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# **ECOMMERCE PLATFORM STRATEGIES AND** ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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#### Abstract

This study in particular was to shed light on the effectiveness of commerce platform strategies on organization performance in the manufacturing industries in Nairobi City County. The manufacturing sector may improve its performance by integrating the eCommerce platform strategies however there is a paucity of information on the challenges which the manufacturing sector is facing on a lack of technology adoption as well as global developments like COVID, hence this investigation sought to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of eCommerce platform strategies on performance. For this, the study adopted an explanatory research design with a target population of 69 manufacturing firms registered under the Kenya Association of Manufacturers where random sampling was used and purposive sampling to select the 120 respondents. Study found that e-commerce platform strategy positively and significantly influenced organization performance. From the finding, it can be concluded that the e-commerce-platform strategy has a significant positive effect on organizations' performance. The study has an important implication for managers and policymakers.

Keywords: E-commerce platform strategies, manufacturing sector, organizational performance

#### INTRODUCTION

A lot of organizations are now adopting the Web as a way to carry out business which is a result of the fast growth of the internet and E-commerce as well. The study examines the relationship between eCommerce platform strategies and organizational performance. The current and vast growth of technology is highly accepted, especially in business organizations that are employing various technological strategies in the competitive business environment.

According to Balamurugan & Nadu, (2018), e-commerce rapid growth has allowed organizations and the customer where the provision electronic platforms used to facilitate the connection between existing and potential customers has been effectively, electronic payment for allowing a financial commitment involving the purchaser and vendor by use of the internet while e-logistics allows the transfer of goods sold through the internet.

The e-commerce platform strategy is built on interactivity, product design, and user design(UX) which according to research done by the Nielson company (2015), at the beginning of the second phase in the e-commerce growth, social networking merely helped consumers to connect with friends, but now social networking websites are serving a wider purpose. Most savvy brands are using social networking platforms to further their digital connections with consumers to launch products and advertising, feedback, and facilitate purchases termed social commerce to bring forth high performance in the company.

The E-commerce model is different from the brick and mortar that have a physical location and can be able to show the audience unlike eCommerce is managed online and all customer activities occur on the Web which is a challenge to track the audience of whom organizations require more information about their customers hence the requirement of using tracking tools on the platform that help organizations know more about their customers.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Theoretical review

#### Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

This theory consists of a consolidation of previous studies that are related to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Venkatesh, Morris, and Davis (2003) and later Wu and Wang (2005). The UTAUT aim is to explain a user plan usage on the information system and the subsequent utilization behavior. Venkatesh et al. (2003) incorporated four key constituents in UTAUT effort expectancy (EE), performance expectancy (PE), facilitation conditions (FC), and social influence (SI) which determines directly the usage intention and behavior toward technology as well as age, gender, experience and voluntariness which are the four key moderators of use that impact innovation adoption.

Venkatesh et.al (2003) states the extent to which a person accepts a system is referred to as performance expectancy. In this case, e-commerce will aid in attaining performance improvements whereas effort expectancy is the perceived horde of effort that the user necessitates into learning and operate e-commerce. The level of realization that an individual perceives as important others (bosses, peers, subordinates) should use a system in this case ecommerce is the social influence. The facilitation state is considered as the standing individual supposing the organization and technological infrastructure exist to strengthen the system use.

UTAUT model has been used by past research studies to test diversification involving the acceptance of the study. In this case, UTAUT will be used to show how e-commerce has been adopted in terms of payment, platforms, and delivery on user acceptance and use. The theory, therefore, supports the independent variables of the study.

Despite the advantageousness of reviewing the acceptance of technology, the UTAUT model is restrained since it excludes task technology fit (TTF). According to Bagozzi (2007), this was not accepted in the previous model and thus warrants further research. Primarily, the model that underlies UTAUT fails to include task construct. Typically, users intend to use information technology if it meets their task requirements. Dishaw, Strong, and Bandy conducted a study that added the TTF construct to the UTAUT to determine whether this addition produced an improvement in explanatory power similar to that reported by Dishaw and Strong where their results produced a new model combining TTF and UTAUT. (Venkatesh & Zhang, 2010).

#### Task technology fit theory

In 1995 Goodhue and Thompson developed this theory which comprises of fairly simple but powerful perspective, suggesting that a better fit linking technology and the task will result in better performance separate from TAM where consideration is on applying beliefs, perceived ease of use perceives usefulness to point out yet expound user acceptance of IT. TTF is the first theory to aim to explore the post-adoption aspect of technology, utilization unlike other prior research which had mainly focused on the antecedent of use, and utilization is widely used for the prediction and utilization of Information Technology which is the ability to perform a task.

According to (Dishaw & Strong, 1998) numerous models have been built around the concept of task-technology fit yet TTF is at the very heart of them all. Klopping and McKinney, (2004) explain that it is reasonable to expect research on consumer adaptation and online shopping supports the fact that a consumer will favor an e-commerce application whose functionalities match his/her shopping tasks. The TTF theory is very essential in checking the exact usage of technology, especially when experimenting with new technology to get feedback or even evaluating already released technology applications in the market.

Previous studies on TTF focus on improving the general TTF model whereas the TAM theory Goodhue (1995), suggested and even proved many varying dimensions of fit to validate the fit measurements.

In this study, TTF will be used to support both the dependent and independent variables. According to Agarwal, Sambamurthy, and Stair (2000), the TTF theory has been criticized for not lack of focus on individuals' psychological and situational factors like the role of top management, trust between team members and team leaders, and the responsibility of team members

#### **Empirical review**

# Ecommerce platform strategies

A study on the use of online marketing in small and medium enterprises experience in Kenya by Wilson & Makau, (2018) where the study sought to exploit insights into SMEs' experience with online marketing use. The study employed a Qualitative research approach using case studies designed for inquiry wherein depth interviews with small business owners, IT experts, and agencies of the government of which were 110 informants. Across all sectors, Qualitative analysis and interpretations were done indicating that the usage of online marketing is well known to most SMEs, and online platforms like checki.co.ke and Jumia.co.ke are common to small business owners. Nevertheless, SMEs' was the major focus as well as online marketing in the study with no mention of performance, hence this study will ascertain the ecommerce strategies with a focus on how they affect organizational performance.

Moronge, (2018) in his study on electric business practices' influence on supermarket performance in Nairobi Kenya found that eMarketing practices improve the performances of supermarkets where the study was carried out in 144 supermarkets located in Nairobi city county where descriptive research design was used where a census was conducted. The observation unit were the managers in control of operation with findings indicating that electronic business practices (e-payment, e-sourcing, e-inventory) affect the performance of supermarkets. The study established a significant relationship between electronic business practices on the performance of supermarkets. While the main study was to identify means of electronic business in supermarkets, this study will focus on e-commerce strategy on organization performance. Also, the study focused on supermarkets and its surrounding while the manufacturing sector is different from it.

A study by Lim et al.., (2016) on factors influencing the online shopping response serves as the mediator of purchase intention aiming at determining the parallel between subjective norm, perceived usefulness, and online shopping behavior. The quantitative survey method was performed by administering questionnaires to both undergraduate and postgraduate students at Malaysia Perlis university between the age of 18-34. 800 questionnaires were distributed of which 662 were valid for coding. The findings indicated that the subjective norm and perceived usefulness favorable results in purchase intention which also significantly, influences positively shopping behavior. The major limitation of the study is the sample selected is limited to university students with a higher education background whereas this study's sample size consists of 69 manufacturing companies located in Nairobi city county.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In this study, the proposed methodology for predicting the effects of e-commerce platform strategies in the manufacturing sector was based on analyzing the traffic and user experience factor to determine the performance of the organization. Descriptive research design was adopted which ensured rigidity and increased accuracy was used to determine, describe, identify what is, and observe subjects in their original setup. The investigation used random sampling, which gives every object in the universe an equal chance of being included in the sample. Based on the intended population, samples were created using this. 30 companies were chosen based on the stratified random sampling method as it allowed obtaining adequate information systematically. The sample size was determined using the rule of thumb that 30% of the target population is satisfactory; in this case, 30% was 21 companies with an upward adjustment to 30 companies in case of non- or poor response. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents from key departments, especially those whose officers (finance manager, marketing manager, logistics manager, and IT expert) had knowledge that was pertinent to their responses to the questionnaires. The population of the study considered 69 manufacturing firms based in Nairobi City County with the companies being distributed into different industrial zones; Mombasa Road, Industrial Area, and Ruaraka with the unit of observation consisting of managers in IT, finance, logistics, and the marketing department of the manufacturing industries based in Nairobi, Kenya.



Figure 1. Conceptual framework

#### **RESULTS**

The proposed model and hypothesis used in this study were tested using regression analysis with the dependent variable being the eCommerce platform indicators traffic and user experience and the independent being the organizational performance.

# **Descriptive Statistics**

Table 1. User experience

Statements	Mean	Std dev
The company highly considers customer service a top priority	4.60	.566
The website is designed to enable our customers to interact	4.58	.633
with the company's social media platforms.		
The websites always ensure easy navigation	4.57	.721
The website is designed to ensure user satisfaction	4.55	.774
Aggregate score	4.58	.674

Table 2. Traffic

Statement	Mean	Std. dev				
The product displayed on the website are always	4.49	.775				
appealing /attractive to the user						
The company's social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter,	4.47	.668				
and Instagram) are highly interactive with customers						
The company uses social media platforms to market	4.38	.686				
products.						
Our online feedback platform allows dialogues with the	4.28	.769				
customer in case of any issue (chatbot)						
Aggregate score	4.49	.699				

The findings from the study indicate that manufacturing industries in Nairobi utilize websites as an e-commerce strategy. The response from the managers to the study contributed to a mean of 4.49 and std deviation of 0.699 which showed that respondents agreed to the use of websites in their respective companies. The findings indicate that the respondents highly agreed that the websites should be designed to ensure user satisfaction (M=4.550, SD 0.774), websites ensure easy navigation (M=4.57, SD=.721), the products displayed on the company's website are always appealing or attractive to the user (M=4.49, SD=.775,) the online feedback platform allows dialogue with customer in case of any issue (M=4.28, SD=.769) the website

should be designed to allow customer interaction with the customer social media platform (M=4.58, SD=.633). The findings also indicate that the respondents agree that the company highly considers customer service (M=4.60, SD=.566) and that customers use social media to market their products and services which is in agreement with a study by Mutava (2019) on the effects of e-commerce platforms on retail center stores which is a case study on Two River Mall revealed that customers prefer e-commerce platforms for purchasing their products and services than in-store This means that managers must ensure that the e-platform strategy allows a good interaction of the platform and customers.

### **Correlation Analysis**

To find out the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable was undertaken.

Table 3. Correlation Analysis

		Performance	E-Platform
Performance	Pearson correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	53	
E-platform	Pearson correlation	.738**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	000	
	N	53	

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

## **Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between eCommerce platform strategy and organizational performance. The R-value is used to explain the changes in which the independent variable affects the dependent variable. In this study, the e-platform strategy included in the model explains a .461 (40.5%) variance in performance with a standardized error of .33283. The remaining 59.5% accounts for the other factors not in this study.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.461 <sup>a</sup>	.214	.182	.33283

a. Predictors: (Constant), Traffic, User experience



#### **ANOVA**

The regression analysis of ANOVA showed the significance coefficient of the F which is 6.779 is significant as .002<sup>b</sup> which is less than 0.05. This is an indication that there was a significant relationship between E-platform and performance.

Table 5. Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	1.506	2	.753	6.779	.002 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	5.539	50	.111		
Total	7.045	52			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

#### **Coefficients Estimation**

The findings from Table show that a unit increase in e-platform strategy increases organization performance by .290 times.

Table 6. Coefficient Table

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Т	Sig
Constant	3.304	.392		8.435	.000
User experience	.290	.121	.446	2.399	.020
Traffic	.014	.118	.222	.119	.906

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Where the p-value of the variable is p=0.003 and Y=3.304

 $Y=3.304 + .290X_1 + \varepsilon$ 

Where,

 $\beta X_1 = 0.290$ ,  $\beta X_2 = .014$ , Y = Performance,  $X_1 = E$ -Platform strategy.

#### DISCUSSION

It's evident from the study evaluated the effects of e-commerce platforms on organization performance where traffic and user experience were the interactions the customer gets with the organization's platform an indication that when the independent variables are kept



b. Predictors: (Constant), Traffic, User experience

constant, organizational performance will increase by 3.304. A unit increase in e-commerce platform strategy while holding all other variables constant will increase organizational performance by 0.290 times. These findings are in agreement with the (Mutava, 2019) study on e-commerce performance on sales turnover in retail center stores that showed a positive correlation between the e-commerce platform efficiency and sales turnover which is part of the performance. The finding also agrees with the (Achiando, 2018) study which found a positive correlation between e-commerce strategy by use of social media and sales performance in private security firms. These early studies are indicators that the response to e-commerce strategy is highly accepted.

#### CONCLUSION

This paper focused on establishing the effects of e-commerce platform strategies on organization performance in the manufacturing industries. E-commerce platform strategy which consists of traffic and user experience positively and significantly influenced organization performance. E-commerce strategy involved how organizations utilized websites, and the social media platform for performance purposes that would lead to increased customer engagement and increased traffic volume from websites. This grew significantly especially when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged aiding the use of e-commerce by many organizations as a result of allowing its operations.

Considering that the study only focused on the manufacturing sector which is a rather limited study, it is equally important to have research focusing on other sectors as the results indicated fertility for further research on e-commerce strategies, especially now that technology has become part of everyday activity. Additionally, future studies could replicate this analysis with different samples in different geographical areas.

Based on the finding of this study, it's clear that managers should consider fully utilizing the e-commerce platform strategy in the manufacturing sector and also any other sector as it leads to performance in the organization by increasing sales turnovers, increasing visibility of the company, brand, or product through interacting on the website and the social platforms. Considering that technology is growing rapidly and new methods and strategies are evolving organizations must be agile in adopting any other strategies to reach many customers at the right time no matter where they are which in turn allows the organization to increase in sales and profitability.

As much as the internet is magnifying in Kenya, other countries are also experiencing the same accordingly, in that case, e-commerce is crossing borders and customers are shopping from anywhere, this is a call to action and attention for organizations to act globally. In this case, applying e-commerce platforms strategies framework in other countries would yield divergent results due to various factors which as a result is an area for further research.

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