INFLUENCE OF TOP MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-PROCUREMENT IN COUNTY GOVERNMENTS OF KENYA

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Abstract: **The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of top management commitment on the implementation of e-procurement in County Governments of Kenya. The target population of this study was the procurement supervisors working in various Departments of the Nairobi City County. The study employed descriptive research design since it minimizes biasness. The study employed the simple random sampling technique to come up with a sample size of 104 respondents from a population of 243. This study also relied on primary data collected by use of questionnaires. The research instruments were validated by use of a pilot study, which was assessed by the procurement managers. Data collected was analyzed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer Package version 22. The study established a positive correlation between Top management commitment and effective project implementation. The study concluded that Top management commitment was positively related to the effective implementation of E-procurement in County Governments of Kenya.**

Keywords: **Top Management, E-Procurement, County Governments, Implementation Process.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Electronic procurement denotes the use of integrated (commonly web-based)communication systems for the conduct of part or all of the purchasing process; a process that may integrate stages from the initial need identification by users, through search, sourcing, negotiation, ordering, receipt and post-purchase review. Over the years, the internet has advanced from being a scientific network only to a platform that is allowing a new generation of business (Jeyaraj, Rottman &Laicity, 2006).The internet is changing the way business is done in every industry. The World Wide Web has become a source of information, goods and services. E-procurement has developed as one of the most discussed topic in material procurement. It will dramatically change the way purchasing is done in the near future. (Rankin,Chen & Christian, 2006).

Governments across the world have incorporated ICT to improve the quality of public service, increase public access to information and to energize more participation in civic affairs. As a result, most countries have recognized public participation in government tendering process by enhancing access to opportunities available in the government authorities such as procurement activity.

As a result of ICT advancement, e-procurement has been adopted by governments across the world as a way to ease access to the information. E-procurement is the application of internet technology in works, materials and service department.

According to Bialy (2008) E- procurement is done with a software application that includes features for supplier management and complex auctions. The new generation of e-procurement is currently on demand or software as a service.

The public sector organizations use E-procurement for contracts to achieve such benefits as increased efficiency and cost savings, faster and cheaper in government procurement and improved transparency, and to reduce corruption in procurement services by eliminating interaction with suppliers. E –procurement in the public sector has seen rapid growth in recent years. Transactions can be standardized and all bids for products and services can be tracked more easily, allowing business owners to use such knowledge to obtain better pricing. Due to faster exchanges of information and delivery of goods and services, e procurement also promotes shorter product-development cycles. (Acher, 2005)

According to Wilson (2002) e procurement is the merger of sales and purchasing business models and calls for differentiation based on application and functions. Therefore suppliers form a vital part of the implementation process and their attitude, integrity; transparency, capacity and willingness to comply play a major role in the success of the process. These suppliers would also be using e-procurement systems for management of all processes relating to purchase. These are various forms of e-procurement that concentrate on one or many stages of the procurement process such as e-tendering, e-sourcing, e-payment, e- invoicing, e- catalogue.

Public and private sector organizations have been using Information Technology (IT) systems to reorganize and automate their purchasing and other processes over the past years. It is only in the past decade that e-procurement systems have attracted attention. The rise of e-business in the late 1990's led to the growth of new opportunities associated with procurement: e-procurement, spend management, outsourcing and joint product design (choudhury 2004). Procurement in the public sector is large and complex, accounting for between twenty and thirty percent of gross domestic product and traditionally attempts to meet many economic, social and political objectives (Thai, 2005: Aberdeen, 2011). Governments procure goods and in order to preserve accountability and transparency, they use complex legal and regulatory systems intended to protect the public interest. While private sector procurement is practiced under the sponsorship of each individual firm's governance polices, public sector procurement must function within a range of regulations and policies established to achieve desirable social as well as economic financial and public audit requirements (Thai,2005)

According to (Soudry,2007), 60% of Information Technology applications in procurement initiatives and projects do not bring the anticipated benefits. Despite the great benefits of e-procurement technologies, their execution is still at their early stages (Aboelmaged, 2010). A firm's decision to adopt and implement a particular ICT is affected by a variety of factors. In consolidating prior studies examining innovation, (Aboelmaged, 2010) classified variables that potentially influence ICT adoption and implementation into five broad categories: individual, task and innovation related, organizational and environmental characteristics.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Republic of Kenya (2009), the five years up to 2007 was a period when government took audacious steps to implement changes under the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth Creation (ERS). As a result, real GDP grew progressively from 0.5% in 2002 to7% in 2007 and per capita income improved from US$ 430 to US$735. E-procurement application was one of the strategy framework that have been recognized to yield substantial benefits for government in terms of procurement cost reduction, improving efficiency and fighting corruption bearing in mind that 60% of government spending is spent through public procurement. In Kenya more than 50% of procurement processes are public procuring entities that are carried out manually. The manual processes are costly, slow, inefficient and data storage and retrieval is poor (Malela, 2010).

Internationally, 60% of Information Technology applications in public procurement initiatives and projects do not deliver the expected benefits, (Soudry, 2007). Despite the great benefits of e-procurement technologies, its implementation is still at early stages (Aboelmaged, 2010). Studies done locally on the application of e-procurement have focused on other sectors other than the government ministries, (Kangogo & Gakure, 2013; Odago & Mwajuma 2013) & IT in day to day operations of an enterprise.

In spite of the Government's continued and incremental efforts in laying down ICT strategies in the area of Public Financial Management Reforms with a view of boosting transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, it is apparent that the implementation of e-procurement is still very slow.

Kishor et al, (2006) resolved that if e-Procurement initiatives in the public sector are to support the development of e-procurement across the information economy, there should be broader debate on what constitutes the critical success factors (CSF). A million dollar question is that despite many benefits on the use of E-procurement in the government, it implementation has largely been slow. Mose, Njihia and Magutu (2013) did a study on the critical success factors and challenges in e-procurement implementation among large scale manufacturers in Nairobi, Kenya. The study concluded that most of the large scale manufacturing firms have embraced e-procurement. However these studies did not address the influence of top management commitment on the implementation of e-procurement in County Governments of Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholder Theory (ST) has its origins in management literature. The origin of stakeholder theory can be traced to studies by the Stanford Research Institute (1963) which defined stakeholders as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist" (Freeman, 1984). In the management literature, stakeholders refer to employees, customers, competitors, government, clients, suppliers and shareholders (Ibid, 1984). In the information systems literature however, Mishra and Mishra (2013) stakeholders refer to individuals or groups within the organization. Stakeholder Theory (ST) provides a deeper analysis to identify stakeholders, their influence, and their agendas (Sæbø, Flak & Sein, 2011).

There are several studies in the literature that have relayed the importance of ST. Mumford and Weir (1979) is one of the early researchers in supporting the involvement of end-stakeholders as a component of effective information systems development and implementation, using essentially the stakeholder concept in this domain. It has been proved that end-stakeholders and managers are very important towards successful system implementation. Lacity and Hirschheim (1995) research showed how the different conflicting perceptions and expectations of stakeholders in the organisation can be an obstacle to implementation of E-procurements in an organization. For instance, top management is mostly concerned with the cost whilst end-stakeholders are more concerned with service. Project managers are 'caught in the middle' of a hostile environment and find that they need to justify the agreement made with these groups. Huang (2015) study concluded that ST can serve as a practical guideline as to what and how top management may perceive and support effective implementation in the face of identified factors.

According to Lopes and Mañas (2013), investigation of project delays and failures in projects through the lens of stakeholders' theory is still an approach little used by the academic and professional environment. The stakeholder can be defined as any group or individual who is affected or may affect the strategic decisions related to information technology in a company. They are usually numerous and sometimes difficult to identify, and their involvement largely depends on the context. The PMI (2008) recommends that managers IT project managers should be careful so that they do not ignore groups or individuals who apparently are not important at any given time, since they may become essential (or cause greater impact) in the future.

The stakeholder approach is relevant for this research as it seeks to measure the influence of stakeholder involvement on successful implementation of projects. The project manager, project staff, top management and stakeholders of the system all have interests in the success of a project. The stakeholder theory recommends for project managers to include all stakeholders in the project phases to contribute to success. This theory guides in the understanding of the second research question on to what extent does staff competence affect effective implementation of E-procurement in County Governments, Nairobi City County.

The top management team is responsible for setting the vision and goals, bringing about collective commitment for change in processes and organizational structures, and formulating the policies and strategies necessary to put an e-procurement initiative in place (WB, 2003). If the e-procurement system does not have the full support of the top management team, there is every reason for it to fail. It is important to make sure that the top management has given full support for the adoption of e-procurement. Considerable attention and support should be provided by senior management to ensure that procurement reforms have been well understood in the agency (S & A, 2003).

Chatterjee (2006) used the term top management championship to define managerial beliefs about e-commerce initiatives in firms and participation in those initiatives. The results of quantitative research by Chatterjee et al. (2006) prove that top management championship positively influences extent of organizational assimilation of web technologies in e-commerce strategies and activities. Managerial productivity and strategic decision aids are defined in the article of Grandon and

Pearson (2004) as important factors in e-commerce adoption in organizations. Managerial productivity refers to managers' perception that ecommerce provides better access to information, helps in the management of time, improves communication among managers.

Top management can stimulate change by communicating and reinforcing values through an articulated vision for the organization. Top management support is critical for creating a supportive climate for the adoption of new technologies. Top management support, organizational adaptation, and training of employees are examples of issues for the successful implementation of organization IT system (Kawalek, 2003). Jeyaraj (2006) found that top management support to be one of the best predictors of organization adoption of Information System innovations. Top management can stimulate change by communicating and reinforcing.

According to Chatterjee (2006) top managers nowadays continuously emphasize to adapt to the Internet applications; they often advise employees to be sensitive to competitors' initiatives with regard to e-business; top managers insist that their employees must bring more benefits and costs associated with the process or processes to be automated in order to understand the probable outcomes of e-procurement adoption or enhancement (Scupola, 2009). Senior executives have traditionally viewed IT as a back office function that is a "necessary cost" of doing business, without any strategic implications. In the recent years senior managers are now looking at IT as a strategic resource and key enabler of growth. Throughout negotiations the procurement manager can further credibly guarantee the supplier a level of prompt payment, which was not possible prior to e-procurement, David Eakin (2002).

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4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population of this study was the procurement supervisors working in various Departments of the Nairobi City County. The study employed descriptive research design since it minimizes biasness. The study employed the simple random sampling technique to come up with a sample size of 104 respondents from a population of 243. This study also relied on primary data collected by use of questionnaires. The research instruments were validated by use of a pilot study, which was assessed by the procurement managers. Data collected will be analyzed by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Computer Package version 22.

5. FINDINGS

From the information gathered about How effective is collective commitment was in this study, out of the 92 respondents, 13.0% concluded it was very effective, 44.6% concluded it was effective, 18.5% concluded it was moderately effective, 7.6% concluded it was less effective and 16.3% concluded it was not effective. A good percentage therefore concluded it was effective and this provided a better means of analysis relevant to the study. The findings of the study are in agreement with those of Wagir, (2008) that conducted a study and found out that the collective commitment can greatly influence the procurement process. If the collective commitment is well enhanced, there is a high likelihood of successful completion of the procurement process. The figures are shown in table 1.

Table 1: How effective is collective commitment

	Frequency	**Percentage**
Very effective	12	13.0
Effective	41	44.6
Moderately effective	17	18.5
Less Effective	7	7.6
Not effective	15	16.3
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Highest Qualification Achieved

To be able to find out whether the highest qualification achieved affected effective implementation of E-procurement, it was important in this regard to look into detail how academic qualification affected effective implementation of E-procurement in Nairobi City County. The response gathered included: 13.0% had a diploma, 44.6% had a degree, and 26.1% had masters and 8% had a PhD. This implied that degree qualification to a large extent affected effective implementation of E-procurement. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Highest Qualification Achieved

	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	12	13.0
Degree	41	44.6
Masters	24	26.1
PhD	15	16.3
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Effect of Top Management Commitment

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which top management commitment affected effective implementation of E-procurement. From the findings in table 3, majority of the respondents who represented 29.3% indicated that top management commitment affected the effective implementation of E-procurement very effectively, 32.6% indicated the influence was effective, 16.3% indicated an effect of moderately effective, 12.0% indicated an influence of less effective while only 9.8% indicated not effective. This implies that top management commitment is an essential requirement in effective implementation of E-procurement. These findings are in line with those of Ling and Mau, (2012) who stated that top management commitment have more significant correlations with project outcomes, suggesting that it is far more important to undertake top management commitment in the procurement process.

Table 3: Effect of Top Management Commitment

	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	27	29.3
Effective	30	32.6
Moderately effective	15	16.3
Less effective	11	12.0
Not effective	9	9.8
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Organizational Structure

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the organizational structure affected effective implementation of E-procurement. From the findings in table 4, majority of the respondents who represented 23.5% indicated that organizational structure affected the effective implementation of E-procurement very effectively, 38.7% indicated the influence was effective, 18.3% indicated an effect of moderately effective, 9.0% indicated an influence of less effective while only 10.5% indicated not effective. This implies that organizational structure is an essential requirement in effective implementation of E-procurement.

Table 4: Organizational Structure

	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	22	23.5
Effective	35	38.7
Moderately effective	17	18.3
Less effective	8	9.0
Not effective	10	10.5
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Regression Analysis for Top management Commitment

Table 5 below indicates the model summary for the regression between Top management Commitment and effective implementation of E-procurement. An R squared of 0.400 indicates that 40.0% of effective implementation of E-procurement is explained by changes in Top management Commitment. F statistic of 130 indicated that the overall model was significant.

Table 5: ANOVA- Top management Commitment

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.030	1	030	130	.719
	Residual	20.799	90	.231		
	Total	20.829	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Effective implementation of E-procurement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Top management Commitment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.632[a]	.400	.387	.481

The regression coefficient table below shows that the regression model between Top management Commitment and Effective implementation was given as $Y=2.859+0.037X_2$ which indicate that there was a positive and significant relationship between Top management Commitment and effective implementation. The regression coefficient indicated an increase in Top management Commitment by one unit leads to an increase in effective implementation of E-procurement by 0.037

Table 6: Regression Coefficients- Top management Commitment

Model	Unstandadized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.859	.224		12.788	.000
Top management Commitment	.037	.103	-.038	-.361	.719

a. Dependent Variable: Effective implementation of E-procurement

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study established a positive correlation between Top management commitment and effective project implementation. The study concluded that Top management commitment was positively related to the effective implementation of E-procurement in County Governments: A case of Nairobi City County, Kenya. Top management commitment is therefore essential to ensure projects are effectively implemented.

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