

**ISO CERTIFICATION AND FIRM PERFORMANCE OF THE ISO CERTIFIED
COMPANIES IN PACKAGING IN KENYA**

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DECLARATION

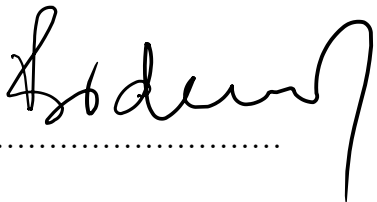
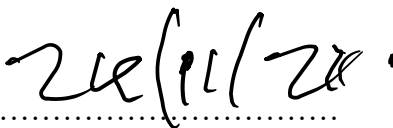
This research project is my own original work and has not been submitted any other university for any academic award.

Signature.......... Date...29 November 2021.....

D61/7378/2017

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my family for their support, encouragement and allowing the required time from family in the course of this project.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

ISO	-	International Organization for Standardization
ROI	-	Return on Investment
KPMG	-	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
QMS	-	Quality Management Strategies
SMEs	-	Small and Micro Enterprises
UK	-	United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

Performance of any organization in a competitive environment is affected by both internal and exogenous factors. Internal ones include resources. In as much a firm is endowed with a strong capital outlay, its performance may be compromised. To differentiate itself from the rest in the market and realize some competitive edge firms need to embrace the quality philosophy. This is the best frontier for driving organizational performance. This project aimed to ascertain the role of ISO certification on the overall performance of firms operating in Kenya's packaging domain. The study's design is cross sectional and descriptive, and it targeted 14 registered packaging companies and hence was a census study. Questionnaires were administered on the middle and operational staff of the respondent firms. The data collected to establish the influence of certification on company performance was analyzed with the aid of statistical software (SPSS-21). The findings of the study were presented by measures of central tendency and dispersion namely standard deviation, and mean. The study findings indicated that majority of the firms (40%) had already been ISO-certified for more than ten years while 30 % of the companies had been ISO-certified for a period less than five years and a period between 6 and 10 years respectively. The study established presence of a positive correlation of the study variables indicating that ISO certification positively influenced the performance of ISO certified packaging companies in Nairobi. The study findings established that ISO certification and continuous improvement had the highest influence on companies' performance with (M= 2.2 SD = 1.09), ISO certification and regulatory requirements with (M=1.6, SD=0.802), ISO Certification and Process Approach with (M= 1.6, SD 0.802), ISO Certification and Workers Training Programs with (M=1.2 SD=0.748) and system advance to administration with (M=1.1, SD=0.648) respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

ISO certification is a procedure that has been associated with high quality management and good performance of firms around the world (Anders, Johan & Liljab, 2020). This is because accreditation give autonomous certification that firms meet the demands for promoting good governance and management of different stakeholders in the company. Many packaging firms globally have been certified and adopted ISO certification with the aim of promoting their general performance. Studies done by Alhamd (2021) established ISO certification's role in providing a system of quality management framework determining the improvement of a firm's performance. It covers key activities of a firm, such as allocation of responsibilities, identification of important organizational processes, making policies, as well as determining the objectives and requirements for documentation of various plans in the organization.

Packaging firms have many legal obligations to ensure safety of their products in terms of preventing hazards and contamination thus enhancing increasing efficiency and longevity of the products. Consistency in both brand color and quality is key and hence processes implemented by the guide of ISO certification promote performance in terms of the service or production ensuring a company is fully integrated to drive optimal performance. It is a requirement of ISO certification to ensure continuous improvement in every part of the organization hence improving customer satisfaction while building their confidence due to reliable, consistent, compliant, safe and quality packaging (Sebastian & Bugdol, 2018).

The basis of this study is built on the TQM theory as well and the agency theory. The total quality management model indicates that firms must provide approaches for superior quality management aimed at enhancing their performance. The model supports the need for adopting continuous improvement in promoting process management, stakeholder value as well as being customer focused. The theory further advocates for a holistic organizational involvement and commitment of all employees' continuous improvement to effectively satisfy the customer's needs and the organizations implied requirements (Alhamd,2021).

However, the agency theory provides a model for guiding the relationship between the firm top-managers and other shareholders. The model indicates that the managers or the agents must promote ISO certification plans in the processes of maximizing the returns of the shareholders. Currently, the (ISO) certification model is regarded as the most effective check for quality standards worldwide (ISO, 2010). With this high demand, most African countries have adopted ISO standards, Kenya not being an exception (Bugdol, 2021). Juanzon et al (2017) explain that ISO certification is necessary for all categories organization; thus, the companies in the packaging industry need ISO certification. This is because it guides performance improvement methodologies by directing all the processes in an organization.

Studies by KPMG (2011) also indicated that firms within the packaging industry are gradually taking up ISO certification due to the prevailing market pressures brought about by change and the need for efficient and effective production of quality products and services (Ahmed,2017). ISO certification outlines quality standards that have been proven to promote better overall organizational performance through increased efficiency and

higher employee satisfaction. The firms in Kenya have notably received ISO certification in comparison to other East African countries. This is shown by a survey of ISO certification conducted in 2014 which showed that Kenya had the highest number of companies within East Africa that had achieved ISO certification (ISO, 2015).

1.1.1 ISO Certification

ISO (International Organization for Standardization) was established 1987 and in 1988, the organization crafted a set of standards termed ISO standards. The initial ISO standards have since been revised a number of times in 1994, 2000 and 2008.

The responsibility of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is not exclusively set performance standards but also categorizes the operations upon which levels of quality administration are worked on. According to Abdelkrim and Berrouiguet(2015), ISO also helps craft operational procedures that promote effectiveness and efficiency by directing quality management system to be used by a company. ISO 9001 for instance defines a set of procedures that can help a firm to utilize a quality strategy in its operations to impact the quality of the final products.

Notably, ISO provides a scale through which companies can monitor their key processes and operations: it does not offer certification presumed by many. The measures given by ISO help firms to make an objective evaluation of itself through bench marking themselves with other equivalent companies worldwide to underscore their niche in the market. Therefore, the standards set by ISO are intended to enhance effectiveness in a firm thus improve performance. The concept of improvement of standards is hinged on a philosophy of continuously improving operations and customer satisfaction through focus prevention of defects (Jagdeep & Harwinder,2015).

With ISO certification, firms are able to inculcate and utilize efficient quality management methodologies and strategies. There are currently four ISO 9000 standards: ISO 9000:2005; ISO 9001:2008; ISO 9004:2009 and ISO 19011: 2002: The ISO 9001 series were built on the concepts of quality management strategies that encompasses customer focus, leadership, stakeholder involvement, gradual improvement, process approach, and strategic decision making. These factors when considered help promote the performance of the firms.

1.1.2 The Concept of Firm Performance

By definition, firm performance is an evaluation of the realized (actual) performance against the desired performance (Jester & Sjøile,2013). It represents the efficiency with which an organization utilizes its resources in generating revenue. Bhosle (2012) states that performance is defined on the basis of parameters stated as performance indicators. It can be defined on the basis of tasks quality, results or effort driven by a detailed layout of conditions under which it should be delivered.

According to Moraa and Muturi(2016) firm performance can be categorized into two groups namely, financial and non-financial. Financial performance is an index of the financial health of a firm within a defined period that includes cash flows, sales turnover, profits return on investment and several other profitability ratios (Mohamud, Ali & Joyce,2016) On the other hand the common nonfinancial measures used by firms are market share, customer satisfaction level and retention, employee's motivation level, employees' turnover rate and innovation (Barween, Kurdi & Tyseer,2020).

1.1.3 Packaging Industry in Kenya

Packaging is an important part of any product. Packaging refers to the process of wrapping products with the purpose of protecting them from damage. An attractive packaging of any product can encourage the potential customers to buy that product. In Kenya, there are various firms that are involved in the packaging industry. The packaging firms in Kenya help to deliver high-quality print solutions which are also highly customized to enhance flexible packaging. The majority of the firms within the packaging industry in Kenya have their headquarters in Nairobi -Kenya.

The Packaging companies in Kenya are good manufacturers of flexible packaging solutions and they are among the largest companies in Eastern and Central African region. They deliver high quality, customized print solutions for client needs. The packaging of products in Kenya indicates the firm ability to deliver a standard quality of product and services. The packaging process is concerned with defining product use instructions, inserts, labels, graphic design, as well as decisions about the types and sizes of physical containers for individual product items with the outer package.

Some of the firms within the packaging industry in Kenya include the Betatrad Kenya Ltd which is a medium sized company that was incorporated in 1990 in Kenya. The firm mostly involves in plastics packaging materials that are manufactured and distributed in Kenya. East African Packaging Industries produces paper sacks and corrugated cartons packaging. Other major packaging firms in Kenya include the Dodhia packaging Limited, Dune Packaging Limited as well as the Techpak Industries Limited and the Flexipac Limited.

1.2 Research Problem

The main determinants of ISO certification in the packaging industry are to ensure quality standards and promote performance (Corbett et al, 2015). In most cases, the acquisition of ISO certification is aimed at ensuring high quality standards and improving the organizational performance (<https://www.globalstd.com/en/blog/iso-survey-2018>). The Kenyan business market through the prevailing market pressures is largely compelling firms in the packaging industry to undertake ISO certification to improve their performance (Lee & Yu, 2017). According to Ochieng (2017) some firms in the packaging industry in Kenya have inferior quality processes, products and services due to lack of ISO certification while others still register poor performance yet are ISO certified.

Studies on adoption of ISO have indicated that it helps firms to achieve continuous improvement. Many studies have dwelled on the impacts of ISO certification on operational performance rather than financial performance resulting from ISO certification. For example, Psomas et al (2013) found out that despite the fact that the interest shown by most companies on ISO certification, simple implementation of ISO certification without implementation of effective quality management strategies after certification may yield no tangible effect.

They explain that organizational efficiency is not solely dependent on the certification but largely on processes sustaining superior quality processes in the various departments and through the whole supply chain. Dick et al (2011) expound that business benefits and greater outcome can be obtained by firms if they incorporate quality management strategies with ISO 9001 certification.

Interestingly, Gotzamani et al (2018) found out that ISO 9000 certification lowers innovation but increases bureaucracy, thus the main advantage of ISO9000 certification is to enhance internal operations of a business. ISO 9000 certification is more practicable and produces better results in predictable environmental set ups where innovation is largely relevant (Benner & Tushman, 2013). This study noted that ISO certification models help in controlling quality in almost all organizations.

Corbett et al (2010) undertook a study in the United States and noted that companies' performance is significantly improved after three years of ISO certification. In addition, a study of more than five hundred organizations in Japan, USA, Germany, and Canada, by the 2001 International Quality Study of the American Quality Foundation established that supplier certification and operation improvement had significant impact on firm performance.

Locally, Moturi (2015) established that only about 35% of the insurance firms had obtained ISO certification by December 2015, while the remaining 65% had not received the ISO certification. The study also noted that the ISO 9001 certification included ISO 9001:2008 which emphasized the need for quality administrative strategies in firms, ISO 9000:2005 enlisting the critical aspects of language and other related concepts; ISO 9004:2009 dealing with the effective quality management strategies and the ISO 19011:2011 that outlines a blueprint on audits of quality administrative strategy (both internal and external). Notably, there are some instances where consumers compel their suppliers to obtain ISO 9001 certification to ensure specific levels of quality performance expected by the customers. This is also prompted by the reason that ISO 9001 certification reduces the defects among the firms in terms of perfection in performance. The study outlined the importance of ISO

certification frameworks in managing the workers, suppliers and other stakeholders in the organization.

In a project that aimed to study the effect of ISO 9001:2008 on the micro public service sector enterprises in the country, Ochieng et al (2015) established that standardization led to an improvement in the dispensing of services in the public sector. Mundari (2010) studied ISO 9001 certification in the local Insurance industry and found out that satisfaction of customers, operational efficiency, reduction of waste and enhanced organizational performance as some positive gains of certification. Anyango and Wanjau (2017) did a study on the manufacturing firms in Nairobi in relation to ISO 9001:2008 certifications and found that performance improved drastically after the certification.

From the analysis of the above past studies, it can be argued that there is minimal information regarding ISO certification that includes adoption and duration as determinants of the firms 'overall performance. In the view of the ongoing discussions and the studies that had been carried out, that none of those previous studies touched on determining the impact of ISO certification on the overall performance of companies in the packaging industry.

In addition, the previous studies are not comprehensive and focused mostly on the manufacturing and banking industries and banking industry rather than in the packaging industry. This project aims to fill this gap by providing research-based findings and answering the question; what is the effect of ISO certification on firm performance in the packaging industry in Kenya?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of ISO certification on the performance of ISO certified companies in packaging in Kenya

1.4 Research Question

What is the impact of ISO certification on firm performance in packaging in Kenya?

1.5 Value of the Study

The results and the findings of the research will be used by different stakeholders both locally and outside the country. For instance, it will assist the management of firms within the packaging industry, different scholars around the globe as well as policy makers to understand how ISO certification affect firm performance. The findings of the research will also be used by the management of packaging industry to understand the significance of ISO certification on the performance of a firm. This will assist them to embrace proper ISO certification and firm performance.

The research will also benefit different academicians and researchers as it will provide useful information on the established link between ISO certification and company performance in the packaging industry. In their future studies, scholars will use it as a reference point. The research will also assist students in their daily research to have a clear understanding on how ISO certification affects the firm performance in the packaging industry. This will help promote the performance of firms in the ISO in the packaging industry.

Policymakers will also benefit from the results of the research as they will be able to formulate and enforce policies affecting ISO certification and company performance in the

packaging industry. This is essential in the development of effective policies on ISO certification and company performance in the packaging industry. The policy makers will ensure that policies and programs associated with ISO certification results into high performance of firms in the packaging industry.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section, academic literature regarding the impact of ISO certification on the organizational performance in the packaging industry around the world will be presented with aim of finding the gaps in knowledge. The theoretical literature is reviewed followed by empirical literature that involves a review of past studies on related to this study

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This part depicts and includes the underlying theories associated with the study. Theories are models that guide the study. The study includes the total quality management theory as well as the agency theory.

2.2.1 Total Quality Management Theory

TQM theory is associated with William Deming (1950's). It is a management framework that is built on a culture for an organization's endeavor to build long-term success by involving all the employees from low cadre to the senior in focusing on improving quality subsequently delivering customer satisfaction.

Ho (2007) argues that TQM is part of models employed to promote the business excellence and it includes or cover the use of the quality management principals as well as a set of business management aspects, in pursuit of improving performance with regard to stakeholder value, customer focus and process management. This theory in addition posits a requirement for an organizational holistic commitment to continuous improvement in

order to effectively meet the customer's needs and the organizations requirements. This means that continuous learning should be managed in all organizations through adoption of total quality frameworks (Tamimi & Sebastianelli, 2012).

The theory has several assumptions. For example, the model assumes that change is based on a behavioral change and this primarily entails a change in a firm's technology, and it should be managed through changing the firm's culture in its norms, values and belief systems. The theory also assumes that there are various power bases in the organization. This means that a firm should have a strong quality culture to help them performed better in the society. Evidently, a study done by Chang and Lo (2105) noted that firms that implemented the quality process showed steady growth in performance which exceeded the average performance of the industry in terms of customer and employee-related indicators as well as financial results and operational results.

In this study, the theory can help the management of the firms to adopt high quality management models and this should be anchored in the philosophy of high vision, good strategy as well as enough skills and resources (Tamimi & Sebastianelli, 2012). The firm should also promote the rewards among different elements in the firm. The firm should use its resources to avoid frustration and the use of the principles and tools of Total Quality Management will make sure that the governance of certified firms perform with minimal resources. The firm should also consider concepts of customer's quality of service, and the critical role of quality in their business management.

2.2.2 Agency Theory

Postulated by Stephen Ross and Barry Mitnick (1973), this theory characterizes the conflict of interest between owners and agents (managers), which is referred to as an "agency problem".

Agency theory holds that in the today's corporation ownership is shared thus managerial actions may divert from those maximizing shareholders' wealth (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). This means that managers may not be compelled to act with the interest of maximizing the returns to shareholders not unless appropriate governance structures such as ISO certification models are adopted to safeguard the interests of those shareholders. Additionally, Wu and Chen (2011) stated that as agents of stockholders, managers of profit motivated firms have to develop and use strategies to improve company value and stakeholder wealth. The agency problem occasioned by the conflicting senior management and stockholders' interests can be partly addressed by the recent growth of stock options and contacts that are incentive-based (Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Eisenhardt, 1989). This is important in promoting the performance of the firm.

The theory indicates that top managers should exhibit vested interest in maximizing shareholder profit by meeting the financial interests of the shareholders and those of top management. Therefore, ISO 9001 certification seeks to increase of the shareholders by realizing an improved cashflows, which increases the company's retained earnings (Wu & Jang, 2013). Agency theory is a fundamental framework used in most organizations for designing controls and governance in organizations and the firm should use it as an economic and management principle to resolve and explain the relationship between agents and their business principles. The theory can also be used in order for the firm to explain

how to form relationships among different stakeholders in the organization (Tamimi & Sebastianelli, 2012).

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Global Studies

Various scholars have performed studies to examine the effect of ISO certification on firm performance across the world. For example, Cloke and Goldsmith (2012), in a study done in the American pharmaceutical industry to underscore the ISO certification and firm performance correlation, noted that having ISO certification help promote the firm's financial gains and general performance. The study suggested that firms should value systems and include proper collaboration, diversity, as well as good participation and unity in the development of good ISO certification models.

Košir et al(2012) performed a study on the importance of organizational values and how the ISO certification promotes the performance of the organization. The study was done in Slovenia, and 303 companies were used. The study findings showed that there were different ISO certification models that promote performance in different models in terms of employee productivity, supplier retention, return on assets as well as the reputation of the firm and the number of customers in the society.

Additionally, the ISO certification added value in terms of the costs per employee as well as efficiency in client proceedings and this is important in promoting non-financial models of performance. However, the study was done in Slovenia and may not apply in the Kenyan context.

Fitriya and Locke (2012) did a study on the link between ISO certification, ownership structure, corporate governance mechanisms and firm performance was conducted in New Zealand and showed mixed results because of how the governance system was set up in the country. Their study, confirmed the existence of a non-linear relationship among management structure, ownership, and board composition and ISO certification and firm performance. The study further indicated that firms must adopt ISO certification to promote their performance and corporate governance structures.

Bhagat(2020) examined how ISO certification model influence the firm corporate governance and performance in UK. Findings showed that the firms that had an ISO certification had better internal control and showed better performance than those which lacked ISO certification. The study also noted that firms which were owned by a larger number of shareholders delivered better performance than those which were owned by a family. The researchers concluded that ISO certification allowed the firms to have proper corporate governance systems and enjoyed high profitability as well.

2.3.2 Local Studies

A close analysis of past studies reveals that various researchers have done studies on the impact of ISO certification on the overall performance of Kenyan companies. Juma (2014) did research testing the connection between ISO standards and corporate governing structures on the general performance of government corporations. The results showed that there existed a relationship between aggregated organizational ISO certification model adoption and performance which was statistically significant.

Furthermore, Gakenia (2015) conducted research on the impact of ISO certification plans and performance of mobile phone companies in Kenya. The researcher established that that there existed a significant positive impact of ISO certification on the general performance of mobile phone firms in the country. However, it should be noted that this study mainly focused on the mobile industry.

In a study to find out the effect of ISO certification on human resource management performance of companies within the banking industry in Kenya, Cania (2014), found out that some firms appear competitive in the market through adoption of ISO certification models. Cania (2014) further investigated the importance of ISO certification management on human resources and established that it helps promote and improve high organizational performance. The findings of the study confirmed that human resource ISO certification can be managed through adoption of effective human resources skills as well as the consideration of the human capital behaviors and attitudes and these aspects are important in managing the performance in the organization. However, the study mainly focused on the banking industry in the country.

A study done by Okwiri (2010) on the relationship between operational performance of Government agencies and ISO certification noted that this certification promoted the operational performance of Government agencies in the country. The study revealed that good leadership model and proper strategic planning help human resource development, process management and promoted the levels of quality of services in the firms. This means that quality management practice variables are important in promoting ISO certification and operational performance of Government agencies in the country. However, the study focused on the government agencies associated with the health sector.

From the empirical review studies on the influence of ISO certification on firm performance is limited. This study will seek to fill the gap by investigating the influence of ISO certification on the general performance of Kenyan packaging.

2.4 Knowledge Gaps

A study by Cloke and Goldsmith (2012) focused on pharmaceutical companies. These firms operated in a completely different environmental set up compared to the packaging companies. In addition, the study was performed in a completely different context in terms of industry and jurisdiction making it difficult to be generalized in this study.

The study performed by (Košir(2012) on the role ISO certification on the performance of 303 companies in Slovenia. The study did not clearly state the context of the study and the performance indicators measuring performance. Slovenia is again a very different context from this study case firm, making these findings difficult to generalize in this

Locally Gakenia (2015) conducted research on the impact of ISO certification plans and performance of mobile phone companies in Kenya. The researcher focused on completely different context, the mobile industry, away from the packaging industry.

Cania (2014) did a study to establish the effect of ISO certification on human resource management performance of companies within Kenya's banking industry and the importance of ISO certification management on human resources. This study was performance specific and was however, mainly focused on the banking industry in the country, whose findings cannot be generalized in this study.

A study done by Okwiri (2010) on the connection between operational performance of Government agencies. This study was based on service operations while this study

focuses on manufacturing operations. In addition, that study focused on the government agencies associated with the health sector.

From the reviewed studies, literature capturing the influence of ISO certification on firm performance is limited. This study will seek to fill the gap by investigating the influence of ISO certification on the performance of ISO certified companies in the Kenyan packaging industry.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section presented the research methodology of the study. The study methodology comprises the research design, data collection, and the data analysis techniques the study used. This chapter acted as the blueprint that was used in this project to establish the role of ISO certification on performance of packaging firms in Kenya.

3.2 Research Design

A study design is a blueprint explaining how data will be collected and analyzed Frankfort-Nachmias(2008) A study design helps the researcher to study the behavior of the study variables without making any alterations on them (Kothari,2004).Sine it acts as a blue print for the study, it helps a researcher to proceed in the research process right direction without any deviation from the task. It is in a nutshell an overall, detailed strategy of the research study process. This study adopted a cross sectional descriptive research design. In a cross-sectional study, data is collected from many different respondents at a single point in time where the researcher observes or surveys the study variables without influencing them.

This study is therefore cross sectional since data was collected and analyzed at one particular point in time across the sample population. This study design was found to be ideal in ascertaining the nature of the role of ISO certification on the performance of the packaging companies in Nairobi, Kenya.

3.3 Target Population

This study targeted registered packaging companies in Kenya. There are 14 ISO certified packaging companies in Kenya (KAM, 2020) as per appendix (ii). The researcher therefore performed a census due to the small size of the population. According to Mugenda,(2003) when a population size is less than 30, census sampling design is considered to be appropriate. The length of time firms has operated under ISO certification was obtained from individual companies' website.

3.4 Data Collection

This study used primary data. The researcher utilized questionnaires administered on drop and collect basis to collect primary data from the respondent firms. The questionnaires were administered to the middle and operational level employees due to the ease of accessing them to provide the required information for the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used quantitative techniques in establishing a link between ISO certification and the performance of packaging companies in Kenya companies in Nairobi, Kenya. The collected data was cleaned and coded for ease of analysis. The researcher used a statistical software (SPSS-21) to analyze the findings of the study were. The findings were presented through descriptive statistical analysis techniques such as measures of central tendency (mean) and measures spread (standard deviation) and presented on tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the findings of the study and the analysis of the findings of this study as determined by the research question and the research methodology. The chapter also reviewed the response rate, participants' demographics. The section also looks at the descriptive statistics of the obtained findings as well as the correlation analysis of the data with the aim of establishing the effects of ISO certification on firm performance in the packaging industry in Kenya. The primary data was collected from the employees of the respond companies from the middle level managers and operational staff of the respondent firms.

4.2 The Participants Response

The researcher distributed structured questionnaires to the respondent companies. 14 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 10 were sent back to the researcher representing a response rate of 71.4% which is sufficient in answering the study questions and the objective of the study. Mugenda (2008) states that a study with a response rate that is above 50% is always considered to be sufficient to address the objectives of a study.

4.3 Education Level of the Respondents

Table 4.1: Education Level of the Respondents

Level Of Education	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Master's Degree Level	2	20	20
Bachelor's Degree Level	4	40	60
Diploma Level	4	40	100
Total	10	100	

Source: Researcher, (2020)

From the findings portrayed in Table 4.1 above, 20% (2) of the respondents had a Masters' degree, 40 % had Bachelors' degree, and 40% (4) had a Diploma level of education.

4.4 General Information

This section presented the bio data of the fourteen (14) ISO certified packaging companies in Nairobi Kenya. The bio data consisted of the length of operation of the firms and the length of time the firms have been ISO certified

4.4.1: Length of Operation by the ISO Certified Firms in Nairobi

The study results presented on Table 4.2 indicate that 30 % of the respondent firms have been in operation for a period less than 10 years and a period of between 10-15 years respectively. 40 % of the respondent firms had already been operating for a period more than 15 years.

Table 4.2 : Length of Operation by the ISO Certified Packaging Firms in Nairobi

Length Of Operation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Below 10 years	3	30	30
10-15 years	3	30	60
above 15 years	4	40	100
Total	10	100	

Source Researcher: (2020)

The study findings established that a majority of the respondent firms have been in operation for a period more than ten years. They are well aware of the business environment defined by competition; consumerism and it's drive for consumer awareness campaigns regarding quality standard compliance demands and the legal frameworks regarding quality compliances and their effect on their operational efficiencies and performance.

4.4.2 Duration of Operation under ISO Certification

This section sought to establish the history of the ISO certified firms regarding the length of time they have operated under ISO certification.

The results of the study presented in Table 4.3 below indicates that 40 % of the respondent firms had operated under ISO certification for periods above 10 years 30 % of the respondents' firms had operated under ISO certification for a period below 5 years and a 6-10 years period respectively. This indicates that majority of the firms in the packaging industry were very sensitive about the benefits derived by firms from ISO certification, hence had been ISO certified the longest.

Table 4.3 : Duration of Operation under ISO Certification

Length Of Operation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Below 5 years	3	30	30
6- 10	3	30	60
Above 10 years	4	40	100
Total	10	100	

Source: Researcher, (2020)

4.5 Influence of ISO Certification on Companies' Performance

Table 4.4: ISO Certification and Companies Performance

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
ISO Certification and Workers Training Programs	1.2	0.748
ISO certification and regulatory requirements	1.6	0.802
ISO Certification and Continuous Improvement	2.2	1.950
ISO Certification and Process Approach	1.6	0.802
System advances to administration	1.1	0.648

Source: Researcher (2020)

The results in Table 4.4 show that all the independent variables impact the performance of ISO certified packaging companies in Nairobi positively. The study findings established that ISO certification and continuous improvement had the highest influence on companies' performance with (M= 2.2 SD = 1.950), ISO certification and regulatory requirements with (M=1.6, SD=0.802), ISO Certification and Process Approach with (M= 1.6, SD = 0.802) ISO Certification and Workers Training Programs (1.2, SD=0.748) and system advance to administration with (M=1.1, SD=0.648). From the findings

presented on Table 4.4 it is discernable that all the variables in this study have a role in the determination of the direction performance of the packaging companies will take. Their influence varies however depending on each variable impact on operational efficiency.

4.6 Discussions

When an organization is said to be “ISO certified”, it means that such an organization has developed, maintains and improves its business processes continuously which is achieved by evaluating and comparing its performance to the right quality standards. Globalization has presented stiff global competition and the best frontier organizations are using today is quality assurance to win and retain customers’ confidence. ISO certification confers this, and impacts organizational performance.

This study devoured to establish a link between ISO certification and performance of packaging companies in Kenya. The findings indicated that 40% of the firms in the industry have been ISO certified for more than 10 years a clear indication that many packaging firms in the packaging industry have embraced the new paradigm in quality management philosophy that advocates for zero defect, lean operations, waste reduction, improved operational efficiency and subsequently sound financial performance.

Regarding the influence of ISO certification on the performance of the ISO registered packaging firms in Kenya, it was established that there existed a relationship between the two concepts. The study findings established that ISO certification and continuous improvement had the highest influence on companies’ performance with (M= 2.2 SD = 1.09), ISO certification and regulatory requirements with (M=1.6, SD=0.802), ISO

Certification and Process Approach with (M= 1.6, SD = 0.802) ISO Certification and Workers Training Programs (M= 1.2, SD= 0.748), and system advance to administration with (M=1.1, SD=0.648). From the findings presented on Table 4.4 it is discernable that all the variables in this study have a role in the determination of the direction performance of the packaging companies will take. Their influence varies however depending on each variable impact on operational efficiency.

4.6.1 Comparison of the Study with Theories

Accordingly, the study findings supported the total quality management theory. The TQM theory advocates for employee's involvement in pursuit of continuous improvement as a means to drive performance. With the findings indicating that certification and continuous improvement influenced performance significantly at (M= 2.2; SD=1.09) and workers Training Programs (M= 1.2, SD= 0.748), it is an affirmation of the link between the TQM theory and findings of this study. The findings indicated that total quality management is associated with ISO certification models and promoted the performance of the packaging companies (Ho, 2007).

This occurs because the customers enjoy high quality and get attracted to purchase from the firm when quality is maintained. According to total quality management theory, quality assurance associated with business excellence (BE) and consideration of the stakeholder value. The study supported the theory findings and indicated that adoption of ISO certification models and quality assurance systems resulted into continuous improvement and high performance of the firms (Tamimi & Sebastianelli, 2012).

Regarding the agency theory that advocates for a balance of the stake holder's interests. The study findings also supported the agency theory assumptions and noted that the adoption of ISO certification models aim at maximizing the shareholder wealth after consideration of the values of the agents/managers in the firm (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). The findings also supported the view that the agents of the firm must means be compelled to act with the interest of maximizing the returns to shareholders using appropriate policies such as adoption of effective governance structures and ISO certification plans (Tamimi & Sebastianelli, 2012). This is important in safeguard the interests of the shareholders and promoting the performance of the firm in the long run (Wu & Chen, 2011). This means that firms must put plans and models that will increase their company value and stakeholder wealth and this can be done through adoption of ISO certification models and governance structures supported by the agency theory (Wu & Jang, 2013). These provisions however did not come out conspicuously to link agency and are not noticeable significantly.

4.6.2 Comparison of the Study with Other Studies

A study by Cloke and Goldsmith (2012) on ISO certification and company performance globally established a positive correlation between certified status and performance. In view of the above findings, they were an exact match of the findings of this study and therefor they strongly support it. A study on ISO certification and performance done by Kosir et al (2012) in Slovenia the study established that ISO certification promoted performance in terms of employee's productivity, ROI, and corporate reputation. Kosir's (2012) findings are in agreement with the findings of this study and there is no contradiction between the two studies since the align favorably.

Bhagat (2020) did a study on the role of ISO on corporate governance in Britain and established that ISO certified firms had better internal controls. Since performance is strongly linked to measurement and control, this study is strongly related to the current study and can act as a source of reference for this study, and is favorably supportive.

Locally, Juma (2014) performed a study on ISO certification and governance of the state corporations in Kenya and established that like Bhagat (2020) ISO certified corporations had better internal control which improved the quality of their service delivery which strongly supports the findings of this study. In a study on study on ISO certification and performance of the mobile phone sector firms, the study established that ISO certification positively influenced the performance of the mobile phone sector firms by enhancing operational efficiency. There is no contradiction between these findings and the study findings since they are focusing on the same set of variables.

Okwiri (2010) focused on the relationship between operational performance of Government agencies. The study established that ISO certification resulted to proper leadership, effective strategic planning that leads to superior and operational performance of the agencies. On the other hand, Cania (2014) did a study to find out the influence of ISO certification on human resource management performance of companies within the banking industry in Kenya and the importance of ISO certification management on human resources. The study established that ISO certification led to more human resource development and a promotion of service quality. This is in tandem with the findings of this study which support its findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section of the project comprises a discussion of the findings established conclusions and recommendations of the study. It further delves into the limitations of the study and potential suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the Study Findings

In this study the main objective was to establish the impact of ISO certification on company performance in the packaging firms in Kenya. Data was collected from middle and operational level employees of the respondent firms. The study achieved a response rate of 71.4%. The findings show that the respondents were well educated with 40 % of the respondents holding bachelor degree and an equivalent number having a diploma qualification while 20 % holding master's degrees

The study found out that packaging firms in Kenya have adopted ISO certification strategies in their major operations and programs. The study noted that majority of the packaging firms have ISO certification which is part of standards that help them to manage their quality assurance systems. The study also established that the packaging firms in Kenya have adopted ISO certification programs and their workers are trained in the program to ensure quality assurance of their products and services. The inquiry also found out that the adoption of ISO certification had enabled the organizations to operate more effectively and efficiently, meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements. This led to low risks and challenges in the firm operations.

Furthermore, the study found out that ISO Certification plans were associated with continuous improvement in the organization activities. Companies that have adopted ISO certification enjoyed high decision-making processes, continuous improvement and high customer satisfaction levels. This promoted the level of their success and performance in general. The study also noted that ISO Certification programs improved the firm's process approach leading to stable leadership and management framework.

The findings of the study also revealed that adoption of ISO Certification models improved stakeholder Management among packaging companies in the country. This is because ISO certification conditions are associated with system advance to administration, continual improvement, involvement of all employees, as well as factual strategy of decision making and balanced or equal relationship with different stakeholders. The analysis and inquiry also noted that adoption of led to high performance of the packaging firms in Kenya. This is because packaging companies that have adopted ISO Certification models enjoyed high profitability, attracted new customers and enjoyed high level of return on investment.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concludes that there is a positive and significant link between ISO Certification adoption and the performance of the packaging firms in Kenya. This is because packaging companies that have adopted ISO Certification models enjoyed high profitability, attracted new customers and enjoyed high level of return on investment. The packaging firms that have adopted ISO Certification standards also reported high levels of customer satisfaction, improved stakeholder management and less customer's complaints in their major operations. The firms also reported high levels of high customer retention and growth after ISO certification adoption. This is because the use and adoption of ISO Certification

standards is associated with fewer defects and less wastage resources. As a result, the firms experienced high-cost reduction after ISO certification adoption as well.

The study also concluded that majority or many packaging firms have adopted SO certification strategies in their major operations and programs. The companies also managed to educate and train their employees of the importance of maintaining ISO Certification standards, especially in ensuring the quality assurance of their products and services. The adoption of ISO certification enabled the organizations to operate more effectively and efficiently, meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements. It was thus, concluded that adoption of ISO Certification standards results into low risks and challenges in the firm operations.

Moreover, the study concluded that the adoption of ISO Certification standards helps firms to achieve continuous improvement in their major operations. This is because it was evident that the companies that have adopted ISO certification enjoyed high decision-making processes, continuous improvement and high customer satisfaction levels. It was also confided that ISO Certification standards help the firm to experienced stable process approach leading to stable leadership and management framework as well as improved stakeholder management. This means that packaging companies in the country should continue adopting ISO Certification standards to advance their management, increase their continual improvement as well as involvement of people in their operations and programs.

5.4 Recommendations for the Study

The study recommends a number of programs that packaging firms should adopt in their major operations. Since it was concluded that there is a positive and significant adoption of ISO Certification standards and the performance of the packaging firms in Kenya correlation, the study recommends the need for all packaging companies in the country to be ISO Certified in their major operations. This will help to improve their profitability, help them to attract new customers and enjoy high level of return on investment.

The study also recommends that packaging firms should adopt ISO Certification standards mainly in promoting and ensuring quality standards in their operations. This is because it was evident that firms that have adopted ISO Certification standards reported high levels of quality standards and this resulted into high levels of customer satisfaction, improved stakeholder management and less customer's complaints in their major operations. It is important that packaging firms in the country adopt the ISO Certification standards to support their growth rate and help reduce their cost reduction of operations.

The study suggests and recommends that top management of the packaging firms in the country find a way to educate and train their employees on the importance of ISO certification strategies usage in their major operations and programs. This will ensure that they enjoy quality assurance of their products and services and attract new customers leading to their high success and performance. It is imperative that the ISO certification training in the companies involved all the employees including the junior level employees. This will ensure well-rounded employees who understand quality assurance and standardizations systems.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the study was successful, it faced many limitations. One key limitation was that the study data was confined to management level and operational staff of Packaging Companies in Kenya. This means that the data gathered majorly relate to packaging issues and operations. Secondly, it was noted that some respondents were extremely busy and gathering data was a challenge due to their busy schedule. However, the researcher managed to go round the challenge by organizing online meetings and sending of questions through their emails. Although some respondents were not willing to share their strategic plans, the researcher reassured them that the study data was only meant for academic goals. The respondent's later responded and it was, therefore, possible to achieve a relatively high response rate in the study.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

This analysis mainly dwelled on the determination of the effects of ISO certification standards on the performance of packaging companies in Kenya. However, it is important that future studies analyze the impact of ISO Certification standards on the promotion of quality assurance of firms in the country. Additionally, future studies should also determine how ISO certification standards promote the competitive advantage of different firms in the country. The current study adopted cross-sectional model and it is imperative that future studies adopt case study to provide deeper and in-depth analysis on the ISO certification standards and the performance correlation of one of the packaging companies in Kenya.

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APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Telephone: 020-8095398
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Our Ref: D61/7378/2017

Tel: 020 8095398
Nairobi, Kenya

Date: 21st November, 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter, **kinyungu C. Wanjiku** of Registration Number **D61/7378/2017** is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) student of the University of Nairobi.

She is required to submit as part of her coursework assessment a research project report. We would like the student to do her project on **ISO certification and firm performance in the packaging industry in Kenya**. We would, therefore, appreciate if you assist her by allowing her to collect data within your organization for the research.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organization on request.

Thank you.

PHILIP NGIGI

FOR: DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Kindly fill all the questions either by ticking () in the boxes or writing in the spaces provided.

1. Name of firm

2 What is your highest level of education ?

Diploma Bachelors Masters

Other (Please specify).....

SECTION B: ISO CERTIFICATION OF THE COMPANY

Tick the only one most appropriate answer from the alternatives provided below.

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Uncertain 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree

To what extent do you agree that your Company has adopted the following ISO certification?

Statement	1Strongly Disagree	2Disagree	3Uncertain	4Agree	5Strongly agree
The company is ISO certified					
The company engaged the workers in ISO training programs					
The adoption of ISO certification has enabled the organization to operate more effectively and efficiently, meeting the statutory and regulatory requirements as well					

as to expand to new markets while identifying and addressing risks					
The adoption of ISO certification has enabled the organizations to enjoy continuous improvement, fact based decision making and customer satisfaction focus					
The adoption of ISO certification has enabled the organizations to enjoy process approach and leadership in the Industry?					
The adoption of ISO certification has enabled the organizations to enjoy system advance to administration, continual improvement, involvement of people, and factual strategy of decision making and equally relationship with different stakeholders					

SECTION C: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ADOPTIONS OF ISO CERTIFICATION MODELS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE COMPANY

To what extent has the adoption of ISO certification influenced the performance of your Company?

Statement	No influence	low extent	Moderate	High extent	Very high extent
Adoption of ISO certification models has improved the performance of the company?					
Adoption of ISO certification models has improved the profit levels of the company?					
Adoption of ISO certification models has improved the number of customers of the company?					

Adoption of ISO certification models has improved the net return on investment, productivity and return on equity of the company?					
Adoption of ISO certification models has led to less customer's complaints in the company?					
The company has maintained high customer retention and growth after ISO certification?					
The company experienced fewer defects and less wastage after ISO certification introduction					
The company has experienced high cost reduction after ISO certification introduction					

Thank You

**APPENDIX III: LIST OF ISO CERTIFIED PARCKAGING COMPANIES IN
KENYA**

1. TETRA PAK EAST AFRICA, NAIROBI
2. ALWIN PACKAGING INTERNATIONAL LTD, NAIROBI
3. EAST AFRICAN CANS AND CLOSURES LTD, NAIROBI
4. RONGDAR INTERNATIONAL LTD. NAIROBI
5. PAPERBAGS LTD NAIROBI
6. MOMBASA POLYTHENE BAGS, MOMBASA
7. CARTON MANAUFACTERS, NAIROBI
8. DODHIA PACKAGING KENYA LIMITED(DPKL)
9. NESTLE PACKERS LTD, NAIROBI
10. EURO PACKAGING LTD, NAIROBI
11. KENPACK LTD, NAIROBI
12. METAL CROWNS
13. ECOBAG SUPPLIERS LTD.NAIROBI
14. PAPER BAGS LTD, NAIROBI