INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ON THE PERFOMANCE OF KENYA COMMERCIAL BANK

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for the
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my parents; the late Mr Josephat Ondiek and Mrs Lorna Ondiek for seeing me through my life of education. They achieved this through financial struggle but ultimately their effort has been paid off by my academic achievement.

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ABSTRACT

The Banking sector in Kenya has been faced with extreme competition both from within the industry and outside the industry. The entry of Fintech start-ups and the emergence of Mobile money technology has placed the traditional banking sector on a very tight rope. In order to remain relevant and profitable the commercial banks in Kenya have opted to be innovative in their operations through adopting new and emerging technology in the market. The adoption of new and advanced form of technology in the market has proved to be a strong enabler to the commercial banks profitability and business sustainability. Just like many other commercial Banks, KCB bank has also been affected by the disruption in the Banking sector through digital technology. Despite the turbulence KCB has experienced, it has remain steadfast as a leader in the industry through implementing strategies that focus on innovation and technology. The study sought to determine the influence of digital technology on the performance of KCB bank. A case study design was employed to conduct the study while the primary data was collected using interview guides administered to seven senior managers associated with the implementation of digital technology strategy at KCB bank. The data was analysed using content analysis and was presented in form of narrative. The study concluded that the adoption of digital technology has led to an overall improved performance at KCB bank however more investments needs to be channelled in the areas of technological research and design since the market is very dynamic and progressive. This is evident by the fact that over 90% of the bank's transactions have shifted to the digital platforms. The study also found that the adoption of digital technology has helped KCB bank improve on the rate of its customer acquisition. As at 2018, the rate of customer acquisition had increased by 44%. This result was seen to be attributed by increased mobile phone penetration and advancement in mobile phone technology. The study further concluded that adoption of digital technology has enhanced operational efficiency by reducing the cost of operations and making banking processes to be seamless and convenient to the customers.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ATM Automatic Teller Machine

CBK Central Bank of Kenya

CES Customer Effort Score

DIT Disruptive Innovation Theory

FINTECH Financial Technology

KCB Kenya Commercial Bank

MSEs Micro and Small Enterprises

NPS Net Promoter Score

RBV Resource Based View Theory

SMEs Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In recent decade a number of industries have experienced dynamic and uncertain market environments characterized by digital disruptions and new ways of doing business. As a result organizations have been forced to become innovative through adoption of new and emerging technologies in order to improve their performance and survive the uncertainty within their environments while on the other hand gaining a competitive edge over their business rivals. This they do by coming up with the best combination of strategies that leads to high level of achievements and maximization of profit (Taticchi, Tonelli, & Cagnazzo, 2010).

The study was guided by two theories; Resource based view theory (RBV) and Disruptive innovation theory (DIT). RBV theory helped to highlight the concept of how organisations use its internal resources, capabilities and capacity to achieve competitive advantage. The organisation internal resources capability can be inform of technological investment, human resources, research and innovation and financial capacity (Barney, 1991). DIT on the hand explained how organisations use research, innovation and technology in changing their traditional business processes to meet the ever changing customer expectations and dynamics in the market (Antony, 2004). RBV theory and DIT adequately highlights the phenomenon of digital technology and performance of firms hence it was ideal in guiding the research study.

Despite the uncertainty faced within the Banking industry as a result of digital disruption, KCB has remained steadfast as a leader in the industry through implementing strategies that focus on innovation and technology. KCB has placed digital technology at the centre of business operations and it's among the drivers of its overall business strategy.

1.1.1 Digital Technology

According to Moffat (2016), Digital technology refers to the emergence of new information that seeks to improve the existing traditional technological methods and processes. Digital technology consists of a combination of factors whose objective is to enhance efficiency to both the operational user and the recipient of the technological processes. Digital technology also has the capacity of creating some degree of transformational changes within an organisation or even a wider industry.

According to Sullivan (2000), digital technology is characterized as being dynamic. The reason behind this can be due to the changing preferences, needs and expectations for customers. The demands in the market have evolved and increased over time hence forcing the development of new methods and processes that would satisfy the growth in demand. Digital technology has therefore acted as an enabler to many organisations during this new age of information. The study looked at the various digital technology at Kenya Commercial Bank and how they contribute towards the firm performance.

1.1.2 Firm Performance

According to Al-matari et al (2014), the life of any organisation depends majorly on its performance. Investors are usually attracted to organisations that are performing favourably and usually divest when the performance is dismal. Maximization of investors' wealth is one of the key performance indicators of any CEO in a company and usually they endeavour to make it possible by ensuring the bottom line is at its best. Firm performance can therefore be seen as an indicator of how good or bad a firm is fairing. Firm performance indicators can be either financial or non-financial. Financial indicators usually measure the firm's profitability using methods such return on Investment, return on equity and Profit margin. Non-financial indicators on the other hand can include; product quality, value addition, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency. Non-financial performance indicators measurement is very subjective and there is no clear cut of how best to approach it but various methodologies have been adopted by researchers in order to present a firm's picture of its non-financial performance; this include balance score card method, net promoter score, inferential statistical methods and descriptive statistical methods. The study looked into customer satisfaction and operational efficiency as a measure of the firm performance.

1.1.3 KCB Bank

Founded in 1896, KCB has evolved to become one of the East Africa's largest commercial banks with regional branches in Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia. Today the bank has the largest branch networks in the region with 342 branches, 1,055 ATMs, 23,302 point of sale agents and robust digital financial products providing financial services to over 23 million customers spread across the region. As it is estimated, over 70% of the value created in the economy over the next decade will be as a result of digital technology. In preparation to the digital economy, KCB has been investing

immensely in digital technology since 2015 in order to not only remain competitive but also add value to its products and increase its market share. Example of KCB flagship projects in relation to digital technology include; KCB mobi, KCB-Mpesa, customer relationship management systems, KCB internet banking etc. Investments in digital technology has seen KCB customer base increase from 4 million in 2015 to 23 million in 2019 and increased the volume of banking transactions by over 50% (KCB Integrated report and statements, 2019).

Digital technology has been a key pillar in the growth of the bank. In 2019, KCB won an award for having the best digital strategy. According to a survey conducted in 2018, KCB emerged as one of the best banks in customer service driven by the Bank's adoption of social media in customer experience management. Today KCB is among the leading banks with the highest social media footprint; having over 1.1 million followers on Facebook and 440,000 on Twitter. KCB has also developed a robust communication channel using WhatsApp business solution which helps to improve customer experience. An international scouting firm from Hamburg, ranked KCB as one of the top lenders in digital banking. KCB emerged in position 13 out of the top 100 digital banks (KCB Integrated report and statements, 2019).

KCB future is in digital technology and artificial intelligence. This has seen KCB introduce their next 2020-2022 strategic plan; "beyond banking". This strategic plan will focus on digital technology as a driver towards achieving value proposition in their services and growth. (KCB Integrated report and statements, 2019).

1.2 Research Problem

Currently many organisations are going through a disruptive change never experienced since the era of industrial revolution. The disruption characterized by digital technology and innovation is making the cost of business processes to fall drastically. This transformation in digital technology is also affecting people's habits, behaviours, communication, relationships and general way of life. This has called for organisations to come up with innovative strategies and investment in digital technology in order to survive the competitive environment. (González, Francisco, 2011)

The Banking sector has experienced numerous challenges in the past recent years including reduced barriers of entry into the market, capping of lending interest rates and a global pandemic, forcing many banks to experience reduced margins and profitability. With the dynamic and volatile competitive environments, banks have become more responsive to customer needs and market information and have made good use of the opportunities

available through digital technology in order to compete with other firms in the market (Li & Calantone, 1998). Just like many other commercial banks, Kenya Commercial Bank has also faced its fair share of the digital disruption. The Bank has adopted digital technology as a strategic option in order to remain relevant and cope with the uncertainty in the environment. (KCB integrated report, 2019)

Several past studies have been carried out around the subject of digital technology and its relation to firm performance. Githuku (2018) performed a study on the influence of digital banking to customer relationship. The study found that digital banking positively influences the nature of customer relationships. Muluka (2015) conducted a study on the effect digital banking on customer satisfaction. The study found that digital banking improved customer satisfaction due to its operational efficiency. Cathles et al (2020) did a study on digital technologies and firm performance within various industries in Europe. The study found that digital technologies cutting across various industries in Europe increase productivity. Mubarak et al (2019) conducted a study to ascertain the impact of digital transformation on business performance among SMEs in Pakistan. The study found that adoption digital technologies among SMEs would help to increase productivity and add value to their products.

Even though studies have been conducted to explain how digital technology has influenced firm performance, very few have conclusively addressed the issue in the context of Kenya Commercial Bank.

1.3 Research Objective

To determine the influence of Digital Technology on the performance of Kenya Commercial Bank.

1.4 Value of the Study

The management of KCB bank would find this study useful, as it will seek to inform their next strategic plan, which puts focus on digital technology. They will therefore see the relevance of digital technology in achieving the firms objectives hence motivate them to invest in digital technological infrastructure.

The policy makers on the other hand would find this study useful as the findings from the study will assist the sector improve and realign the existing policies relating to digital technology within the banking sector. Since digital technology is an emerging subject within

the banking sector, the finding of the study will help to inform the formulation of new policies to safeguard both the commercial banks and its customers.

Lastly, the study will be of value to researchers as it will aid in theory development and add into the body of knowledge relating to digital technology and its influence to firm performance. In addition, the study will help future academicians undertaking research around this subject through bridging the knowledge gaps that existed in literature.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The following four sections were covered in detail throughout this chapter; the theoretical

foundation, empirical literature review on digital technology and firm performance, summary

of empirical literature review and knowledge gaps and the conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This section sought to identify and discuss the relevant theories that supported the research

study. Under this section, the following theories were discussed; resource based view theory

and disruption of innovation theory

2.2.1 Resource Based View Theory (RBV)

RBV theory postulates that an organisation resource possession should be one that is

valuable, very hard to imitate, unique and cannot be easily substituted by competitors. It

further suggests that organisations should consider looking internally though the use of its

resources in order to achieve competitive advantage (Wade & Holland, 2004).

According to Barney (1991), organizations should put emphasis to its internal resources and

capabilities when developing strategies aimed at creating advantage over the competitor in

the industry. Organisations that seeks to harness the opportunities of its unique and valuable

internal resources and capabilities will achieve competitive advantage.

According Connor (2002), the resource based view theory seeks to find a strategic fit

between the forces outside the organisation and its internal resources. The concept differs

from the traditional strategy models that focusses solely on the organisations external

competitive environment. Therefore the organisations internal environment through its

internal resources and capabilities is seen as crucial factor in determining the organisation

strategic action. The resource based view theory is seen as an inside out process of

formulating strategy for the organisation. This form of strategy formulation assumes that

organisations develop core strategic competences that form part of its future.

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The RBV theory can be used to explain how organisations achieve competitive advantage in the market by identifying and harnessing unique and valuable internal resources to enhance their performance and increase value to products and services. In this current study, the theory sought to explain how KCB has managed to achieve competitive advantage through the use of its existing internal capabilities and resources.

2.2.2 Disruptive Innovation Theory (DIT)

Disruptive innovation as described by its developer Clayton Christensen in 1995 refers to how organisations achieve growth through innovation. Christensen further explains DIT as a process through which a small organisation with very few resources successfully challenges and overtakes existing mature organisations in the industry and quickly obtains dominance in the market (Hang and Yu, 2010)

This theory suggests that through innovation, there is increase in technological improvements, which further escalates to improved performance. The general characteristics of the improved products as depicted by the disruptive innovation theory can be one that is faster, cheaper, efficient, smaller, smarter and productive (Christensen & Bower, 1996).

The prevailing competitions in the market forces firms to be innovative and find strategies to improve their performance in the market by offering better and quality items than the competitors. However the drive to improve performance and achieve competitive advantage sometimes surpasses the customers anticipated needs. When it occurs that the performance of firms in the industry surpasses the anticipated needs of customers, then disruptive innovation is said to have happen (King & Baatartogtokh, 2015).

According to Anthony (2004), the theory of disruptive innovation theory helps organisations to see their existing potential. This is true to the extent that firms are investing huge resources in technologies and in other value adding product and services in order to improve their capabilities and capacities as a result existing stiff competition.

The disruptive innovative theory suggest that for any business environment to be considered disruptive, it must possess the following characteristics; low pricing, few targeted customers, and simpler products and services. By doing this, bigger organisations seek to avoid such markets since it is unattractive and thereafter creating a market gap in the lower end of the market to be occupied by the disrupters (Sultan and van de Bunt-Kokhuis, 2012).

Similar characteristics have been exhibited in the Banking industry through the past several years. The traditional banking sectors placed their utmost focus in offering best products and services to their most demanding customers while a certain segment of the market was being overlooked. As this happened, the telecommunication industry through mobile banking innovation tapped into the segment of the market that has been overlooked by the traditional banking industry and redefined the business processes of mobile banking.

2.3. Empirical Literature Review

Various studies have been carried out to determine how digital technology influences firm performance. This section sought to examine how different scholars have addressed the subject of digital technology and its influence to firm performance. The analysis of the empirical studies also sought to address any existing knowledge gaps.

2.3.1 Global Studies

Vijayalakshmi (2019), conducted a study to determine how digital transactions impact financial performance of SBI and ICICI banks in India. Descriptive research design was employed and data was collected using secondary methods from Banks reserve publications. The study found that the use of digital technology had increased penetration, productivity and efficiency. The study further concludes to suggest that, increased awareness to customers and training to firm staff on the proliferation of digital payments will enhance operational profitability.

Falentina et al (2019), carried out a study to ascertain how digital technology influences Micro and Small enterprises in Indonesia. The study employed a field survey approach in its design and the questionnaires were administered using a mobile phone. The study found that the use of internet has helped the MSEs to engage in the digital economy and improved their performance. The internet uptake increased labour productivity and export.

Jaganathan & Mohanraj (2017), carried out a study to ascertain how mobile banking impacts customer attitude and behaviour in Erode district, India. The study employed descriptive research design. The study used questionnaires in collecting primary data while the company's records and website were used as secondary data. The study found that mobile banking is a very crucial component among many customers. Constant updates and communication to the customers helps to instill trust and loyalty to the service.

2.3.1 Regional Studies

Agboola et al (2019), carried out a study to ascertain how digital technology influences commercial banks performance in Nigeria. Descriptive design was employed while primary data was collected using self-structured questionnaires. The study found that the effect of digitalization is still yet to be felt among Nigerian banks but the relationship is significant. The study concludes further to suggest that Nigeria commercial banks need to focus more on processes innovation to improve efficiency in operations that meets customer expectations and demands.

Ngando (2017), conducted a research study on effect of technological innovation on the performance of commercial banks in Tanzania. Descriptive survey design was employed while primary data was collected using questionnaire. The study found that adoption of technological innovations by some commercial banks in Tanzania has resulted to an improved financial performance and increased efficiency in its business operations.

Ehijiele et al (2018), conducted a research study to ascertain how banking using mobile channels affects customer experience in Nigeria. The research study employed a research survey design and questionnaires was used in collecting primary data. According to the research result, the use of mobile channels in banking positively enhances customer experience.

2.3.2 Local Studies

Wachira (2013), carried out a research study to ascertain how innovation through technology is impacting performance on the Banks in Kenya. Descriptive cross sectional design was employed and structured questionnaires was used in collecting primary information. As per the study findings, innovation through technology positively enhances bank performance and in order to remain competitive, banks need to significantly invest in technology.

Achimba (2014), performed a research study to find out how innovation through technology is impacting customers in the Kenya banking industry. Descriptive survey research design was adopted while primary data was collected using questionnaires. The study suggested that

the use of technology especially the customer relations management systems will enable the Banks offer customized service to its customers.

Moffat (2016), carried out a research study to find out how advancement in technology can improve efficiency in business operations of Kenyan Banks. The study used descriptive survey design while primary data was collected using questionnaires. The findings from the study revealed that advancement in technology greatly improved the business efficiency of Kenyan Banks.

2.4. Summary of Empirical Literature Review and Knowledge Gaps.

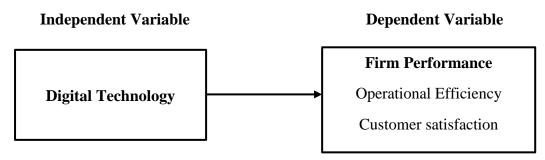
It can be determined through the empirical review that digital technology is key in ascertaining the performance of an organisation. Several global studies have clearly demonstrated how digital technology positively influences performance of a firm. This is inform of efficiency, financial performance and customer perception. The studies cut across both the banking and MSEs sectors which has helped to bring an objective perspective of the relationship (Vijayalakshmi, 2019; Falentina et al, 2019; Jaganathan & Mohanraj, 2017). Regional and local studies on the other hand have focussed on the discussions surrounding digital technology and commercial banks performance. There is a unanimous conclusion among the empirical studies that investment in digital technology enhances both financial performance and operational efficiency (Agboola et al, 2019; Ngando, 2017; Ehijiele et al, 2018; Wachira, 2013; Moffat, 2016).

The research studies highlighted from the empirical review have mostly focussed on the commercial banking sector, which is a broader scope of the research study. This study focussed on a narrow scope case study approach. Secondly, the empirical studies highlighted have both come up with different variables that constitute digital technology and firm performance. Lastly, the research design and methodology adopted by the empirical studies are different compared to the one adopted by this study.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

According to Grant and Osanloo (2014), the concept of research study helps in describing how different variables in the study relate to one another. In the conceptual framework, Digital technology is the independent variable whereas firm performance is the dependent variable.

 Table 2. 1: Conceptual Framework.



Source: Research data 2021.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted by the study in addressing the research

question. Research methodology can be described as techniques used to select process and

analyse information about a particular research topic. The sections discussed in this chapter

included; research design, collection of data and analysis of data.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a case study design for its research. A case study is an evaluation and

analysis of a particular research problem. The aim of a case study is to summarize field of

research into simple researchable examples which helps to create a clear understanding of the

complex relationships existing amongst the variables (Creswell, 2009).

Kenya Commercial Bank was selected because digital technology and innovation lies at the

centre of its strategy. The design was therefore suitable for this research study as helped to

give more information regarding current status of Kenya Commercial Bank and facilitated an

accurate examination of how its digital foot print is influencing its performance.

3.3 Data Collection

The study employed both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected using

an interview guide. One on one interviews was conducted on seven senior managers at KCB

bank associated with the implementation of the digital technology strategy. The interview

guide consisted of 4 sections: Section A covered questions on the company and interviewees

demographic information. Section B covered questions on digital technology employed by

Kenya Commercial Bank. Section C covered questions on digital technology and operational

efficiency. Section D covered questions on digital technology and customer satisfaction.

Prior arrangements inform of appointments were made in order to prepare the interviewees

for the particular set date of the interviews.

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The secondary data for the study was obtained from the company website and the company annual integrated reports for 2018 and 2019. The importance of having different methods of collecting data is to triangulate the information collected and hence therefore improve reliability and validity of the instruments.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study used content analysis for data analysis. Content analysis is a systematic research method that seeks to summarize, analyse and obtain meaning of research data in a qualitative form e.g interviews, focussed group discussions, and open-ended survey questions. Content analysis uses various strategies to categorize, compare and contrast a pool of data. (Creswell, 2009). The advantage of using content analysis was because it is a systematic and transparent approach of analysing qualitative data. Content analysis also can allow the researcher to obtain information about the relationships existing within the social groups.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of results and discussions arrived using content analysis. The objective of this study was to determine the Influence of digital technology on the performance of KCB bank. The sections discussed in this chapter include background information, the types of digital technology adopted by KCB bank, influence of digital technology on operational efficiency and influence of digital technology on customer satisfaction. The data was collected from seven senior managers in the digital financial services division. The findings was presented in form of narratives. Data collected from the interviews was analysed using content analysis.

4.2 Demographic Information

The interviewers were requested to mention their specific roles and responsibilities at KCB bank. It was established that four among the seven senior managers were in charge of customer experience. Two among the seven senior managers were in charge of digital banking products and one among the seven senior managers was in charge digital products development. One manager from the customer experience department further mentioned that the different roles within the division is meant to improve service delivery. The interviewees were also requested to state the duration they have taken to serve KCB bank in their current capacity. It was established that four of the managers interviewed have worked at KCB bank for a period between five to ten years in their current capacity. One of the managers interviewed had worked at KCB bank for a period of two to five years in their current capacity while two of the managers interviewed had worked at KCB bank for over ten years in their current capacity.

4.3 Digital Technology Adopted by KCB Bank

The interviewees were asked to mention the types of digital technology adopted by KCB bank. Five of the managers across the three departments went on to mention that mobile banking is the most used digital technology at KCB bank. Two of the managers from the digital banking department further mentioned internet banking as among the digital technology used at KCB bank. One of the managers from customer experience department also mentioned Payment Integration as among the digital technology used by KCB bank and other three managers from the same department also mentioned account management integrations as among the digital technology used by KCB bank.

One manager from the digital products development department went ahead to give examples of digital technologies under mobile banking as follows; KCB-Mpesa app, KCB app, Fuliza, Vooma app and KCB USSD. Manager III gave examples of account management digital technologies to be; IPRS checks, biometric checks, Mbenki and Mobi grow.

When asked about the most preferred digital technology among the ones adopted by KCB bank, the interviewers unanimously agreed that mobile banking digital technologies are the most preferred. One of the managers from the customer experience department went ahead and said that the preference towards mobile banking is mostly due to increased mobile phone penetration, and improved mobile technology while another manager from the same department said that the preference towards digital technology was due to ease of use and convenience. All managers unanimously agree that KCB bank allocates a huge portion of its budget towards digital technology development. The interviewees agreed that these efforts were meant to enhance efficiency in their service delivery and meet the ever-changing customer needs. These findings are consistent with the views of Moffat (2016), who found that advancement in digital technology greatly improves business operational efficiency.

4.4 Digital Technology and Operational Efficiency.

As to whether digital technology has enhanced operational efficiency at KCB bank, all managers unanimously agreed on the affirmative. Four of the managers from the customer experience department mentioned that the increase in the number of bank transactions is one of the greatest indicator of improved service delivery brought about by digital technology. Three other managers across the four departments went mentioned that a shift from traditional banking methods to digital methods was another important indicator of improved service delivery brought about by digital technology. One manager from the digital banking

department mentioned the increase in speed of service delivery is among the indicators of improved service delivery brought about by digital technology.

According to one of the managers from the digital banking department, KCB bank has moved over 70% of the total banks transaction to the digital space. This move has decongested the banking halls and enabled customers to get better experience in their digital channels. Customer interactions and behaviour models can be analysed through their transactions on the digital channels thus helping the bank come up with customer centric products that meet the needs of their customers. The bank has revolutionised the mobile lending space reaching out to more than 20 million customers and disbursing over 212 billion in loans using its digital channels in the year 2019. Over the years, the Bank has made it a priority to remove any existing systematic bottlenecks and ensured that all of its operations are streamlined as indicated by another manager in the digital banking department. This move has improved the speed of undertaking daily business processes thus ensuring customer service is enhanced. According to one of the managers from the digital banking department, number of loans disbursed per minute using digital channels in 2018 was 21. The efficiency achieved through digital channels has been as a resulted of an up to date and well maintained KCB bank operating systems. The system guarantees a 99.9% uptime, which is ideal for an organisation with over 13 million of its customers coming from digital platforms.

Regarding digital technology and operational efficiency, all managers unanimously agreed that the adoption of digital technology by KCB bank has helped reduce operational cost.

All the managers were in agreement that being served at the branch is quite costly and that is why the bank has moved a huge base of their customers to self-service digital channels thus enhancing their experience, time taken to transact, offering convenience and delivering value adding product propositions. One manager from the digital products development department further indicated that the Banks cost to income ratio in 2018 was 48.3 % and 50.2 % in 2019. This means that KCB bank is efficiently running its business operations leading to reduced costs. The cost to income ratio performance has been due to the investments the Bank has made on its digital channels. The overhead cost for the bank has significantly reduced traffic at the branches as indicated by all the managers. The congestion at the branches meant increased workload and administrative processes. The adoption and the use of digital channels has not only created convenience to the customers but also reduce the overhead costs brought about by the huge number of customers being served from the branches.

4.5 Digital Technology and Customer Satisfaction

The interviewers were asked to mention whether KCB bank has existing mechanism of responding to customer feedback and complaints.

As indicated by two of the managers from the customer experience department KCB bank often engages its customers through the various social media platforms like facebook, whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram and live chat. As at the year 2019, KCB bank had over 1 million followers on facebook and over 300,000 on twitter making the bank a leader in usage of social media in driving customer experience and excellence. The managers went ahead to mention that KCB bank adopted the use of whatsapp for business whereby the customers could directly raise their concerns and in turn receive direct feedback. The move has seen KCB improve in its personal customer experience and as the end of the year 2019, the bank had received and services 185,249 customer interactions via whatsapp for business platform. As indicated by another manager from same department, the bank acquired an integrated system called Customer Relationship Management System (eCRM) in the year 2019 that seeks to develop a centralized registry for all customer complaints and feedback. The system will help the bank improve on its customer service delivery and in decision-making processes regarding customer experience. The manager went ahead to mention that the bank received approximately 970,000 customer complaints in the year 2018. Among the complaints received, over 86% were settled through the banks in built communication platforms.

The interviewers were asked to indicate whether the adoption of digital technology has helped KCB bank become customer centric. One of the manager's from the digital banking department elaborated that the NPS measures the level of customer satisfaction and the brand loyalty while CES measures the degree of friction a customer experiences when using the banks products. The manager went on to say that in 2019, the banks NPS closed at 42%, well above the industry average of 29% while CES stood at 20% an improvement from the previous year 2018, which stood at 26%. This means that KCB bank's customers are appreciating the efforts that bank has placed to improve service delivery. As indicated by two other managers from the customer experience department, KCB bank has continue to exemplify its excellence in customer centricity by the number of awards and recognition it has received. In the year 2019, the bank won an award for best customer experience team, best digital strategy and the best leadership award in customer experience globally.

The interviewers were asked to indicate whether customers prefer the bank's digital channels or the traditional banking halls. The managers unanimously agreed that most of their customers have a preference towards the bank's digital channels. One of the managers from the digital products development department went ahead to mention that over 88% of the bank's transactions in 2018 constituted non-branch transactions while 97% of the banks transactions in 2019 constituted the non-branch transactions. This clearly shows a paradigm shift of the customer's preference from traditional modes of banking to digital modes of banking.

The interviewers were asked to state whether the number of bank accounts has increased as a result of digital technology. The managers unanimously agreed that there has been a rise in the number of bank account openings as result of digital technology. The bank has seen to it that the process of account opening has been streamlined and efficient hence making it easy for any potential customer to manoeuvre.

The interviewers were finally asked to state whether the number of bank transactions have increased as a result of digital technology. Three of the managers from customer experience department mentioned that the cost of doing transactions using the digital platforms is much cheaper compared to the traditional banking hall transactions hence making it convenient for customers to transact more using the digital platforms. In the year 2019, the bank transactions done using digital channels was at 97% while 3% were transactions done using traditional banking hall approach. As mentioned by two of the managers from the digital banking department, the ease of access to the digital platforms has also contributed to the increased number of bank transactions. Most digital transactions are done using the mobile phone, which is available in almost every household. The managers further mentioned that the newly introduced reward system dubbed as simba points gives customers the motivation to transact more since it provides an incentive for every transaction.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

4.6.1 Digital Technology Adopted by KCB Bank.

The study established that KCB bank has managed to adopt a number digital technology platforms which include; mobile banking technology, internet banking, payment integration and account management systems. Among all these digital technologies mentioned, mobile banking seems to be the most preferred channel due to increased penetration of mobile

phones and improved mobile banking technology. The study also established that KCB bank has placed robust control systems that ensures security of all digital accounts to avoid any risks of cybercrimes. Some of the adopted digital technologies have been realized through strategic partnerships with other like-minded organisations in order to improve on its product value proposition. KCB bank has placed huge share of its budget towards development and maintenance of digital channels as it believes that this is the future of banking. KCB bank has experienced improved performance since the adoption of digital platforms exhibited by the increased number of bank transactions done through the channels.

4.6.2 Digital Technology and Operational Efficiency

The study established that service delivery has improved after the introduction of digital financial platforms. The improvement in service delivery has been characterized by increased number of banking transactions been done using the digital channels, a shift from the traditional banking halls banking to digital channels and also increased speed in service delivery. Averagely over 70% of the bank's transactions being done every day come from the digital spaces. This preference is a result of the efficient digital channels and the convenience customers experience using the digital platforms. The study has also established that the banks operating systems guarantees an uptime of up to 99.9% which has significantly contributed to the upsurge in the bank transactions emanating from digital spaces.

The study also establishes that KCB has seen a reduction in its operational cost as result of adopting digital financial platforms. The traditional banking methods made the bank incur huge operational costs hence sustaining the approach was more expensive compared to the self-service digital approaches. The bank also experienced an improved cost to income ratio as a result of the adoption of the digital financial platforms. Digital technology has converted most of the banking transactions into a self-service mode. This has drastically cut down overhead cost experienced by the traditional banking hall approach, which exhibited a huge traffic flow of customers visiting the banking halls every day.

4.6.3 Digital Technology and Customer Satisfaction

The study has established that KCB bank has invested significantly in systems that ensure customer responses and feedback are well addressed. The bank has adopted both an integrated customer relationship system and social media for collecting, analysing and responding to customer feedback. The digital communication channels adopted by the bank

has proved to be very effective in terms of its speed of response, ease of use and wider customer reach.

The study also established that the bank invests a huge percentage of its budget in digital technology in order to increase value to its products and services through meeting the everchanging customer needs and preferences. KCB bank has proved to a customer centric organisation by demonstrating high performance in its NPS and CES scores. The bank has also received numerous international awards for being leader in customer experience.

The study also established that KCB bank customers prefer digital channels to the traditional banking approach. Averagely over 90% of the banks transactions are being done using the banks digital channels. This preference has not only seen an increase in the number of accounts opened by also in the number of bank transactions. This can be attributed to the reduced cost of transaction using the digital platforms and ease of access to almost all banking features.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The summary, conclusion and recommendations were aligned to the objective of the study, which was to determine the influence of digital technology on the performance of KCB bank. Other sections that have been discussed in this chapter include; limitations of the study and suggestions for further study.

5.2 Summary

The study aimed at determining the influence of digital technology on the performance of KCB bank. The study employed content analysis in its analysis of the findings and presented inform of tables and narrative discussions. From the analysis of the findings, it was determined that digital technology positively influences performance of KCB bank. One of the key findings of the study is that digital technology positively influences the banks operational efficiency. The study found that digital technology has helped the bank improve in its service delivery towards its customers. This was demonstrated by the customer's preference towards the digital platforms to the traditional banking hall approaches. The study found that an average of 90% of the bank transactions were being conducted from the banks

digital spaces. Improved operational efficiency was also demonstrated by reduced operational cost as a result of digital technology. This was made possible through a shift from the banking halls to self-service digital operations. The face-to-face banking approach was costly as it involved investing heavily in administrative resources. This move saw the bank improve on its cost to income ratio and a reduction in cost per staff ratio from 2.73 million in 2018 to 2.57 million in 2019.

Another key finding from the study is that digital technology positively influences the banks customer's level of satisfaction. The study found that the bank has invested a huge percentage of its budget towards improving its digital products to satisfy the ever-changing customer needs and preference. Among the platforms the bank has adopted is social media and customer relationship management systems that help in collecting, analysing and responding to customer feedback and complaints. The study found that the bank has remained to be one of the leading customer centric organisations in the region through the numerus international awards it has won and also demonstrating an improved NPS and CES score. The study also found that the adoption of digital technology by the bank has resulted to not only an increase in the number new bank accounts being opened but also to an increase in the number of bank transactions.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the objective and the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be made: Adoption of digital technology by KCB bank has led to an overall improvement in the Banks performance. This is evident due to the fact that over 90% of the banks transactions have now shifted to the digital platforms. Adoption of digital technology has also seen KCB bank improve on its product value proposition, which has enhanced both customer satisfaction and loyalty to its brand. This information is supported by the result from KCB integrated report 2019, which highlights an increase in brand power from 15% in 2014 to 29% in 2019. KCB has also integrated most of its operations with digital technology hence improving in its operational efficiency and service to customers.

Adoption of digital technology has seen an increase in customer acquisition and usage of its products. This is supported by the result from the KCB integrated report 2018, which showed a 44% increase in customer acquisition as a result of adopting digital financial technology. The increased usage of mobile phones and improved mobile phone technology has also played a key role in KCB bank digital financial performance. The convenience brought about

by the use of the digital platforms has also contributed to the shift from branch to non-branch banking. As evident from the NPS score, which stood at 42% in 2019, well above the industry average of 29%, KCB bank's customers are appreciating the efforts the bank has placed to improve service delivery.

Adoption of digital technology has enhanced efficiency in business operations. This has been characterised by an increase in the number of bank transactions being performed using digital platforms. According to the Bank's integrated report of 2019, an approximate 97% of the banks transactions were done using digital financial channels while 3% were from the non-digital channels. This preference to digital platforms can be associated by the Banks move to automate most of its operations and improve its systems in order to make banking simple and the processes seamless to the lives of the customers. The bank undertook a significant overhaul of its systems and opted to automate its branch processes in order to drive efficiency to its product users. This move has seen the Bank significantly reduce its cost of operations.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

From the findings and result of the study, investment in digital technology has played a major role in the bank's overall performance and remains a critical factor in the Bank's future strategies. The study therefore recommends that the bank continue to leverage on emerging technology in order sustain and improve its performance in the industry.

Key among the emerging technologies is open banking. This would enable the Bank customers easily share their financial data and securely interact across institutional networks. Open banking would help to enhance transactional efficiency between the bank and other institutions.

Another potential area of technological adoption is on investment and advisory services. The sector of investment and advisory services possess a huge potential for future technological disruption. In some developed markets, the use of digital technology in advisory and investment services have started to emerge. The bank should consider initiating processes towards adoption of this future trend.

Another recommendation the study suggests is on the Bank's partnership and acquisition strategies. The traditional form of acquisitions and partnership revolved around brick and motor (physical branches). The latest example of the bank's acquisition was in 2019, where

the bank to full control of National Bank of Kenya as one of its subsidiaries. The future form of acquisitions and partnerships would see banks acquire fintechs or digital banks especially in emerging markets.

Another recommendation the study suggest is for the bank to start making necessary preparation through study and research into block chain technology, artificial intelligence and machine learning. Even though the two concepts are still new in the African financial economy, their potential in disrupting the financial sector is very high.

The study recommends that the bank take all necessary measures towards protecting its customers from the risks that come with digital technology. The bank should invest heavily on cyber security in order to create a safe and secure cyber environment for their customers. The study also recommends that the bank invest on ethical hackers to test the reliability of their cyber systems.

Finally, the study strongly recommends that the customer/end-user should always inform their next strategic decision in regards to investment in technology. The firm should consider the value proposition that the new technology would bring to the customer hence therefore, customer centricity should remain a cross cutting theme all year round.

5.5 Limitations of the Study.

The study was limited by various factors that made it challenging in achieving the desired objective. One major constrain that the study faced was the ongoing covid 19 pandemic. The pandemic posed a challenge during data collection exercise due the existing government health requirements. The number of respondents the study interviewed had to be limited in order to reduce any health risk to the researcher and the respondents. There was also limitation to some of the office departments due to the ongoing pandemic. The pandemic also brought about cost constrains, as the researcher had to make extra trips in order to obtain data from the respondents. The study also faced some time constrains due to the ongoing pandemic as most of the research schedules programs stalled. The research also faced limitations because of the researcher personal challenges due to the ongoing pandemic.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Since the study was conducted in a period when KCB bank was implementing its three-year strategy (2020 -2022) on innovation and technology, the study suggests that another study to

be conducted in the year 2022 in order to evaluate the progress made in regards to technology and innovation.

The study suggests another study to be conducted that incorporates the views of the banks customers in regards to digital technology. The ideal time for conducting the research would be after the pandemic has subsided. This would help in giving a holistic picture of the research study.

Furthermore, the study suggests future research can be conducted across commercial banks in order to get the industry perspective in regards to digital technology. This would help in obtaining broader perspective of the research study and allow for comparison between the banks.

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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear respondent,

The objective of this research study is to determine the influence of digital technology and performance of KCB Bank. The study will be for research purpose only and all information

provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Which department do you belong to?

2. How long have you worked for the company?

3. How long have you worked in your current position?

SECTION B: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY ADOPTED BY KCB

4. In your own view, can you give examples of digital technological services adopted by

KCB?

5. Among the digital services adopted by KCB, which one/s is the most preferred?

6. Following up on question 5, why are those services most preferred?

7. Following up on question 5, why are the other services not preferred?

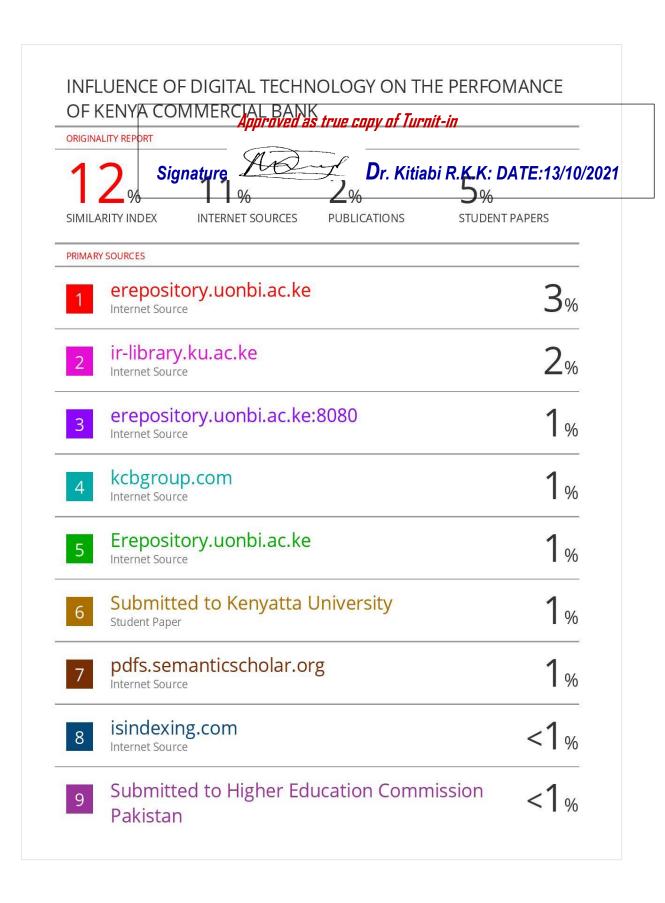
SECTION C: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

28

- 8. In your own view, has the adoption of digital technology by KCB improved service delivery?
- 9. In your own view, has the adoption of digital technology by KCB helped to reduce operational cost?
- 10. In your own view, has the adoption of digital technology improved the work turnaround time?
- 11. In your own view, has the ease of undertaking daily business operations improved among the KCB staff?

SECTION C: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- 12. Does KCB have existing mechanism to deal with the customer complaints and feedback?
- 13. Did the adoption of digital technology help KCB bank become customer centric?
- 14. In your own view, do customers prefer digital banking approaches or traditional banking approaches?
- 15. In your own view, has the number of bank accounts increased since the introduction of the digital services?
- 16. In your own view, has the number of customer transactions increased since the introduction of the digital services?



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