can transfer and receive money anytime and anywhere; e-payment also supports the movement of green technology wherein use of paper can be reduced" (Restanto, Ghozali, Purwanto & Januarti, 2022). According to Fatonah., Yulandari,, and Wibowo, (2022) studies and practice have found out that "E-payment leads to credible, convenient and secure transactions due to risk reduction and increased security in the whole process." Kamble, (2019) further identified "e-payment to be a very convenient means of payment as compared to the traditional payment methods such as cash and cheque. This is because payment is made instantly leading to saving time."

E-transactions in business and financial requires a secure deposits and withdrawals of money to and from banks, secure payments and transactions, safe communication network and secure network maintenance and management. Security must handle privacy, authenticity non-repudiation and integrity (Okifo & Igbunu, 2020). Ngairah and Nzulwa (2016) argues that "This includes both direct and indirect costs; atomic exchange-EPS must involve consumers paying money or something equivalent in value (tokens) in a transaction; user reach-which refers to the range of users to whom an EPS is accessible, whether countries or ages; value mobility- EPS token circulation is limited to the community authorized by the issuing

company, the token may be valued by large number of parties at different places and passed along as gift or exchanged for currency in equal value; and financial risk-where concern is on level of security for online transactions, potential damages or loses that may be incurred (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021)."

The application of e-payments has indeed done well to improve performance but has been riddled with challenges that threaten its usage. Olakah (2022) identifies delays in completing transaction due to network issues as one other challenge. Further, this application solely depends of power and any outage grounds all its operations. AL-Qawasmi *et al.*, (2020) opined that "In comparison to the conventional payment methods, e-payment systems are noted to have many Barriers, Which prevent customers from interacting with them. as loss of customer trust, difficulty in use, and high transaction costs, lack of perceived advantage and perceived risk. These constrains are considered to be of importance in providing customers with adequate trust to switch to an online payment system." Moreover, customers will stop engaging in online activities if these conditions are not supported in the payment systems, and thus leads to loss through potential sales via the Internet" (Laudon & Traver, 2016).

Performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega county government

Medicare is provided by public and private health providers. Public Medicare is usually provided by the established government through health facilities. Private health care is usually provided "for profit hospitals and self-employed practitioners, and not for profit non-government providers, including faith-based organizations" (Jenatabadi, 2020). Organizational performance is a broad concept which has often been used as synonymously with effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. Performance consists of the real outputs or results of an organization as weighed against the wished-for outputs. Performance is a "tool that can be used to measure the level of achievement or policy groups and individuals. Performance is a translation of performance that is often interpreted as appearance, demonstration or achievement" (Richard et al., 2020).

Silitonga and Widodo (2017) "Organizational performance is as a description of the level of achievement of the implementation of an organization's tasks in an effort to realize the goals, goals, mission and vision of the organization." Al Damoe (2022) avers that organizational performance is manifested in "financial scales non-monetary, sales, market share and profit methods such as, commitment and efficiency of employee, organizations' productivity, employees' satisfaction, quality of service, and innovativeness." Devinney, Yip and Johnson (2008) suggest that organizational performance consists of three areas of organizational results: financial performance, market performance and shareholder return.

According Dragomir and Pânzaru, (2024) "Performance represents a state of competitiveness, attained through a level of effectiveness and productivity that ensures its strong presence on the market, considering the multiform and complex interaction between numerous factors." Richard et al. (2020) considers organizational performance as includes three particular firm areas: financial performance, product market performance and shareholder return. Performance is defined as the ability of an organization to achieve is goals and objectives. Organization performance is expressed on four parameters namely efficiency, relevance, effectiveness and financial sustainability (Kachuwai, 2022). Ismael, Nor'Aini, and Davoud, (2010) defines "performance is all about achieving the objectives that organizations/firms set for themselves."

Performance in an organization is best explained by the context in which it operates. It demands a wholesome vision of how the internal and external contexts of the organization, the qualitative and quantitative, human and technical, physical and financial measures interdepend and interplay (Hammed, 2024). The essence of performance is to create value by the use of all

available resources that is equal or more that the capital injected. Emeriau, Robouam and Dupre (2020) contends that procurement performance is one of the intangible resources that help create value by increasing effectiveness and efficiency across the entire procurement function in the organization. Thus, this is one of the proven ways of effectively controlling the junk resources expended by procurement function (Richard, et al., 2020).

The application of technology of e-procurement in organizations has further added impetus to organizational performance and consequently business performance (Awadallah and Saad 2022). Nawi et al., (2017) further avers that "electronic procurement facilitates partnerships with suppliers, accelerate procurement cycle times and enables supplier performance enhancements, and better data consistency, which reduces ordering inaccuracies and improves supplier performance." Studies in the health care system strongly feel that "hospitals in should consider full implementation of e-procurement practices to greatly improve their operational performance in terms of timely procurement of goods (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021)."

Empirical Review

E-Awarding

Mustapha (2022) did a study on" E-payment technology effect on bank performance in emerging economies–evidence from Nigeria." The study variables included performance index, risk exposure and profitability measure. The study used a descriptive survey research design and used both primary and secondary data. The study concluded that e-payment technology is in use and it is an ingredient for business performance. Gichuhi (2022) did a study on "does e-payment influence procurement performance? a case of geothermal development company in Kenya." The study sought particularly to "determine the influence of e-payment on procurement performance in Geothermal Development Company in Kenya." The study was anchored on business to business model. Descriptive research design was employed and a sample size of 97 respondents from a multistage sampling from whom primary data was collected by the aid of a questionnaire. The study concluded that "e-payment has a significant relationship with procurement performance. It was noted that e-payment enables prompt payment of suppliers hence enabling efficient procurement processes. Further e-payment was shown to significantly account for variation in procurement performance" leading to a recommendation that "it is important for the company to adopt e-payment as a means of boosting procurement performance in the long run. E-payment was shown to be strongly correlated with procurement performance (Ongeri & Osoro, 2021)."

Ngairah and Nzulwa (2016) did a study on "challenges facing performance of e-payment systems in government ministries in Kenya; a case of ministry of energy and (petroleum (MOEP)." The study was anchored on the diffusion of innovation theory and the developer-based (determinist) theory. The study employed descriptive research design and data collection was both "interactive (interviews and focus group discussions) and non-interactive involving questionnaire and document analysis. This triangulation enabled the researcher to obtain a variety of information challenges facing performance of E-payment in government ministries in Kenya." The study found out that e-payments has been embraced by government agencies albeit with "occasioned by the levels and rate of usage of E-payment s by the ministry, the costs involved to engage the ministry in the e –payments systems and the issues of security and trust as addressed in the processes of E-payment systems in government ministries in Kenya." The challenges identified included "lack of adequate and reliable infrastructure, inadequate skills due to low levels of computer literacy. Breakdowns and unprecedented delays, bureaucracies with respect to specimen signatures and authentication, lack of legal and institutional frameworks in governments on E-payments, Integration issues, Lack of knowledge and awareness on E-payments, Lack of trust in electronic payments. Slow processes and overly

misappropriation and maladjustment of records apparent on the face value (Ongeri & Osoro, 202)."

E-Sourcing

The perception of what e-Sourcing entails has strongly evolved over the last years from a very narrow focus on e-Auctions into what is now generally accepted as e-Sourcing, namely "the Sourcing process enabled with the appropriate web-based, collaborative technology in order to facilitate the full life-cycle of the procurement process for both buyers and suppliers" (BuyIT, 2004). More specifically, e-Sourcing is the strategic activity conducted by the procurement professional to establish, manage and monitor a compliant contract and covers the buying process including specification, e-RFx, e-Tender, e-Auction, contract evaluation/ negotiation, tracking, forecasting and monitoring savings. Organizations can utilize enabling technologies within the e-Sourcing arena, which allow them to benefit from strategic sourcing in a scalable way in areas previously not addressed by purchasing. While the Return on Investment for e-Sourcing can be very positive, the primary goal should be to form a part of an integrated approach to elevate the purchasing function by addressing all elements of change: strategy, structure, systems, process and people. Therefore, e-Sourcing is considered to be the backbone of modern strategic sourcing as it automates and streamlines strategic sourcing processes such as RFx's and reverse auctions. Furthermore it enhances flexibility and transparency in the buyer-seller relationship. As shown in a report by the Aberdeen Group, e-Sourcing is the widest adopted technology solution by Best-in-Class enterprises (63%)

for the purpose of supporting and streamlining their strategic sourcing programs (Limberakis, 2022). The operational benefits of e-Sourcing as identified in a study by Booz-Allen & Hamilton are: a) streamlining of processes due to simpler/faster ordering, reduced paperwork, easy online comparison, fewer human errors and lower inventory costs and b) purchasing cost reductions due to transparency of spend, buy aggregation, better compliance, reduced maverick (out of contract) buying, comparability and competition, efficient market and pricing mechanisms, data for strategic sourcing and virtual buying organizations to increase bargaining power (Baker et al., 2000). Some of these benefits were quantified as part of a research conducted by the Aberdeen Group, namely 5– 20% reductions in material costs, reduced sourcing cycle times by 25 – 30% and time-to-market by 10 – 15% (Presutti, 2003). Due to these anticipated benefits, suppliers are facing increasing demand from the buyers to turn to online applications such as e-RFx and e-Auctions systems for negotiation and trading purposes (Ivang & Sorensen, 2005). However, the adoption of e-Sourcing represents substantial challenges for a company such as the change

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Performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega County Government

Proper supplier collaboration strategy may possibly help food and beverage manufacturing to plan and effectively tackle external and internal effects that potentially obstruct production and firm performance (Tseng et al., 2022). This is due to the growing complexity of contemporary supply chains and the subsequent increased probability of experiencing a disruption. As international trade becomes increasingly efficient and companies continue to expand their networks, the need to establish and maintain a detailed understanding of your supply chain becomes more significant. Meanwhile, issues around food security and associated risks are extremely important. Some methods or approaches have been used to identify and assess risks that occur in agri-food supply chain. Effective performance of level four hospitals should go beyond the firm's established suppliers to try and mitigate against the risk of supply chain break down (Al-Ansi, 2022).

The basic goals of performance management are to improve Performance, reduce costs and minimize risk (Wang & Zhang, 2022). A good performance management solution provides a reliable performance metrics. Cost Reduction use one supplier; you are eliminating competition for your orders. Find several suppliers who compete on price, and use several of them at all times so you can avoid costly delays in receiving products. Using multiple suppliers protects you from spending money for less-than-satisfactory service. In addition, if there's no approval process and individuals have the power to order supplies whenever they want, you could be ordering things you don't need. Examine your ordering process to see if it is causing waste (Al-Ansi, 2022).
Some companies have also scaled down their manufacturing capacity impacting negatively on the financial performance of level four hospitals therefore the study sought to analyze the effect of total assets on financial performance of level four hospitals in Kakamega county Kenya (Wang & Zhang, 2022). The study was guided by economic theory of firm growth. The study adopted descriptive survey research design with a target population of 15 food and beverage manufacturing firms. The unit of observation was 15 food and beverage manufacturing firms

in Nakuru County. The unit of analysis was 56 employees in the finance department. The study utilized primary data. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data desirable for the study.. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was done using frequency, percentage, means and standard deviations to describe the basic characteristics of the population. Inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson's Product Moment correlation and multiple regression model. The finding of the study was presented in table form (Ali & Shoaib, 2023).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive research design (Mugenda & Mugenda 2008). The function of a research design ensured that the evidence obtained enabled the researcher to effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. The target population is a subset of the general public identified as the targeted population was 144 respondents who comprised, procurement officer, finance officer, admin officer and production officer. Purposive Random sampling is a technique was used in qualitative research to select a specific group of individuals or units for analysis. Participants are chosen "on purpose," not randomly. It is also known as judgmental sampling or selective sampling. This study was used both open and closed ended questionnaire. A questionnaire was a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aims to collect information from a respondent. A research questionnaire were typically a mix of close-ended questions and open-ended questions. The study used Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28. The analyzed results or data is now presented in tables, charts, graphs, and other figures. The following multiple regression formula was applied in this study

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 130 questionnaires that were circulated to the respondents, 103 of the respondents dully filled and retuned questionnaires; yielding a response of 90.8%. This was considered to be a very reliable response rate for the generalization of study findings is in line with Sharma (2022), states that a response rate of 70% and above is believed to be a reliable response rate. This was less 14 (10%) respondents who were pilot tested.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

In this section, the study presents findings on Likert scale questions on the role of electronic procurement practices and performance of preference groups in Level four hospitals County, Kenya. The study specifically presents the effect of e-awarding, and e-sourcing on performance of preference groups in Level four hospitals County, Kenya. Respondents were asked to use a 5-point Likert scale where 5 (SA) = Strongly Agree, 4(A) = Agree, 3(UD) = undecided, 2 (D) = Disagree, and 1(SD) = Strongly Disagree. Results obtained were interpreted using means and standard deviations where a mean value of 1-1.4 was interpreted as strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4 disagree, 2.5-3.4 neutral, 3.5-4.4 agree and 4.5-5 strongly agree.

E-Awarding

Respondents were requested to give their responses in regard to E-awarding in a five point Likert sale where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N= Neutral, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree. Results obtained were presented in Table 1 below:

Respondents were requested to give their opinion on the variable E-awarding. From table 4.9, the respondents unanimously agreement that E-awarding ensured performance of and periodic review in Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya viable (M=3.741, SD=1.0601); Through online catalogue basis assessment the In Kakamega County, Kenya has been able to

make rational decisions on priority and non-priority projects (M=3.833, SD=.9202); willingness to electronic email assessment has contribution to the quality and innovation of the planning team (M=3.903, SD=.9007); electronic data interchange of quick, frequent and accurate of E-awarding and it is important to put in place and maintain level four hospitals in Kakamega county, Kenya (M=4.060, SD=.10350); The management of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya implements performance of to prevent fraud in supplier evaluation (M=3.841, SD=1.3020); and E-awarding enhances performance of at Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya(M=3.565, SD=.8016). These outcomes concur with the discoveries of Nyile *et al.* (2022) who observed that clear description of E-awarding, can enhance effective performance of level 4 Hospitals in Kakamega County.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on E-awarding

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
Level 4 hos in Kakamega County, Kenya ensures online Implementation of e-awarding in the county	3.374	1.064
E-awarding in Kakamega County, Kenya has e-notices on performance of level 4hos in Kakamega County	3.813	.9202
E-awarding has contribution to performance of Hospitals County e-selection e-awarding	3.903	.9307
Towards better performances of level 4 hos	4.060	.7950
E-mailing of level 4 hospital in Kakamega County, Enhance good performance	3.840	1.306
E-awarding enhances performance of level 4 Hospitals in Kakamega County	3.565	.8016

E-Sourcing

Respondents were asked to give their responses in regard to E-sourcing on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya i.e. 5 point likert sale where SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N= Neutral, D=Disagree, and SD= Strongly Disagree. Their responses are presented in table 2 below:

From table 2, respondents, respondents agreed that Innovative Activities ensure performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya (M=4.039, SD=.7306); reduced costs activities on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya (M=4.004, SD=.8306); My In Kakamega County, Kenya ensures Value for money on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya (M=4.207, SD=.8506); profitability towards the embrace it towards better performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya t (M=4.010, SD=.8072); customer satisfaction reaction process contributes to performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya (M=3.926, SD=.8305); and to enhance dispute resolution results, our in Kakamega County, Kenya has reacted a conducive supplier dispute resolution towards performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya(M=4.108, .8054).

These results are in agreement with the result of Nyile *et al.* (2022) who observed that the characteristic of E-sourcing are the best value reaction to sort out non-performance of, after E-sourcing, for resolving return on investment. The problem areas giving rise to disputes are mainly related to Hospitals County's matters.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on E-sourcing

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
My in Kakamega County, Kenya embrace paperless transaction on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya.	4.338	.7306
My in Kakamega County, Kenya embrace approval activities on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya.	4.094	.8306
My in Kakamega County, Kenya embrace electronic requisition on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	4.013	.7830
In cases of value for money disputes on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	3.926	.8305
Alternative value for money process on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	4.108	.8054
To enhance online payment on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	4.084	.8157

Performance of Level Four Hospitals in Kakamega County

Respondents gave their level of agreement on various statements relating with performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. The results were as presented in Table 3below: From the findings, respondents were in agreement that performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya is being affect by electronic procurement poractices, they gave 63.2%; when asked about Value for money and its effect on procurement performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya they gave 70.7 %; When the respondents were asked to show their level of agreement on how complaints affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya they gave 9%; When also the respondents were asked to show their level of agreement on growth of the in Kakamega County, Kenya government on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya they gave 69.7%; Alternative dispute resolution process contributes to E-orderings on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya they gave 42.5% and through contract management, operational performance measured by quality, flexibility, E-orderings on procurement performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya they gave 74.2%. The discoveries is in line with the discoveries of Mutai and Osoro (2021) they observed that some of the factors that contribute to inefficiency in public procurement as corruption, delayed payments, poor planning, statutory amendments, insufficient use supplier evaluation low public participation, and improper payment procedures negatively affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya..

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Performance of Level four hospitals

Statements	Yes (%)	No (%)
customer Satisfaction an affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	52.2	47.8
Value for Patients can affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	70.6	26.4
IT training an affect performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	56	44
Return on investment an affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	69.7	31.3
Quality of supplies an affects performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya	42.2	57.8
on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya , Kenya	74.1	25.9

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The study further conducted inferential statistics entailing both Pearson and regression analysis with a view to determine both the nature and respective strengths of associations between the conceptualized predictors such as E-awarding, and E-sourcing and performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficients

		Performance	E-awarding	E-sourcing
Performance Level four hospitals	Pearson correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1		
E-awarding	Pearson correlation N. Sig. (2-tailed)	.331* 103* .000	1	
E- sourcing	Pearson correlation N	.421* 103*	.240 103	1

From the findings, a positive correlation is seen between each variable and performance. The strongest correlation was established between E-awarding and performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya(r = 0.331 while E-sourcing and performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya were found to be strongly and positively correlating with performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya correlation coefficient of 0.421. This is tandem with the outcomes of Ongeri and Osoro (2021), who observed that all independent variables were found to have a statistically significant association with the dependent variable at over 0.05 level of confidence.

Regression Analysis

To establish the degree of the effect of supply chain for a regression analysis was conducted, with the assumption that: variables are normally distributed to avoid distortion of associations and significance tests, which was achieved as outliers were not identified; a linear relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable for accuracy of estimation, which was achieved as the standardized coefficients were used in interpretation.

From the result shown below, it's clear that when all the independent variables are regressed against the dependent variable the constant gives a negative result meaning there is a strong relationship and how each predator has an effect on the dependent variable.

Table 5: Regression coefficient Results

	Unstandardized coefficients		**Standardized coefficients**	**T**	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(constant)	-.134	.060	-1.144	.004	.003
E-awarding	.471	.132	.858	5.472	.002
E-sourcing.	.266	.115	.321	2.657	.003

a. Predictors: (constants), E-awarding, and E-sourcing
b. Dependent Variable: performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya

A unit change in e-awarding would thus lead to a .471 effect on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya sector ceteris paribus; while a unit change in E-sorcing would have an effect of .266 change in performance of Level four hospitals of Hospitals County. This outcome is in line with the results of Ongeri and Osoro (2021). This implies that

among other factors, E-awarding, and E-sourcing are significant determinants of performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Conclusion

E-awarding

The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between E-awarding and Performance of Speciation identification, periodic design assessment, continues improvement and proactive assessment are among the E-awarding factors that significantly influenced the performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study further concludes that by implementing E-awarding has enhanced performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya, leading to operational increase in efficiency and effectiveness .Therefore, the study concludes Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya has significantly increased their suppliers' quality management in the In Kakamega County, Kenya government in the supply chain practices.

E-sourcing

The study concludes that there is a positive relationship between E-sourcing and performance of level 4 Hospitals in Kakamega County. Partnership enforcement policy, collective bargaining, alternative dispute resolution processes, free expression of concerns by involved practices are among the coordination factors that significantly influenced the performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study further concludes that by adopting alternative coordination and partnership mechanisms as it was observed at Level four hospitals in the level of performance of Level four hospitals has increased. Therefore, the study concludes that Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya has been experiencing significant increase in service delivery through embracing proper coordination in the supply chain practices.

Recommendations

E-awarding

The study recommend that E-awarding formalizes relations between practices within a robust legal framework, but is much more besides; it is an opportunity to define the arrangements that encompass every aspect of e-awarding in the Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya wants from the supplier and how it wants the relationship to work. This means that the In Kakamega County, Kenya needs to take an active role in the development of the quality mechanism early on; it should not be left as a supplementary activity post negotiation. At preparation of every quality management can contribute to supplier evaluation on performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. Proper E-awarding can result to high procurement in Hospitals County.

E-sourcing

This study recommends that E-sourcing had a strong relationship with performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. When relationship are not properly managed through e-sourcing, they may cause supplier to expertise delivery, undermine team spirit, increase delay costs, and, above all, damage business relationships. With the increase in the number of participants in a supplier management, it is obvious that more business interactions and arguments end up with an increase in the number of supplier relationship disputes. Research in preventing and resolving relationship disputes supports the effort for better understanding and harmonization of the different cultures. Therefore, this study recommends

to the management of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya to enhance and upgrade on the implementation of all applicable alternative disputes resolution mechanisms so to protect relationship with its stakeholders in the supply chain practices.

Areas for Further Studies

This study focused on E-awarding and E-sourcing and performance of Level four hospitals in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study therefore recommends a further study to be conducted to other counties in Kakamega County, Kenya. Then get their findings and compare with this and agree or disagree. The study also recommends replication of the study in other sectors such as manufacturing sector and public sector to allow comparison of research findings. Future researchers an investigate the factors affecting supply chain best practices broadly in all areas of concern in this profession on performance of the supply chain practices

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