

## Effect of Sourcing Strategy on Performance of Iron Sheet Manufacturing Firms in Nairobi County, Kenya

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### Abstract

In Kenya, procurement is a major factor in the country's social and economic advancement. However, it is vulnerable to hazards that could result in the loss of money, products, and services, particularly when appropriate procurement practices and principles are not followed. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of procurement strategies- specifically, the outsourcing strategy on the performance of iron sheet manufacturing companies located in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive research design. 125 respondents made up the target population, from which the sample (95) was drawn. Both closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to gather data. Data analysis included descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The results show that the correlation between sourcing and performance is positive and statistically significant, which implies that sourcing positively influences performance. The study concluded that the sourcing has a significant influence on the performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County. The study recommends that the iron sheet manufacturing firms should: Conduct comprehensive supplier market analysis to identify the most reliable and cost-effective suppliers of raw materials such as galvanized steel, zinc, and aluminum. Use the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) approach instead of just price comparison, factor in transportation, lead time, quality, and reliability. Employ e-sourcing platforms for transparency, efficiency, and wider supplier access. Regularly evaluate suppliers based on quality, cost, delivery performance, and compliance.

**Keywords:** *Sourcing strategy, organizational performance, iron sheet manufacturing firms*

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### 1. Introduction

Performance is seen as supervising and determining how an organization undertakes its strategy so that it can give good results as it is supposed to (Oliveira, 2023). It is made up of looking at the future in order to get a better picture and get to know how to maximize the different management points. With effective strategy and tools of performance management, companies will be able to ensure operational excellence and a culture of continuous improvement. To do it, it is necessary to define the performance criteria clearly, determine the main indicators, and follow the progress carefully (Panel, 2024). Performance measurement allows comparing real outputs or results to the planned results. Such a comparison assists an

organization in knowing whether it is getting what it intended to accomplish. This is a performance evaluation that is normally undertaken by business owners, strategic partners, and managers, and the procedure involves identification as well as establishing processes that have the potential of enhancing the performance of the company (Hannah, 2024).

Sourcing is the process whereby suppliers identify and select suitable goods or services. When applied both strategically and tactually, sourcing can play a critical role in influencing an organization's overall performance, especially in terms of cost control, product quality, and supply availability. Strategic supplier selection can lead to long-term contracts that offer more favorable pricing, better payment terms, and reduced transaction costs, such as discounts on bulk purchases or waived service fees. Additionally, working with a broad network of reliable suppliers helps reduce dependence on any single source, thereby minimizing risks associated with supply disruptions, including those caused by political instability or extreme weather events (Jonker, 2023).

Iron sheet manufacturing is a critical sub-sector within the broader steel and construction materials industry. It involves the production of galvanized, coated, and corrugated iron sheets, which are widely used in roofing, fencing, and structural applications. The industry plays a pivotal role in infrastructure development, particularly in emerging economies where urbanization and housing demand are on the rise. The manufacturing process typically involves raw material sourcing, rolling, coating, and finishing, with efficiency heavily reliant on procurement strategies, technology adoption, and supply chain management. (I. A I.S., 2025). Manufacturing, which involves turning raw materials like ore, wood, and food into completed products like metal goods, furniture, and processed foods, is an essential and important component of the global economy. Manufacturing is a major force behind economic growth and profitability because of this value addition, which raises product prices (WMF, 2023).

Globally, countries such as China, India, and the United States dominate the sector due to advanced technology, efficient supply chains, and economies of scale. However, global manufacturing faces challenges such as fluctuating steel prices, supply chain disruptions, and increasing environmental regulations, necessitating strategic procurement approaches to optimize production efficiency and resilience (Will, 2024). Africa's iron sheet manufacturing industry is expanding, driven by rapid urbanization, infrastructure development, and industrialization. Countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt have well-established steel and iron sheet industries, while other nations rely heavily on imports. However, the sector faces significant challenges, including high production costs, inadequate access to raw materials, and policy inconsistencies, which hinder growth. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents an opportunity for enhanced regional trade and supply chain integration, allowing manufacturers to leverage cost-effective procurement strategies and increase competitiveness (AfDB, 2021).

Kenya's manufacturing sector accounts for 9.2% of GDP, 11.7% of total formal employment, and 20.4% of informal employment. ( The Star, 2023). Despite its significance, the sector has experienced slow growth, averaging 7.7% between 2018 and 2020, and contributing an average of 8.4% to GDP between 2016 and 2020, falling short of the expected 15% contribution (KIPPRA, 2021). This sluggish growth is attributed to high production costs, supply chain disruptions, raw material shortages, labor strikes, technological limitations, and competition from imported goods (Karani, 2022) Iron sheet manufacturing, a key sub-sector, is crucial for

Kenya's construction industry, requiring strategic procurement practices to optimize costs, ensure steady raw material supply, and enhance production efficiency. With the government's Vision 2030 industrialization agenda, firms must embrace innovative procurement strategies to improve operational performance, increase competitiveness, and support sustainable economic growth (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

In Nairobi County, Kenya, procurement techniques are essential to improving the performance of iron sheet manufacturing companies. Navigating industrial obstacles, including shifting raw material costs, supply chain interruptions, and regulatory requirements, requires efficient sourcing, supplier management, risk reduction, and cost control. As Kenya's manufacturing sector struggles with slow growth, strategic procurement approaches can drive competitiveness and resilience (Karani, 2022). Ultimately, aligning procurement strategies with operational goals is key to improving productivity, reducing costs, and ensuring long-term sustainability in the iron sheet manufacturing industry.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

The manufacturing sector in Kenya plays a significant role in the economic growth of the nation. An effective procurement strategy is essential for manufacturing businesses, especially those in iron sheet manufacturing, because it guarantees that the right products and services are acquired at the best price. This in turn optimizes cost management, boosts productivity, reduces risks, cultivates strong supplier relationships, and ultimately advances the company's overall goals by coordinating purchasing decisions with market conditions and company objectives according to Waithira (2021).

Despite the adoption of several procurement strategies, such as strategic sourcing, many manufacturing firms, specifically iron sheet manufacturing firms, still face numerous operational inefficiencies like high procurement costs, unreliable suppliers, inadequate risk management practices, manufacturing and materials delays, and frequent stockouts. These problems hinder operational efficiency and affect the organization's overall procurement functions that contribute to organizational goal attainment. (Golobrodskia, 2024). Procurement strategy is a key element of the contemporary business environment, despite its numerous challenges. It serves as a tool for cost reduction as well as for boosting competitiveness and guaranteeing the long-term viability of the business. For buyers to accomplish the objectives of their company, an efficient procurement strategy is essential (Onventis, 2024).

Although procurement strategies in other industries have been examined in earlier studies like Namusonge (2024) Owino (2023), little empirical study has been done on the precise effects of procurement strategies on the operational performance of iron sheet manufacturing companies in Kenya. It is against this background that this study seeks to harness this knowledge gap by establishing the nexus between procurement strategies, particularly the outsourcing strategy, and operational performance in the iron sheet manufacturing sector.

### 1.2 Research Objective

To determine the effect of sourcing strategy on the performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

### 1.3 Hypothesis

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Sourcing strategy has no significant effect on the performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County, Kenya.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

Systems theory, originating in the mid-20th century, views the world as interconnected and complex systems, emphasizing that each system's components are interdependent and influence the overall behavior of the system. Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a biologist, is credited with formulating Systems Theory in 1950, seeking to identify common principles applicable to various disciplines. It highlights the notion that a system is more than the sum of its parts and that several interdependent systems are necessary for it to function. The foundation of systems theory, a popular framework in social work, is the notion that people cannot be fully comprehended in a vacuum; rather, they must be viewed in the larger context of their connections, surroundings, and the different systems that shape their lives. Social workers are encouraged by this theory to go beyond individual behavior and take into account the various interrelated systems, such as family, community, society, and culture, that influence people's feelings, ideas, and behaviors (Hu, 2022).

Modifying one part of a system can have an impact on other parts or the system as a whole. Such changes in behavior can be foreseen. The line of progress and the level of development of the systems capable of learning and adaptation rely on the quality of the system connecting with its environment (with all situations that condition the system organization). Other systems are also putting in place what will keep the other system in place that is not failing. In order to create principles (such as purpose, measure, methods, and tools) that can be applied to systems at any level of nesting in any field of interest, systems theory aims to model systems with respect to dynamics, constraints, conditions, and relations (Brunton, 2021). The main idea of systems theory is to develop general concepts and concepts that may be applicable with respect to what is usually termed a general principle and not in reference to a specific branch of interest. The systems theory does distinguish between the static systems and the passive systems, as opposed to the dynamic systems and the active systems. Dynamic systems or active systems are architectural elements or architectural bodies of activities that are interactive either through formal boundary conditionalities (attractors), or through behaviors or processes. Static or passive systems are structural parts and structures that are still under the process of being processed. An example is a computer program in operation, which is entitled to be labelled as active in memory, while the program is a file saved on the hard drive, it is a passive system. The field is aligned with machine logic, systems engineering, and systems thinking (Brunton, 2021).

Systems theory does, however, have several drawbacks. It occasionally lacks the precision required for individual-based problems, is too general, and is challenging to use in hectic settings. The intricacy of the theory may also make it difficult to establish boundaries, create specific objectives, and effectively convey ideas to consumers. Furthermore, extra tact and comprehension are needed when applying systems theory to culturally diverse communities in order to guarantee that treatments are both efficient and considerate. The communication paradigm used in this theory limits the role of the individual by reducing reciprocal talks to one-sided information supported by codes. Demands for recognition and social support go against this way of thinking. Thus, care must be taken while implementing Luhmann's systems theory in modern social work (Roberts, 2025).

Systems theory offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending how procurement strategies, including risk management, sourcing, supplier relationship management, and cost leadership strategies, interact to affect manufacturing companies' success. Businesses may maximize cost effectiveness while preserving quality and supplier dependability by seeing procurement as an integrated system, as opposed to discrete operations. Collaboration and creativity are encouraged by efficient supplier relationship management, which improves sourcing choices and ensures long-term stability. Furthermore, risk management assists businesses in anticipating and minimizing interruptions, guaranteeing success. Manufacturing companies may increase overall competitiveness, decrease waste, and improve operational efficiency, hence increasing overall organizational performance.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Amuhaya (2023) conducted a study examining how various sourcing strategies influence the organizational performance of Murang'a Co-operative Creameries in Kenya. The research focused on four key procurement approaches: single sourcing, multiple sourcing, delegated sourcing, and parallel sourcing. The study was anchored in systems theory, network theory, and agency theory. It employed a descriptive research design, targeting all 76 employees of the creamery as the units of observation. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather the data, and SPSS version 24.0 was used to analyse the results using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including regression and correlation analysis. The results demonstrated that an increase in each sourcing strategy positively contributed to organizational performance, as reflected in the corresponding beta coefficients. Based on these findings, the study recommended enhancing the use of these sourcing techniques, given their statistically significant influence on the performance of Murang'a Co-operative Creameries.

Keitany's (2024) study sought to determine the relationship between suppliers' sustainable procurement performance and sourcing strategies. The study employed a correlational research design. The target population for the study consisted of 188 workers from the 16 KTDA-run Region 5 firms. The directors, production managers, ICT managers, procurement managers, leaf base managers, and factory unit managers were surveyed using a census method and a standardized questionnaire. The results showed a substantial positive association between sustainable procurement performance and supplier sourcing strategies ( $r = 0.545$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). According to the report, KTDA procurement strategies should be in line with the organization's sustainability objectives. Additionally, rules and procedures for material handling should be developed with the sustainability objective in mind. The findings of this study could help shape policies about sustainable procurement performance and sourcing tactics. Since the current study served as a foundation for additional research, other scholars may find the literature on inbound logistics and sustainable procurement performance useful.

According to Aseka (2024), who investigated the effect of supplier sourcing on the performance of ward development projects in Narok County, Kenya. Despite numerous initiatives to enhance development projects, challenges such as delays, cost overruns, and quality issues persist, partly due to procurement practices. Using an explanatory research design, the study surveyed 171 respondents, including procurement managers, suppliers, and ward committee members. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Reliability tests confirmed the consistency of the data collection instrument, and descriptive statistics highlighted key factors



influencing supplier sourcing. The results indicate that effective supplier sourcing significantly enhances project performance by ensuring timely delivery, managing costs, and improving quality. With a value of 0.594 ( $p < 0.01$ ), correlation analysis demonstrates a positive and substantial association between supplier sourcing and project performance. The study concludes that strategic supplier sourcing is vital for the successful execution of ward development projects, providing recommendations for optimizing procurement practices to improve overall project outcomes.

The essential techniques and tactics for efficient supply chain management (SCM) and global sourcing were determined and ranked by Kumar (2024). To examine and determine the connections between the important practices and strategies that were found, the study combined Pareto analysis with multi-objective optimization based on ratio analysis research methodology. By concentrating on the most important elements, Pareto analysis helps organizations to prioritize their resources and efforts. "Lean manufacturing," "eco-friendly sourcing strategy," and "tool cost analysis" are the three most important strategies and practices for supply chain management and global sourcing, according to the report. However, the most important strategies and methods for supply chain management and global sourcing are "risk management," "procurement strategy," and "leverage digital solutions." Using these techniques, this study provides insightful information about the key procedures and tactics that could boost productivity, reduce risks, and promote success in global sourcing and supply chain management. The topics and components that this study concentrated on will provide a framework and recommendations for further theoretical research and practical applications.

The research of Sibel (2020) analyzed implications of SS on LSC and ASC strategies and questioned how these concepts can influence the development of competitive performance. Cross-sectional e-mail survey data obtained in the manufacturing firms, especially those operating in Turkey, were used to test the proposed research model and hypotheses. SS is modeled reflecting a second-order factor. The given hypotheses were tested with the help of structural equation modeling. This paper came to the conclusion that SS has a positive impact on LSC strategies and ASC strategies. Also, it is observed that these concepts can be utilized in enhancing competitive performance. The findings are significant in the aspect of recounting the significance of SS in enhancing lean and agile design of the supply chain.

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional research approach. Cross-sectional research entails collecting data from a large number of participants simultaneously and observing variables without altering them. Usually, they are inexpensive and easy to execute (Lauren, 2020). This study was conducted at selected manufacturing firms in Nairobi County, namely: Boma Mabati Factory Limited, Royal Mabati, Mabati Rolling Mills, Rafiki Roofing Mabati and Imarisha Mabati Limited (KAM, 2025). The study target population was one hundred and twenty-five (125) respondents. In this study, the sample was obtained by a simple random method after stratification of the population. Slovin's formula was used to compute a sample size of 95 for this investigation. A questionnaire was used in collecting data for this study. The survey had both open-ended questions and closed-ended questions. The researcher used both descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean and standard deviation were examined in the descriptive. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the research variables.

4. Results and Discussion

Introduce this section

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the study’s key variables. The descriptive statistics presented in the subsequent tables summarize the central tendencies and variability of responses for each variable

4.1.1 Sourcing strategy

The study sought to assess respondents' perceptions regarding the sourcing in iron sheet manufacturing firms within Nairobi County. This was evaluated using a set of descriptive statistics, namely means and standard deviations, for a series of statements designed to capture various aspects of sourcing. The statements were rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. Table 1 presents the summary of findings.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Sourcing Strategy

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
Supplier evaluation is conducted regularly to ensure performance standards are met.	4.21	0.579
The sourcing process ensures supplier diversification to reduce dependence on a single source	4.26	0.580
The organization ensures that suppliers adhere to ethical and sustainability standards.	4.15	0.646
The company considers factors like cost, quality, and reliability when choosing suppliers.	4.29	0.613
The organization has automated processes to enhance procurement risk management.	4.32	0.658
The organization’s sourcing strategy aligns with its overall business objectives.	4.33	0.565
<b>Aggregate Score (Overall Perception)</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.607</b>

The highest-rated item was the statement concerning the organization’s sourcing strategy aligns with its overall business objectives, with a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 0.565. This indicates strong agreement among respondents that manufacturing firms have effective strategies in place to ensure operational continuity and product availability. The organization has automated processes to enhance procurement risk management, scored a mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.658. Respondents agreed that automated processes enhance procurement risk. The standard deviation of 0.658 reflects a strong consensus among the respondents.

The company considers factors like cost, quality, and reliability when choosing suppliers, with a mean of 4.29 and a standard deviation of 0.613. Respondents in totality agreed with the statement. The sourcing process ensures supplier diversification to reduce dependence on a single source. The statement scored a mean of 4.26 and an SD of 0.580. Regarding, Supplier evaluation is conducted regularly to ensure performance standards are met.the respondents

strongly agreed with the moderate consensus having a mean of 4.21 and Sd of 0.579. Finally, concerning whether the organization ensures that suppliers adhere to ethical and sustainability standards. The respondents agreed with a mean of 4.15 and a standard deviation of 0.646. The overall aggregate score across all indicators was 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.607, indicating general agreement with all statements in the sourcing matrix. These findings were in tandem with those of Amuhaya (2023), who conducted a study examining how various sourcing strategies influence the organizational performance of Murang'a Co-operative Creameries in Kenya. The results demonstrated that an increase in each sourcing strategy positively contributed to organizational performance, as reflected in the corresponding beta coefficients.

4.1.2 Performance of Iron Manufacturing Firms

This section presents the findings on respondents’ perceptions regarding the performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County. The analysis was based on responses to six performance indicators rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Mean scores were interpreted using the following guide: 4.00–5.00 signified strong agreement, 3.50–3.99 indicated general agreement, and 3.00–3.49 reflected neutrality. Standard deviations below 1.00 were interpreted as indicators of moderate to strong consensus, while values of 1.00 and above reflected less agreement among respondents. Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics for performance indicators.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Performance of Iron Sheet Manufacturing Firms

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
The procurement department ensures that purchases meet quality standards.	4.45	0.500
The organization identifies and mitigates procurement risks proactively.	4.46	0.524
Key performance indicators (KPIs) are used to measure procurement efficiency.	4.58	0.520
The organization effectively monitors and measures employee productivity to ensure optimal performance.	4.54	0.524
The organization uses technology and automation effectively to improve operational efficiency and reduce errors.	4.56	0.499
The organization prioritizes sustainable sourcing practices	4.41	0.623
<b>Aggregate Score (Overall Perception)</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>0.532</b>

The results demonstrate that respondents strongly agreed with all the statements in the matrix, reflecting a generally positive evaluation of iron sheet manufacturing firms’ performance. The procurement department ensures that purchases meet quality standards, with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.500. This suggests that firms uphold quality standards. When asked if the organization identifies and mitigates procurement risks proactively, the mean score was 4.46, and the standard deviation was 0.524. This reflects both strong agreement and moderate consensus, indicating the need for timely identification and mitigation of procurement risk. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are used to measure procurement efficiency, scoring a mean of 4.58 with a standard deviation of 0.520. This suggests that most firms have competent support structures and KPIs in place, which enhances procurement efficiency. The organization effectively monitors and measures employee productivity to



ensure optimal performance, scoring a mean of 4.54, with a standard deviation of 0.524. This shows the effects of monitoring and measuring employee productivity on the organization. The organization uses technology and automation effectively to improve operational efficiency and reduce errors, with a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.499. Respondents agreed that manufacturing firms need to automate and employ technology effectively to improve efficiency without errors. The organization prioritizes sustainable sourcing practices, scoring a mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of 0.623. This revealed that strategic sourcing practices enable the firms to fully realize and increase profitability margin through timely sourcing and quality observation.

The aggregate mean score was 4.50, indicating strong agreement overall, while the standard deviation of 0.532 shows a consistent pattern in responses across firms. The results portray iron manufacturing firms in Nairobi County as generally effective, customer-focused, and increasingly reliant on modern technology to enhance organizational efficiency and performance. These findings align with broader empirical evidence. For instance, Waithira (2021) assessed how procurement cost optimization affected Kenyan manufacturing companies' performance. This showed a statistically significant positive correlation between procurement cost optimization and the performance of Kenyan manufacturing enterprises. According to the study's findings, procurement cost optimization has a favorable correlation with manufacturing firms' performance and significantly improves it.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

A correlation test was carried out, and the results were recorded in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variable	Sour
Spearman's Correlation	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	
Per Pearson Correlation	.286**
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008
N	85

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

The results show that the correlation between sourcing and performance is positive and statistically significant (Pearson correlation( $r$ ) = 0.286,  $P < 0.008$ ), which implies that sourcing positively influences performance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that the outsourcing strategy does, in fact, have a statistical significance on firm performance.

5. Conclusion

In the examination of the effect of sourcing, the study concluded that sourcing has a significant influence on the performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County. The study concluded that a unit increase in the sourcing results in an increase in the performance (0.098 or 9.8%) of the organization's performance of iron sheet manufacturing firms in Nairobi County.

## 6. Recommendations

The study recommends that the iron sheet manufacturing firms should: Conduct comprehensive supplier market analysis to identify the most reliable and cost-effective suppliers of raw materials such as galvanized steel, zinc, and aluminum. Use the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) approach instead of just price comparison, factor in transportation, lead time, quality, and reliability. Employ e-sourcing platforms for transparency, efficiency, and wider supplier access. Regularly evaluate suppliers based on quality, cost, delivery performance, and compliance.

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