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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	APPLICATION OF SEMANTIC SIMILARITY USING ONTOLOGY FOR DOCUMENT COMPARISON <i>PALLAWI UNMESH BULAKH &amp; DR. AJIT MORE</i>	1
2.	ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AMONG THE APPAREL MANUFACTURING AND EXPORTING ORGANISATIONS LOCATED IN TIRUPUR CLUSTER <i>DR. J. SHANTHILAKSHMI &amp; S. GANESAN</i>	3
3.	INDIAN CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ON BRAND LOYALTY: SUBSTANCE STILL SCORES OVER STYLE <i>RIDDHI BISWAS</i>	9
4.	ROLE OF TEACHERS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION <i>DR. ANIL CHANDHOK</i>	16
5.	THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA <i>DR. SAMBHAVNA GUPTA, DR. M. K. GUPTA, DR. JASVEEN KAUR &amp; DR. PRADEEP KUMAR AGGARWAL</i>	19
6.	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO EVALUATE SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS <i>U. JEYASUTHARSAN &amp; DR. N. RAJASEKAR</i>	24
7.	HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC IDEALS: DISRUPTIONS AND DIRECTIONS <i>DR. PAWAN KUMAR SHARMA</i>	29
8.	BUYER BEHAVIOUR IN PURCHASING RESIDENTIAL FLATS IN CHENNAI CITY <i>DR. A. MOHAMED SALI, DR. K. SALEEM KHAN &amp; I.NASEEMA</i>	32
9.	UNDERSTANDING EURO-CRISIS: HOW DID IT OCCUR? <i>NEHA NAINWAL &amp; ASHIS TARU DEB</i>	38
10.	THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBAL STRATEGY AND STRATEGIC ALLIANCES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT <i>OMANKHANLEN ALEX EHIMARE &amp; JOSHUA O. OGAGA-OGHENE</i>	41
11.	GROWTH OF INDIAN FINANCIAL SECTOR: POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS <i>PRIYANKA PANDEY &amp; AMOGH TALAN</i>	48
12.	A STUDY ON HRD PRACTICES IN BANKING SECTOR <i>P.V.V.KUMAR &amp; MEERAVALI SHAIK</i>	54
13.	TO STUDY OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: AS A RELATIONAL STUDY ON SCHOOL TEACHERS <i>JAIBHAGWAN GUPTA</i>	57
14.	DEVELOPMENT OF POWER SECTOR IN INDIA: A BIRD'S EYE-VIEW <i>DR. BHASKAR DASARIRAJU</i>	60
15.	DEVELOPING A PARSER FOR SIMPLE PUNJABI SENTENCES <i>VIVEK AGGARWAL</i>	65
16.	GREEN MARKETING: CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN PUNE <i>YOGESH RAUT</i>	67
17.	A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS CELL PHONES <i>RAJESH KUMAR</i>	72
18.	GROWTH MOVEMENT OF DEPOSITS IN OMKAR MAHILA SAHKARI CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LTD, PUNE <i>MEGHA MEHTA</i>	79
19.	A STUDY OF AWARENESS OF TAX PLANNING AMONGST SALARIED ASSESSEES <i>CA SHILPA VASANT BHIDE</i>	86
20.	DATA PROTECTION IN CLOUD COMPUTING <i>CHENNA LAKSHMI</i>	89
21.	AN OUTLOOK OF STRUCTURAL UNORGANISED UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA <i>JAI BHAGWAN GUPTA</i>	93
22.	DATA HIDING TECHNIQUE FOR E-TENDERING USING STEGANOGRAPHY <i>MAHAVEER PRASAD TAWANIA, ABHISHEK DIDEL &amp; SAURABH MAHESHWARI</i>	96
23.	ANALYSIS ON AUDITING PRACTICES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON HUMAN RESOURCES: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED FIRMS IN NAIROBI COUNTY <i>JANE DIANA IMALI KIGUMBA &amp; KARIM OMIDO</i>	105
24.	CORE BASED COMMUNICATION IN MULTICASTING <i>ASHOK KUMAR BHOI &amp; BIJAYA KUMAR KHAMARI</i>	110
25.	E-WASTE: A LATENT ECONOMIC POTENTIAL <i>SIDDHARTH RATHORE</i>	119
26.	USE OF XBRL: AS E-TECHNOLOGY IN COMMERCE <i>NEHA JAISWAL</i>	123
27.	E-COMMERCE IN INDIA – GROWTH & CHALLENGES: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE <i>KARAN JOSHI</i>	129
28.	FINANCIAL DERIVATIVES MARKET IN INDIA <i>ANSHIKA AGARWAL</i>	132
29.	A STUDY INTO THE PROCESS OF OPEN TENDERING AND HOW IT INFLUENCES STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY <i>FASIKA BERHANU WOLDESELESSIE &amp; KARIM OMIDO</i>	142
30.	A TEXT READING SYSTEM FOR THE VISUALLY DISABLED <i>ARAVIND.S &amp; ROSHNA.E</i>	148
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	151

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# A STUDY INTO THE PROCESS OF OPEN TENDERING AND HOW IT INFLUENCES STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA POWER AND LIGHTING COMPANY

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## ABSTRACT

*A tender or bid is a formal offer to supply goods or services for an agreed price. From a purchasing perspective, tendering or competitive bidding is a purchasing procedure whereby potential suppliers are invited to make a firm and unequivocal offer of the price and terms on which they will supply specified goods or services, which on acceptance, shall be the basis of subsequent contract. Open tendering is the process of inviting all interested suppliers in the market to provide price and other terms at which they are prepared to supply organizational requirements. The process involves analyzing the information provided and opting for the best offer in a transparent and open fashion that is devoid of any obligation to accept the lowest bid. The main objective of this study therefore is to analyze this process of open tendering and how it influences strategic organizational performance.*

## KEYWORDS

open trading, strategic organizational performance.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoE	Department of Environment
DSO	District Service Organization
EOCD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
EPSRC	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
KPLC	Kenya Power and Lighting Company
NEDO	National Economic Development Organization
PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposals Act
PPRA	Public Procurement Regulatory Authority

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Organizations are embarking on strategically streamlining the supply chain to reduce or cut any unwanted costs burdening the purchasing process and unwanted inefficiencies leading to unnecessary costs. This is in attempt to gain competitive edge in the market place. Organizations therefore try to engage on effective purchasing methods that ensure maximum returns for their money value. But this requires organisations to abide by the respective legislative Acts (Bella, 2006).

The Public Procurement and Disposals Act, 2005; defines procurement as the acquisition by purchase, rental, lease, hire purchase, license, tenancy, franchise, or by any other contractual means of any type of works, assets, services or goods including livestock or any combination. From a purchasing perspective, tendering in a competitive bidding process entails a procedure whereby potential suppliers are invited to make a firm and unequivocal offer of the price and terms on which they will supply specified goods or services, which on acceptance, shall be the basis of subsequent contract (Onyango, 2012).

Open tendering on the other hand is the process of inviting all interested suppliers in the market to provide price and other terms at which they are prepared to supply organizational requirements. Competitive tendering is the main mechanism in a market in which open competition between different operators is engaged (Laffont and Tirole, 2008; Klempner, 2009). Thus, if competition in the market is limited for technical reasons, the only way to enhance the efficiency is to introduce competition for the market. This may entail instituting distinct strategies (Demsetz, 2012).

## 2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review summarizes information on open tendering and makes mention of how closely it has embraced free market competition. It covers numerous scholarly work in the theoretical review and empirical review.

### 2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Open tendering had begun long time ago mostly in the European countries. Following the wave of liberalization in the late 1980s, articles began to appear in the 1990s which assessed the outcomes and the factors influencing competition in markets where competition had been introduced at every early stage (Tough (2004). Alexandersson et al. (1998) showed initial effects of tendering in Sweden, including significant cost-reducing effects. One of their main findings was that the decline in demand in Sweden during those years was not a result of the introduction of tendering or of deregulation, but was probably related to the country's deep recession.

Sharaby and Shiftan (2008) analyzed the results of introducing tendering in Israel, which again confirms increasing quality levels and decreasing prices. A notable recent paper is Wolanski (2009), which compared the efficiency levels of direct awarding and competitive tendering and analyzed the drivers of efficiency in the Polish market. He confirmed that tendering public bus transport services results in considerable improvements in efficiency.

### 2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

A recent survey of Australian building constructors has overwhelmingly indicated that contractors and subcontractors perceive their market success to be determined by their company's ability to be the lowest cost tenderer —75% of respondents ranked submission of the lowest price as the number one reason for tender award success. With the introduction of open tendering many returns were seen as evidenced (Pyddoke, 2003).

With procurement accounting for about 20% of government expenditure in most developing countries, proper management of the activity is of paramount importance. The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) in Tanzania admits in an EOCED/DAC assessment of the country's procurement system in 2006 that there were no defined skills and knowledge profiles for specialized procurement skills (EOCED/DAC, 2007). The EOCED/DAC study revealed failure by many procuring entities to observe simple issues like bid validity periods thus rendering many awarded tenders null and void. Some tenders were awarded far beyond the legally allowed maximum periods, (sometimes up to six months later) while others had their bid period dated too below the legally allowed minimum period, for example, 19 days instead of 30 days (Msita, 2009).

**2.3 CRITIQUE OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE**

Much of previous research concentrated solely on the application of open tendering in the public sector and especially in the procurement operations of the government. Non looked at how performance improved strategically. In Tanzania for instance, as Mista (2009) reports, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) was singled out by the EOCED/DAC whose study revealed failure of the Tanzania PPRA by many procuring entities to observe simple issues like bid validity periods thus rendering many awarded tenders null and void. Some tenders were awarded far beyond the legally allowed maximum periods, sometimes up to six months later while others had their bid period dated too below the legally allowed minimum period, for example, 19 days instead of 30 days. No study touched on procurement and strategic organizational performance. This research thus attempted to bring the knowledge of open tendering and its effect on strategic organizational performance.

**3.0 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this research will be of beneficial interest to several concerns. Kenya Power and Lighting Company is a public utility company providing power distribution to the citizenry. It is of great interest to the government that improved efficiency in the company will be of integral role in achieving Vision 2030 goal of rural electrification. The government will also gain revenue and performance as a result of the improved efficiency thus translating to better strategies. Firms will be bound to integrate and optimize the supply chain by understanding the operations of the open tendering process and on how best to strategically optimize the process to gain a competitive edge in the competitive market place.

**4.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Although open tendering has, upon occasion, been discredited in the UK following continued criticisms in industry transformation reports that it negatively translates to increasing bureaucracy hence slowing business, a relatively recent report (Holt et al., 1996) has suggested that it is making a surprising return. For a developing country like Kenya, the question arose of public procurement policies gaining prominence as it is difficult to imagine how a government can deliver substantial improvements and the wellbeing of its citizens without a public expenditures system that includes effective public procurement policies (Evenette et al, 2005). This motivated the researchers to look into the process of open tendering and its importance in strategic organizational performance.

**5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

**5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The broad objective of this research was to study the process of open tendering and how it influenced strategic organizational performance.

**5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To find out the importance of open tendering in strategic organizational performance
2. To investigate the limitations of open tendering as a means of procurement
3. To find out the role of organizational management in implementing open tendering
4. To assess the challenges faced by management in implementing open tendering

**6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This aspect describes the method which was used to carry out the research study. It entails the research design, the target population, the sampling design and sampling procedure, sample size, data collection methods, data analysis and presentation.

**6.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The researcher adopted a descriptive study approach. Descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds. This involves describing the situation as it is. (Rop, 2012).

**6.3 TARGET POPULATION**

The population of interest in this study consisted of 100 respondents covering employees of KPLC from branches selected randomly. The major concentration was on their head office in Nairobi and its sub-branches in Mombasa and Voi towns. This was because of practical accessibility, capacity, time and budgetary constraints. The respondents encompassed top management, middle management and the lower level staff.

**TABLE 6.1 : TARGET POPULATION**

	Target Population (N)	Percentage (%)
Top management	10	10
Middle management	30	30
Lower level management	60	60
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: HR Department KPLC (2013)

**6.4 SAMPLING DESIGN AND SAMPLE STUDY**

In this study, the researchers used non-homogeneous sampling design whereby random sampling technique was used to select individual branches. The respondents on the other hand were selected stratified sampling. This eliminated bias because every element in the population had a known chance of being selected for the sample (Saunders et al, 2003).

**TABLE 6.2: SAMPLE FRAME**

	Target Population (N)	Ratio	Sample Size (n)
Top management	10	0.5	5
Middle level management	30	0.5	15
Lower level management	60	0.5	30
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>50</b>

Source: Researchers (2013)

**6.5 DATA COLLECTION**

In this study, both primary and secondary data were used to gather information. Secondary data was collected from the past research works, internet, relevant journals, magazines, newspapers and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supplies (CIPS) publications. Primary data was collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were structured in such a way that they elicited specific information from the respondents. The questions comprised of multiple choice, open-



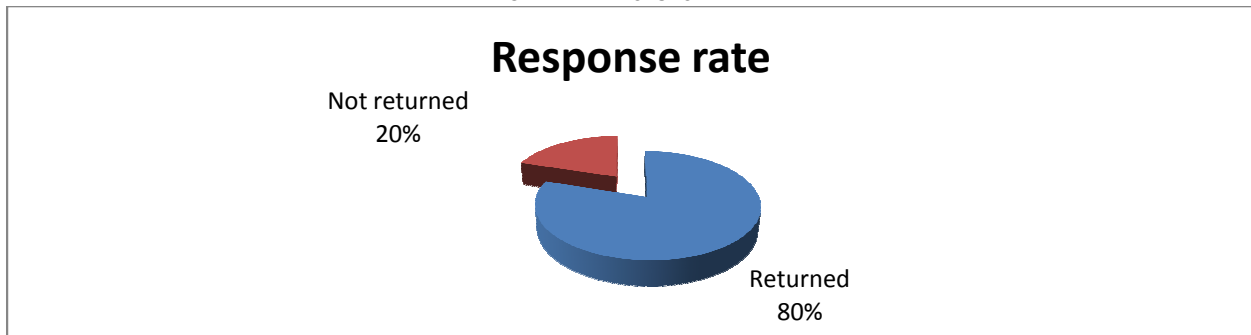
ended and dichotomous questions. In addition, Likert scale attitude type of questionnaires were used to evaluate the strength of attitudes held by the respondents.

**7.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**7.1 RESPONSE RATE**

Table 7.1 below shows that out of 50 questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, a significant 40 of them were returned. This translated to a whopping 80% response rate which was acceptable for analytical purpose hence an indication that the responses reflected the views of the employees of KPLC and thus a reliable source of information.

**CHART 7.1: RESPONSE RATE**



Source: Research Data, 2013

**7.2 ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN STRATEGICALLY IMPLEMENTING OPEN TENDERING**

**7.2.1 Responsibility for Strategic Implementation**

All the respondents were found to apply the open tendering process in their operations. This is true since all public parastatals are required by the law to make their procurement open and transparent. Open tendering therefore comes as a prerequisite. From the findings, 92.5% respondents were of the view that the management was solely responsible for the strategic implementation of the open tendering process. However, 7.5% of their counterparts were of the idea that employees had an hand in the process too. Respondents seem to understand that most of the lower level employees only undertake to implement directions sought by the management echelon. Managers strategically form part of the procurement, tender, and even the disposals committees and are thus the people in charge of the tendering process.

**TABLE 7.1: RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION**

Responsibility for Implementation	Frequency	Percentage
Management	37	92.5
Employees	3	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researchers (2013)

**7.2.2 Improvement Mechanisms**

In an effort to improve upon the procurement system, management have endeavored to fill relevant and qualified staff to the associated positions. Towards this end, respondents were asked to opine how they rated the improvement mechanisms. Of the respondents, 35(87.5%) rated the improvement mechanism as good while only 5(12.5%) rated the mechanism as very good. A mean of 3.1250 supports the trend with a likert scale within the range of 3. There is therefore a general trend of satisfaction with what the management has adopted to improve open tendering. A mean of 3.1250 and a standard deviation of 0.33493 shows a close dispersion towards the mean and thus respondent s agree on the mechanisms adopted by management to improve on open tendering. There is a sense of direction in the organization and therefore corporate energy can be channeled to improve the general organizational performance.

**TABLE 7.2: IMPROVEMENT MECHANISMS ADOPTED BY TOP MANAGEMENT**

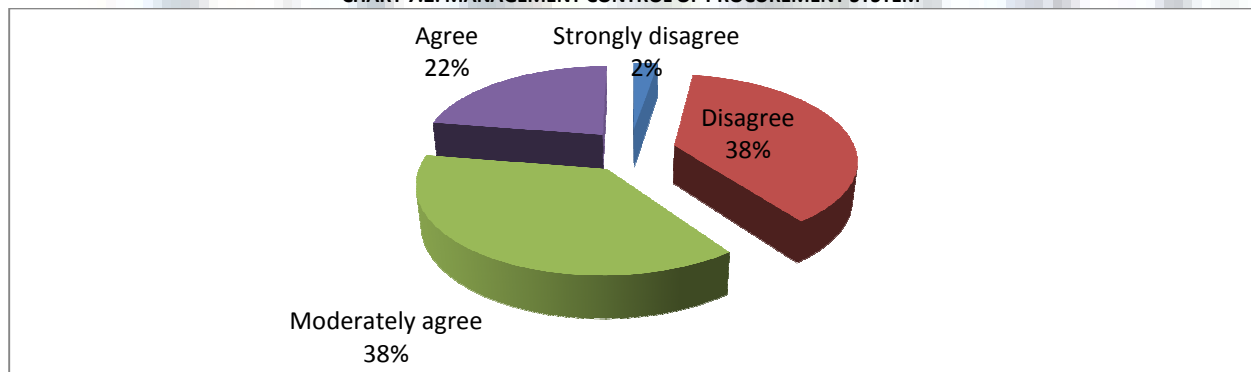
Improvement mechanism	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
Good	35	87.5	3.1250	0.33493	2.357
Very good	5	12.5			
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>			

Source: Research Data (2013)

**7.2.3 Control of Open Tendering**

Respondents were asked to provide their views on whether the firm is better strategically placed in allowing sole control of the entire procurement operations at the helm of management. 1(2.5%) strongly disagree, 15(37.5%) disagree, 15(37.5%) moderately agree and 9(22.5%) agree that management solely controls the process of open tendering. The 2.8000 mean with the support of the Likert scale, shows that respondents moderately agree that management solely controls the method procurement. The 0.82275 shows some considerable distribution of values along the mean showing an extent of agree towards who controls the procurement method. Also, the data from the SSPS is positively tailed with a skewness of 0.108. This calls for some soul searching of the company procurement system since some of the staff feel that the process is not fair, or credible enough to abide by the rules of procurement. May be this is due to corruption, inflexible management structures or any another knock-offs in the supply chain that need to be streamlined to optimize performance.

**CHART 7.2: MANAGEMENT CONTROL OF PROCUREMENT SYSTEM**



Source: Research Data (2013)

**7.3 IMPORTANCE OF OPEN TENDERING IN ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**7.3.1 Conversance with the Application of Open Tendering**

Knowing the law and applying it are two different sides of the same coin. Respondents were asked to provide their views on whether in fact employees at the outset were conversant with the process of application of open tendering. All the respondents were conversant with the application of the open tendering process. KPLC may therefore be hiring qualified staff and also may be credited with a great deal of training its workforce which is paramount for better performance.

**TABLE 7.3: CONVERSANCE WITH THE APPLICATION OF OPEN TENDERING**

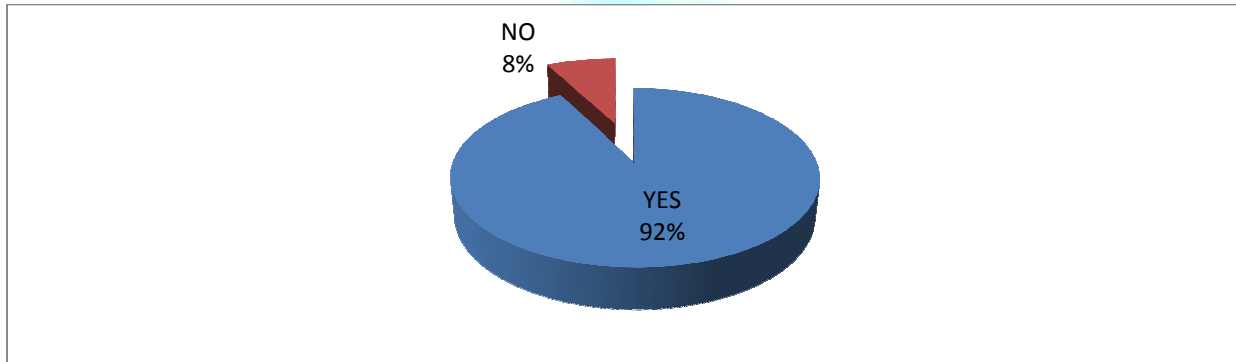
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	100
No	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research Data (2013)

**7.3.2: Training on Open Tendering**

Despite having knowledge of open tendering, respondents views were solicited for in gathering whether additional training of procurement was undertaken or not. Of the respondents, 37(92.5%) had been trained, while 3(7.5%) stated to have never been trained on open tendering process. Certainly the large majority are able to act on the procurement method. The little percentage of un-trained staff may be new in which case need training to enable them carry out the process efficiently.

**CHART 7.3: TRAINING ON OPEN TENDERING**



Source: Research Data (2013)

**7.3.3 Strategic Organizational Performance and Open Tendering**

Information was sought on respondents' views on the strategic performance of the firm. Respondents strongly agree that organizational performance is directly related to the application of open tendering. To illustrate the same, bad orders of materials would lead to organization losing important customers and eventually affect the organization profit margins. With a mean of 4.8750, there is strong agreement as supported by the Likert scale. There is a slight deviation of 0.33493 from the mean and the SPSS data is negatively skewed as shown by -2.357. Therefore organizational performance is directly related to open tendering.

**TABLE 7.4: ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE AND OPEN TENDERING**

Organizational performance	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD	Skewness
Agree	5	12.5	4.8750	0.33493	-2.357
Strongly agree	35	87.5			
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>			

Source: Research Data (2013)

**8.0 FINDINGS**

**8.1 SUMMARY**

From the analysis and data collected, disparity pointed out the case for lack of equal gender empowerment in top, middle and lower level cadres in matters pertaining to procurement. Management need to step up strategic efforts in ensuring equitable performance. Manpower and profit performance is often subject to uncontrollable external factors. The power industry is oft volatile.

**9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- KPLC is operating in a virtual monopolistic market. It is therefore important for competitive players to be allowed to contribute their efforts in the market.
- Training is crucial. Employees need to be imparted with continuous training to improve performance.
- Strategic plans reveal need to eradicate bureaucratic tendencies from procurement process.

**10.0 CONCLUSION**

From the study the researcher concludes that organisational performance seems insofar as open procurement is concerned, to be clouded under hidden guise of corruption, loot and plunder. To tackle this, hard decisions will need to be made in reigning in officers engaged in such vices

**11.0 LIMITATIONS**

The following limitations were faced during the study.

1. The study was limited to just one institution due to time constraints.
2. Confidentiality was a concern as some of the respondents chose to withhold some information deemed for the organization only.

**12.0 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

There is need to capture all sectors of the economy especially the private sector which are the economic drivers of this country.

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**APPENDIX**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

*This questionnaire has been set in relation to the objectives of the study. All the questions relate to the process of open tendering and how it influences organizational performance. Kindly read the questions carefully and answer them as honestly as possible by ticking (✓), rating, specifying or writing the correct answers precisely on the spaces provided.*

**PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Gender  
a) Male b). Female
2. What is the name of organization? \_\_\_\_\_
3. In which department do you work? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What's your designation? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you worked in this company? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your academic qualification?  
a) Certificate b). Diploma c). Graduate d). Post graduate f). other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2: ROLE OF MANAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING OPEN TENDERING**

Does your Company apply the process of open tendering?

- Yes No
1. If YES, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Who has been responsible for the implementation of open tendering?  
a).Management b).Employees c).Stakeholders
  3. Did that process of implementation receive any support from the management?  
Yes No
  4. If YES, specify the form of support \_\_\_\_\_
  5. What efforts does your management execute to support the application of open tendering? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  6. What improvement mechanisms does your management put in place to enhance the application of open tendering?(specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  7. In your opinion how do you rate the improvement mechanisms of your managements towards the application of open tendering?  
a). Excellent a b).Very Good c).Good d). Fair e).Poor
  8. Kindly read the following statements relating to the role of management on the application of open tendering and show the degree to which you agree or disagree by ticking where appropriate. Please note that the numbers indicated therein in the table represent your level of agreement ranging as follows:  
a). Strongly disagree-1 b).Disagree-2 c).Moderately agree-3 d). Agree-4 e).Strongly agree-5

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I think without management's commitment the application of open tendering impossible.					
2	It is the responsibility of management to allocate resources required for the application of open tendering.					
3	The management solely controls open tendering					
4	I think it is the responsibility of management to identify changes in open tendering and implement remedial mechanisms in order to remain relevant.					
5	The management must ensure that employees are able to apply open tendering.					

9. How do you rate the role of management in the application of open tendering?  
a) Very important  
b) Important  
c) Moderately important  
d) Less important  
e) Not important

**PART 3: IMPORTANCE OF OPEN TENDERING IN ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

10. Are you conversant with the application of open tendering?  
Yes No
11. If YES, how did you acquire the knowledge you have about the application of open tendering? (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
12. (i). Have you ever been trained on the application of open tendering?  
Yes No  
(ii). who organized the training?  
a). Management b). Government c).Stakeholders  
b). any other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(iii). How often are you trained on the application of open tendering?

- a) Very often
- b) Often
- c) Less often
- d) Not at all

13. Briefly specify how knowledge on the application of open tendering is sustained in your company \_\_\_\_\_

14. Kindly read the following statements relating to the importance of open tendering and show the extent to which you agree or disagree by ticking where appropriate. Kindly note that the numbers indicated below represent the level to which you agree or disagree.

- a). Strongly disagree-1
- b).Disagree-2
- c).Moderately agree-3
- d). Agree-4
- e).Strongly agree-5

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	I think without knowledge the application of open tendering is impossible.					
2	Open tendering is dynamic hence the need to continuously train the employee.					
3	Organizational performance is directly proportional to application of open tendering.					
4	I think in order for good results of open tendering one must be encouraged.					
5	Application of open tendering requires management support.					

15. How do you rate the importance of open tendering in organizational performance?

- a) Very important
- b) Important
- c) Moderately important
- d) Less important
- e) Not important

**PART 4: CHALLENGES FACED BY MANAGEMENT IN IMPLEMENTING OPEN TENDERING**

16. Are you conversant with the role of management in implementing open tendering?

- Yes
- No

17. If YES, expound \_\_\_\_\_

18. Did the process of implementation receive any support from top management?

- Yes
- No

19. If YES, specify the form of support \_\_\_\_\_

20. What effort does the top management execute to support application of open tendering? Specify \_\_\_\_\_

21. In your opinion how do you rate the improvement mechanisms of your top management towards open tendering?

- a). Excellent
- b) Very Good
- c).Good
- d). Fair
- e) Poor

22. What do you understand by collusion of contractors? Please expound \_\_\_\_\_

23. In your opinion, are the contractors colluding to influence the outcome of the process of open tendering?

- Yes
- No

24. If YES, give an explanation \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 5: LIMITATIONS OF OPEN TENDERING IN PROCUREMENT**

25. Does your organization use open tendering in procurement?

- Yes
- No

26. If YES, indicate the type of materials?

- a) Stationeries
- b) Spares parts and tools
- c) Line building and construction

27. In your opinion how do you rate the effectiveness of open tendering in procurement?

- a). Excellent
- b).Very Good
- c).Good
- d). Fair
- e).Poor

28. Please, explain your opinion \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your invaluable information and co-operation.**

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