

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION FACULTY OF COMMERCE



DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROJECT

THE INFLUENCE OF IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT ON ENHANCING
REPUTATION OF THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCILS IN ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF
MUTASA RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE AT BINDURA
UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL COMPLETION OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS DEGREE IN
PURCHASING AND SUPPLY.

2024

Release Form

Registration number: B1851480

Dissertation title: The influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe.

Degree title: Bachelor of Commerce Honors Degree in Purchasing and Supply

Year granted: 2024

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Approval Form

The undersigned attests to having read and approved for submission to Bindura University of MUDEHWE VIMBISO's project titled " The influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe" as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Purchasing and Supply.

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Student.....Mudehe.....Date.....07/06/2024.....

Supervisor.....[Signature].....Date.....30/9/24.....

Head of Department.....[Signature].....Date.....30-9-24.....

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the hardworking public servants and community leaders in Zimbabwe's rural district councils. Your tireless efforts to implement sustainable procurement practices in the face of limited resources and infrastructure are an inspiration. May this research contribute to strengthening the reputation and capacity of local governments to drive positive change for the communities?

Abstract

This study explores the role sustainable procurement plays in enhancing organizational reputation within some rural district councils in Zimbabwe. The purpose was to understand the impact of socially, environmentally, and economically responsible procurement practices on the reputations of Rural District Councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe. It also aimed to discover how each practice affected Zimbabwe's perception of RDCs. RDCs are purchasing products from suppliers at incredibly low prices but failing to make timely payments. As a result, they receive substandard products and services that harm both the community and environment. Inadequate road maintenance, inconsistent water supply due to aging pipes, unfinished electrification projects ongoing for years, and slow public service response have all damaged their reputation. This mixed-methods study, which included a questionnaire, had 50 participants. The study found all respondents were literate. The participants demonstrated industry knowledge as most had six or more years of experience. However, other research revealed RDCs were not fully utilizing sustainable procurement, harming their reputation. Most respondents claimed Mutasa Rural District Council (MRDC) employed sustainable buying criteria. When MRDC failed to pay suppliers on time however, suppliers had to raise prices or offer substandard products and services. The study suggests MRDC should pay suppliers timely to fully benefit. The researcher proposes additional sustainable procurement research given its status as a global concern. Further research is needed to determine advantages for procurement effectiveness and customer satisfaction. This will help close any gaps in sustainable procurement use within the business sector.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the leadership and staff of Mutasa Rural District Council in Zimbabwe for their invaluable collaboration and support in conducting this research. Your openness to share your experiences and provide access to critical data was instrumental in the successful completion of this project.

I am also thankful for the financial support provided by the Zimbabwean Ministry of Local Government, which enabled me to undertake this important study on strengthening local governance through sustainable procurement practices.

To all who contributed their time and insights, I am truly appreciative. It is my hope that this research can inform efforts to enhance the reputation and effectiveness of rural district councils across Zimbabwe.

Acronyms

RDC	Rural District Council
PRAZ	Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe
SP	Sustainable procurement
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

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CHAPTER I

1.1 Introduction

Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure sustainability in their operations, particularly because the goods they purchase are intended for public use. According to Section 276 of the Zimbabwean Constitution, local governments have the power to impose rates, taxes, and license fees to generate the necessary funds for their mandated tasks and goals. One of these goals is to provide sustainable services by 2030. This study aimed to examine the impact of sustainable procurement on the reputation of building companies. The chapter in this thesis covers the background of the study, the problem statement, the significance of the research, and the underlying assumptions. It also discusses the limitations, scope, and definitions of key terms and abbreviations.

1.2 Background of the Study

Reputation is an important foundation for individuals and companies (Benard, M. 2015). If a reputation is weak, there is a greater risk of the company failing. Reputation is determined by how the surrounding environment treats things, and it can be categorized into three ways: negative or bad, neutral or indifferent, and positive or good. According to Berthod, O. (2017), having a good reputation or goodwill is preferable. In business, reputation can be damaged by unethical behaviour, breaking the law, poor crisis management, and associating with individuals or entities that already have a bad reputation. One way an organization can develop a bad reputation is if stakeholders perceive it as lacking sustainable goals, such as employing child labour, using materials that harm the environment, overcharging customers, negotiating unfairly with suppliers, or causing pollution in any form.

Frequency

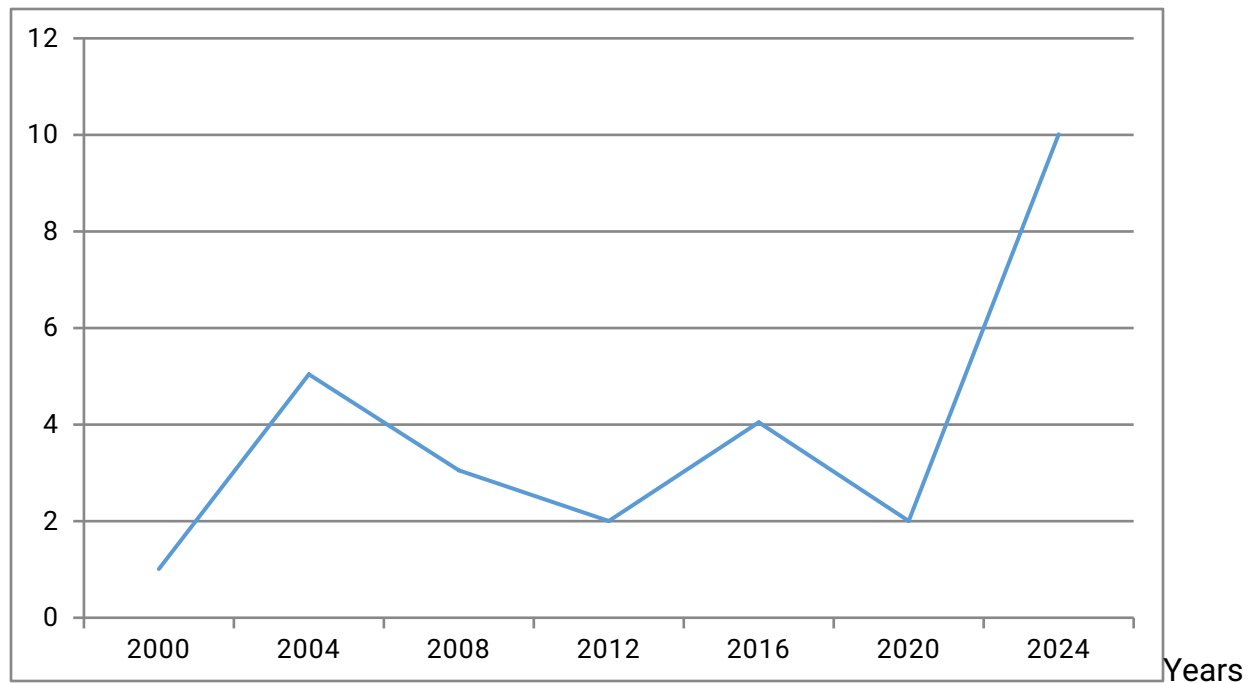


Figure 1: Sustainability Frequency over time Graph

Source: Sustainable Development Summary, (2024)

Sustainable procurement has been decreasing globally for many years, to the extent that the UN had to declare it a worldwide issue due to its negative impact on the ozone layer. Figure 1.1 above shows how sustainability progress was slow around the world until it suddenly improved between 2020 and 2024. This graphic effectively portrays the history of sustainability. Nowadays, organizations and governments worldwide are showing growing interest in sustainable procurement. All economic sectors are being encouraged to make long-term purchases. Sustainable procurement is advocated in both the public and private sectors to ensure organizational stability. When purchasing public goods and services, organizations must follow sustainable procurement practices to ensure their long-term existence. The desire to buy sustainably has been fuelled by the economic, environmental, and social conditions of the world. Additionally, addressing sustainability issues is crucial to effectively utilize available resources in response to population growth and climate change (Hussein, 2014). Given the increase in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, purchasing strategies need to be

reconsidered to preserve valuable resources. Governments worldwide have implemented rules and legislation to promote sustainable procurement, and those who fail to comply with the rules face potential consequences (Pettersson, A. 2008).

When decisions are primarily based on cost, quality, and timeliness, sustainable procurement takes on a different meaning. In the history of sustainable procurement, the main goal was to combine a strategy that considers risks with the common practice of buying from low-cost countries (Sustainable Procurement Guide 2012). How do we measure risk reduction? This is a significant and debated question. How will it affect product development and cost reduction? Business leaders and companies present a business case highlighting the benefits of sustainable procurement. Does sustainable procurement, in line with this, create value that is appreciated by shareholders, financial markets, and customers?

The increasing demand for sustainable procurement by local governments is driven by the need to reduce risks, particularly the financial impact of negative supplier practices like local pollution and the economic costs resulting from disruptions in the supply chain, such as noncompliance with environmental regulations. It is also possible to achieve savings in the overall cost of ownership, energy expenses, over-specification, consumption, and costs associated with meeting social and environmental standards. Local governments can increase revenue by considering the impact of sustainable procurement on them, such as through the creation of eco-friendly products, services, price premiums, and recycling initiatives. Procurement departments need to collaborate closely with suppliers and other departments like research and development and marketing to contribute to the development of new products.

The structure of local governments ensures that they have a strong financial foundation and can effectively carry out their responsibilities of providing efficient services to the local community. According to Section 276 of the Zimbabwean Constitution, local governments have the power to collect rates, taxes, and license fees to raise sufficient funds for achieving their goals and fulfilling their duties. However,

many local governments in Zimbabwe, including the Mutasa Rural District Council (RDC), struggle to deliver adequate services, which affect how they are perceived. The operations of the Mutasa Rural District Council, established by an Act of Parliament in 1980 after Zimbabwe gained independence, are governed by Chapter 29:13 of the Rural District Council Act.

The District Councils Act took the place of the African Councils Act, which used to control councils before. This change happened in 1980. Councils such as the Mutasa Rural District Council were formed under the District Councils Act. The council is responsible for providing most of the public goods and services with the help of the government.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In rural areas of Zimbabwe, district councils often make unsustainable decisions. They acquire goods from suppliers at extremely low prices but fail to make timely payments for those goods. Consequently, the community receives low-quality goods and services, which are detrimental to the environment and the well-being of the people. This has resulted in a damaged reputation for the district councils, manifested through frequent sewer system breakdowns, inadequate road maintenance, inconsistent water quality caused by aging pipelines, unfinished electrification projects, and sluggish public service response times.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study will be guided by the following objectives:

- Evaluating the effects of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.
- Examining the consequences of socially sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.
- Investigating the influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.

- To identify the challenges faced by rural district councils in implementing sustainable procurement practices.

1.5 Research questions

- What is the effect of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?
- How do social sustainable procurement practices impact the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?
- What is the influence of environmental sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?
- What are the main challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices?

1. 6 Significance of the study

1.6.1 To the academia

This study aims to enhance the university library for students and researchers who need to conduct relevant research. It will contribute to increasing the knowledge base. The university is making efforts to implement some of the recommendations that have emerged from this research. Once completed, the findings will be available on the BUSE repository site for other scholars to access and utilize.

1.6.2 To Policy Makers

Once the act and procurement laws are established, this research will have an important role in shaping policymaking. The study acts as a helpful resource and is valuable for explaining the laws and policies that govern sustainable public procurement in Zimbabwe.

1.6.3 To RDC practitioners

Studying how to carry out sustainable and efficient public procurement can be helpful for RDC practitioners.

1.7 Research Assumptions

- The research was conducted well and completed on time.
- The RDC provided the researcher with all the necessary documents for the project.

1.8 Delimitations

The research solely focused on conducting a case study at the RDCs in Mutasa. The researcher collected data for the years 2022-2023.

1.9 Limitations

There was a limited amount of time available to complete the investigation. Additionally, gathering data from respondents required significant labour and financial resources. The researcher had to dedicate weekends and evenings to the study in order to successfully overcome these limitations. When needed, the research made use of sampling methods and other procedures that were less expensive and relevant. These included using questionnaires and secondary data.

1.10 Organization of the dissertation

Chapter 2: Literature Review: This section examines related literatures that have been Investigated by other researchers. It discusses the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, empirical data, and gap analysis (what needs to be filled).

Chapter 3: Research Approach: This chapter examines the data collection methodology. The topics covered include study design, target audience, sample methods, research tools, data analysis, and presentation.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis, and Talks describe how to present data that would have been gathered as well as how to analyze and hold discussions about it.

Chapter 5: The chapter concludes the research findings and discussions with a summary, conclusions, and suggestions.

1.11 Definition of terms

According to Golafshani, N. (2003), procurement refers to the act of buying products and services by government or public sector organizations.

The concept of sustainability, as defined by Lysons and Farrington (2012), involves making decisions that do not harm our future plans or quality of life.

Kalubanga (2012) explains that sustainable procurement is the process of making purchases while considering the impact of those decisions on communities, individuals, and the environment.

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter includes information about the background, objectives, and the problem being addressed in the study. It also provides an introduction to the research. Additionally, the chapter discusses the significance of the research to the researcher.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review and analysis of the related existing literature regarding the influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. The review would be pivotal as it will guide the researcher and, in the process, lead to a greater understanding on this respective topic and related studies. The chapter considers the main pillars of sustainable procurement and further evaluates their influence on reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. Importance of sustainable procurement will be discussed as well as its link to enhancing the reputation of rural district councils. This will allow the researcher to administer proper course of action in the event that problem areas emanate from the research finding.

2.1 Conceptual framework

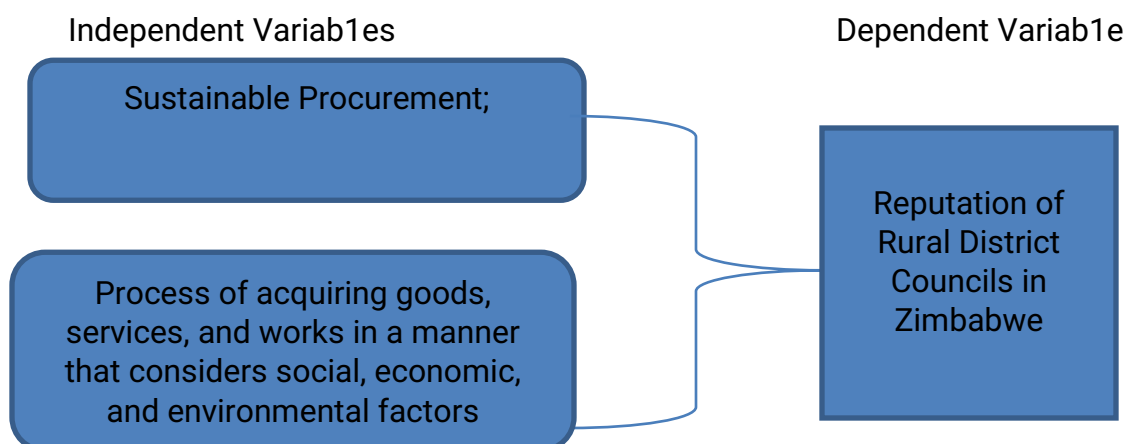


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

Miles & Huberman, in (2020) stated that the conceptual framework clarifies the main factors, concepts and variables to be studied. For this research which is about understanding the influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe the above framework would be applied.

2.1.1 Defining the concept of Procurement

Procurement involves obtaining goods, works and services at the optimal time, price, quality and quantity needed by identifying needs, sources, evaluating suppliers and making the right selection, according to Ezeanyim et al (2020). In other words, procurement encompasses all the processes and activities an organization undertakes guided by policy and compliance when purchasing operational inputs.

Van Weele (2018) as cited in Moshtari et al (2021) notes procurement involves communicating and collaborating with internal buyers on product and service specifications, sourcing, supplier and product evaluation, and managing contracts and relationships among other responsibilities. Procurement activities can be grouped into primary and secondary tasks. It relates to how firms identify external supplier sources for goods, services and works then enter contractual agreements often via tendering or competitive bidding. In other words, the procuring entity must match needs with an external supply source, negotiate and contract with the successful supplier for supplying goods, services and works.

Procurement includes all firm activities ensuring efficient use of limited resources for company and stakeholder benefit, according to Mutangili (2021). In other words, procurement involves purchasing materials for reuse or services by private individuals or government organizations for user benefit, as Aigheyisi and Edore (2015) describe.

2.1.2 Sustainable procurement

As defined by Kalubanga (2015), sustainable procurement involves obtaining goods and services from suppliers in a way that maximizes value over their entire lifecycles while minimizing environmental harm. This benefits not only the procuring organization but also society and the economy. Urgent action is needed to meet current needs without compromising future generations due to issues like climate change and depletion of natural resources.

The UN's call for countries to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030 has prompted a shift in how procurement is viewed, with recognition of its significant financial contribution to meeting these requirements (Renukappa et al., 2016). Sustainable procurement manages all upstream supply chain aspects to maximize economic, environmental and social performance (Sayed et. al., 2021). In other words, supplier activities must also be sustainable. According to Helen Walker and Stephen Brammer (2012), sustainable procurement is an organizational effort through purchasing and supply to achieve sustainability development goals while also taking a positive stance toward society and environment in acquiring inputs through responsible supplier selection and relations.

As defined by Kannan (2021), sustainable procurement, also known as green procurement or environmentally friendly procurement, refers to the process of obtaining goods, services, and works that minimize negative impacts on the environment and society. It involves assessing not just the price and quality of products or services but also their environmental, social, and economic aspects throughout their lifecycles.

The objective of sustainable procurement is to promote sustainable development by integrating environmental and social considerations into the procurement process. It focuses on decreasing environmental footprint, advancing social equity, supporting local economies, and encouraging innovation (Kannan, 2021).

2.1.3 Sustainability model with three bottom lines

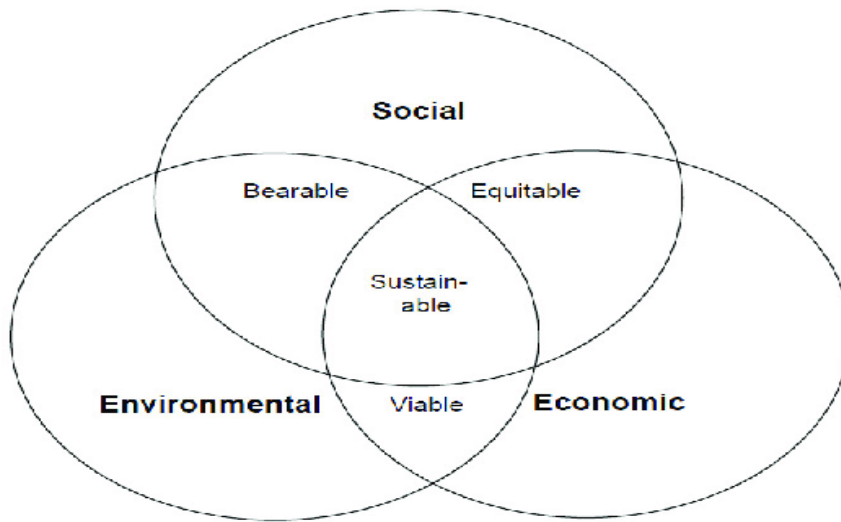


Figure 3: Resource based theory: Source S. Gupta (2015)

2.3 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a set of academic models that have been published on a topic related to it. In this case, the researcher used agency theory, stakeholder mapping, and resource dependency theory as part of this framework (Canals, 2017).

2.3.1 Stakeholder Theory

According to Lin (2018), stakeholder theory guides the interaction and interrelation between an organization's various interest holders such as employees, owners, regulators, suppliers, and customers. As such, it directs the operating principles and ethics observed in business operations. Stakeholder theory is considered a philosophy

that facilitates identifying an organization's different interest groups and how their interests can be satisfied (Lin, 2018). Specifically, the theory focuses on management actions regarding stakeholder needs and how those actions are influenced by stakeholders addressing their needs (Ezeanyim et al., 2020). Likewise, de Gooyert et al. (2017) identified stakeholder theory's contribution in resolving major challenges associated with organizational operations, management, and other stakeholders.

2.4 Evaluating the effects of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.

Evaluating the effects of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) in Zimbabwe involves considering several factors.

2.4.1 Enhanced Transparency

According to Ghadimi, (2016) implementing economically sustainable procurement practices can improve transparency in RDCs' operations. Transparent procurement processes, such as open bidding and competitive tendering, help prevent corruption and favouritism. This transparency can contribute to building a positive reputation for RDCs by demonstrating fair and accountable practices.

2.4.2 Cost Savings

UNGC (2017). Sustainable procurement practices can lead to cost savings in the long run. By considering factors such as lifecycle costs, energy efficiency, and waste reduction, RDCs can optimize their procurement decisions. Cost savings achieved through sustainable practices can enhance the reputation of RDCs as financially responsible organizations.

2.4.3 Social Responsibility

According to Hugos, M. (2018). Embracing sustainable procurement practices can showcase RDCs' commitment to social responsibility. By prioritizing the sourcing of goods and services from local suppliers or those with strong ethical and environmental practices, RDCs can positively impact communities and the environment. This approach

can enhance their reputation as organizations that care about the well-being of stakeholders.

2.4.4 Stakeholder Perception

According Farzipoor Saen, R. (2017), economically sustainable procurement practices can influence stakeholders' perception of RDCs. This includes customers, suppliers, employees, government entities, and the public. If RDCs are seen as actively engaging in sustainable procurement, it can foster positive relationships and enhance their reputation among stakeholders who value sustainable practices.

2.4.5 Compliance with Regulations

Zimbabwe, like many other countries, may have regulations and policies in place to promote sustainable procurement practices. RDCs that comply with these regulations and go beyond the minimum requirements can demonstrate their commitment to sustainability. Complying with such regulations can positively impact their reputation, especially in the eyes of regulatory authorities and government entities.

2.5 Examining the consequences of socially sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.

2.5.1 Community Engagement

Socially sustainable procurement practices can involve actively engaging with local communities. Silvestre, B. S. (2021). RDCs that prioritize sourcing goods and services from local suppliers can contribute to the economic development of the communities in which they operate. This can lead to positive perceptions among community members and enhance the reputation of RDCs as organizations that support local businesses and foster economic growth.

2.5.2 Employment Opportunities

By promoting fair labour practices and providing employment opportunities to marginalized or disadvantaged groups within Zimbabwe, RDCs can contribute to social inclusivity. Creating job opportunities, supporting fair wages, and ensuring safe working

conditions can enhance the reputation of RDCs as socially responsible organizations that prioritize the well-being of their employees.

2.5.3 Ethical Supply Chains

Socially sustainable procurement practices also involve ensuring ethical supply chains. RDCs can conduct due diligence to verify that their suppliers adhere to ethical labour practices, human rights standards, and environmental regulations. Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) (2020) by avoiding suppliers associated with unethical practices (e.g., child labour or environmental degradation), RDCs can build a reputation as organizations that prioritize ethical sourcing and responsible business conduct.

2.5.4 Diversity and Inclusion

Embracing diversity and inclusion in procurement practices can have a positive impact on the reputation of RDCs. Sreekumar, V., & Rajmohan, M. (2019). By actively seeking out suppliers from diverse backgrounds, including women-owned businesses or enterprises owned by underrepresented groups, RDCs can demonstrate their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. This can enhance their reputation as organizations that value equal opportunities and contribute to societal progress.

2.5.5 Stakeholder Perception

Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) (2020) socially sustainable procurement practices can influence how stakeholders perceive RDCs. Customers, employees, investors, and the general public increasingly value organizations that demonstrate social responsibility. By actively incorporating social considerations into their procurement processes, RDCs can enhance their reputation among stakeholders who prioritize ethical and socially responsible practices.

2.6 Investigating the influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.

Investigating the influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs) in Zimbabwe involves examining the impact of these practices on environmental aspects

2.6.1 Conservation of Natural Resources

Implementing environmentally sustainable procurement practices can contribute to the conservation of natural resources. Sloan, T. W. (2020). RDCs that prioritize sourcing from suppliers engaged in sustainable resource management, such as using renewable materials or promoting responsible extraction practices, can reduce their ecological footprint. This can enhance their reputation as organizations that are committed to preserving the environment and mitigating resource depletion.

2.6.2 Waste Reduction and Recycling

Embracing environmentally sustainable procurement practices involves minimizing waste generation and promoting recycling. RDCs can prioritize suppliers that use packaging materials made from recycled content or promote recycling initiatives. Struve, F. (2018). By reducing waste and supporting circular economy principles, RDCs can be perceived as environmentally conscious organizations, positively influencing their reputation.

2.6.3 Energy Efficiency

Sustainable procurement practices can also focus on energy efficiency. RDCs can prioritize suppliers that manufacture energy-efficient products or services, reducing energy consumption in their operations Sloan, T. W. (2020). By actively promoting energy conservation measures and adopting energy-efficient technologies, RDCs can enhance their reputation as organizations that are mindful of their environmental impact and contribute to sustainable development.

2.6.4 Emission Reduction

Addressing greenhouse gas emissions is another important aspect of environmentally sustainable procurement. Jafari, H. (2017). RDCs can prioritize suppliers that have implemented measures to reduce emissions in their production processes or transportation methods. By actively supporting low-carbon alternatives and promoting emission reduction initiatives, RDCs can build a reputation as environmentally responsible organizations that contribute to climate change mitigation.

2.6.5 Compliance with Environmental Regulations

Wong, C. Y. (2017), Adhering to environmental regulations and standards is crucial for RDCs to demonstrate their commitment to environmental sustainability. By ensuring compliance with local and international environmental regulations, RDCs can build trust and enhance their reputation among stakeholders who value environmental stewardship.

2.6.6 To identify the challenges faced by rural district councils in implementing sustainable procurement practices.

Implementing sustainable procurement practices can pose various challenges for Rural District Councils (RDCs) in Zimbabwe. Common challenges that RDCs might face in implementing sustainable procurement practices.

2.6.7 Limited Awareness and Understanding

One of the primary challenges is a lack of awareness and understanding about sustainable procurement practices. RDCs may not have sufficient knowledge or information about the benefits and strategies associated with sustainable procurement. This lack of awareness can hinder the adoption and implementation of sustainable practices.

2.6.8 Limited Resources and Capacity

RDCs often face resource constraints, including financial limitations and limited human resources. Sloan, T. W. (2020). Implementing sustainable procurement practices may require upfront investments, such as training procurement staff, conducting audits, or implementing new systems. Limited resources and capacity can make it challenging for RDCs to allocate sufficient funds and personnel to sustainable procurement initiatives.

2.6.9 Limited Supplier Capacity

Finding suppliers that meet sustainable procurement criteria can be a challenge, particularly in rural areas. The availability of local suppliers with sustainable practices may be limited, and RDCs may need to search beyond their immediate vicinity. Sarkis, J. (2019). Limited supplier capacity can make it difficult for RDCs to source goods and

services that align with their sustainability goals.

2.6.10 Regulatory and Policy Frameworks

In some cases, the absence of clear regulatory frameworks and policies related to sustainable procurement can present challenges. Shukla, N. (2019). RDCs may struggle to navigate the legal landscape and align their practices with existing regulations. The lack of specific guidelines or incentives for sustainable procurement can make it challenging for RDCs to prioritize and implement sustainable practices.

2.6.11 Resistance to Change

Sreekumar, V., & Rajmohan, M. (2019). Resistance to change can be a significant barrier to implementing sustainable procurement practices. Some stakeholders, including internal staff and suppliers, may be resistant to adopting new practices or modifying existing ones. Overcoming resistance and fostering a culture of sustainability within the organization can be a challenge for RDCs.

2.6.12 Limited Monitoring and Evaluation

Chopra, S., & Meindl, P. (2016). Highlights that monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable procurement practices can be challenging, particularly for RDCs with limited resources. Without proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place, it becomes difficult to assess the impact and measure progress toward sustainability goals. This lack of data and feedback can hinder the improvement and refinement of sustainable procurement practices.

To address these challenges, RDCs can consider several strategies. These include conducting capacity-building programs to enhance awareness and knowledge about sustainable procurement, seeking collaborations with other organizations or government agencies to pool resources, promoting awareness among local suppliers to encourage sustainable practices, and advocating for supportive policies and regulations at the national level. Additionally, establishing monitoring and evaluation systems can help RDCs track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

2.7 Empirical evidence

Akyere (2016) conducted a study titled "Sustainable Procurement Practice in Ghana: The Perspective of the Agricultural Sector" to explore how social and environmental principles are integrated into sustainable procurement practices in Ghana's agricultural sector. The study utilized questionnaires to collect data and employed a descriptive analysis approach. The findings revealed that while some banks engaged in corporate social responsibility programs, few procurement professionals were aware of the challenges associated with sustainable procurement. The study emphasized the importance of organizations having policies to monitor the performance of all stakeholders, as it was identified as a crucial factor in environmental and social considerations.

Walker and Brammer (2012) conducted a study to examine sustainable procurement in the UK public sector. The research involved the use of questionnaires to gather data, and both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods were employed. The study found that public sector organizations had varying practices in sustainable procurement. The health sector showed little consideration for the challenges of sustainable procurement, while the education sector primarily focused on environmental issues. Local governments were reported to prioritize purchasing from small, local businesses. The study also identified cost and a lack of senior management support as additional barriers to sustainable procurement.

Hussein (2014) conducted a study on the impact of sustainable procurement practices on organizational performance at Agricore grain brokers in Kenya. The study underscored increasing concern for environmental and social issues, highlighting the need to align procurement practices to conserve scarce resources due to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The research aimed to investigate how sustainable procurement practices influence organizational performance within Unilever. The study focused on Unilever's financial and procurement staff, employing a descriptive research method. The findings indicated that supplier participation, reusable products, ethical business practices, and corporate social responsibility all contributed to Unilever's

adoption of green procurement practices within the organization.

Benard (2015) conducted a comparative study on sustainable procurement practices for grain buying in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study revealed that many businesses in developing countries only implement sustainability practices superficially, as they do not view them as strategically important for internal business operations. The research aimed to assess the degree of sustainable procurement practices employed by grain-buying companies. Using a comparative research strategy involving two sisal processing companies, the study found that while both organizations implemented sustainable procurement practices, one was more successful than the other.

Wallace and Omachar (2016) conducted a study to examine how green procurement techniques impacted the operational reputation of Kenya Airways Limited. The study aimed to determine the effects of green buying strategies on operational reputation. Descriptive research methods were employed, and structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data for the formulation of recommendations. The investigation revealed that Kenya Airways purchased environmentally friendly goods, high-quality materials, recyclable products, and energy-efficient goods, resulting in cost savings in production. Sustainable packaging was also employed, reducing packing costs and energy consumption. The study concluded that green procurement practices had an impact on operational reputation and should be adopted.

Islam et al. (2017) conducted a study on the impact of sustainable procurement practices on organizational performance using Saudi Arabia as a case study. The research utilized surveys and quantitative methods to assess the effects of sustainable procurement practices. The study found a relationship between Sustainable Procurement Practices (SPPs) and organizational performance, with SPPs directly and indirectly influencing performance. Although the direct effects of SPPs on financial performance were not statistically significant, they had an indirect impact on financial performance through non-financial performance.

Kiwili and Ismail (2016) conducted a study on how sustainable procurement practices

affected supply chain performance in Kenya's manufacturing sector, using the East African Cement Company as a case study. The research employed a case study research methodology and involved the collection of primary and secondary data. The results demonstrated a positive correlation between sustainable procurement practices and supply chain performance. The study showed that the adoption of green purchasing methods contributed to improvements in supply chain performance, and the East African Cement Company continued to provide financial aid to the country.

Voorde, F. van de (2014) conducted a study on the impact of sustainable purchasing practices on client-based brand equity. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between brand value and ethical purchasing practices from the consumer's perspective. Survey questionnaires were distributed to consumers of athletic apparel in Finland, and the study utilized online forums to reach a representative sample of the general public. The research offered new insights into various sustainable procurement strategies and their relationship to brand value. The findings indicated that reverse logistics and sustainable production helped build strong brand equity among consumers with sustainability concerns. The study demonstrated a positive relationship between brand image and environmentally friendly procurement practices.

Kalubanga (2015) conducted a study titled "Sustainable Procurement: The Practical Implications of the Procurement Process in Uganda" to review the concept of sustainable procurement and its practical implications. The study highlighted those businesses have started considering sustainability from a competitive perspective to improve organizational reputation, gain a competitive advantage, and mitigate supply chain risks. However, the study noted a lack of clarity surrounding sustainable procurement, particularly in developing countries. The research revealed that sustainable procurement practices were not widely implemented in Uganda due to a lack of awareness, limited resources, and a focus on short-term cost savings. The study recommended the development of clear guidelines and policies, stakeholder collaboration, and capacity building to promote sustainable procurement practices in the country.

These studies provide insights into the implementation and impact of sustainable procurement practices in various contexts, including agriculture, public sector, manufacturing, and consumer goods. They highlight the importance of integrating environmental and social considerations into procurement processes and the potential benefits for organizations, such as cost savings, improved brand reputation, and enhanced supply chain performance. However, they also identify challenges and barriers to sustainable procurement, including limited awareness, resource constraints, and the need for senior management support. Overall, these studies contribute to the growing body of knowledge on sustainable procurement and provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to adopt more sustainable practices in their procurement processes.

2.8 Research Gap

The aim of this study is to establish the influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. The researcher considers all the qualitative features of sustainable procurement. Kalubanga (2015), Kiwili and Ismail (2016) empirical review has shown that indeed there is an affirmative connection between sustainable and reputation in the sense of procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. While others indicated that no reliance is being placed on sustainable procurement for good reputation as evidenced by Hussein (2014) These studies have indeed made key contributions in terms of scope and significance; however, the researcher noted a geographical gap because these researches were conducted in other countries and also in other various sectors of industry especially rural district councils in Zimbabwe. Further, there is paucity of literature since the majority of these respective researchers considered sustainable procurement in context without paying much attention to reputation issues, hence different study variables were applied for this research.

2.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter examined literature presented by different scholars on how implementing sustainable procurement can improve the reputation of rural district councils. It also proposed guidelines by authoritatively outlining relevant theories and concepts. In doing so, the views and knowledge of respected academics and researchers were recognized, serving to expand understanding of the topic under investigation. The following chapter of this study will cover the research methodology and design.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the data that was collected, as well as the data collection instruments used to gather data and the sources of data that were utilized in the analysis. This section of the research covered the research philosophy framework applied and the research methods employed to conduct this investigation, establishing facts and reach conclusions. The researcher explained the research design and approach implemented in the study. Additionally, the chapter defines the research population, sample size, the data collection instruments, and the tools enabling the researcher to achieve validity and reliability of the research. Ethical issues were clearly defined, along with methods used for presenting and analyzing data.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is the underlying structure or framework that holds together all the various elements of a research project. It can be thought of as the "glue" that binds the

different components (Mustafa, 2020). Saunders (2021) defines the research design as the overall plan or organization for collecting and generating the necessary data. In other words, the research design is the overarching strategy adopted to logically integrate the different parts of a research study in order to effectively address the research problem (Kumar, 2018). In this particular study, an exploratory research design was used. The goal was to analyze the impact of implementing sustainable procurement practices on improving the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. The exploratory design incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods (Alexander et al., 2021). The quantitative component involved the use of closed-ended survey questions. For the qualitative aspect, structured and unstructured interview questions were utilized, allowing the researcher to gather detailed explanations from the respondents. Ultimately, the exploratory research design enabled the collection of reliable and relevant data that provided clear insights into the influence of sustainable procurement implementation on enhancing the reputation of the rural district councils under study.

3.3 Research. Philosophy

According to Saunders (2021), a research philosophy refers to the beliefs and assumptions about how data on a particular phenomenon should be gathered, analyzed, and utilized. The philosophy adopted for this research was influenced by the researcher's own views, beliefs, and the way in which this knowledge was established, as supported by Bajpai (2011). The terms epistemology and ontology encompass the various philosophies or approaches to research. However, two major paradigms that have been identified under these philosophies are positivism and interpretive. In conducting this research, the researcher adopted the positivist approach, as described by Saunders et al. (2021). Positivism is a research philosophy that emphasizes the importance of objective, quantifiable data and the application of scientific methods to the study of social phenomena.

3.3.1 Justification for using positivism

By adopting the positivist approach, the researcher was able to maintain a degree of separation from the research subject throughout the process. This allowed the researcher to remain neutral and impartial during the investigation. Additionally, the positivist philosophy ensured that the researcher remained independent from the study, as there was no allowance for incorporating human interests or perspectives. This minimized the level of interaction between the researcher and the research participants, which was intended to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings (Saunders et al., 2021). Furthermore, the positivist angle enabled the researcher to achieve a greater degree of generalizability through the use of quantitative methods. This involved producing graphical representations to demonstrate the linkages between the variables being studied.

3.4 Research Approach

Mixed-methods research (MMR) is a research methodology that utilizes multiple methods to address research questions in a suitable and principled manner (Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2021). It involves the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of both qualitative and quantitative data. As per Kumar (2018), qualitative research is useful for gathering data about the situations and beliefs of individuals. This assists the researcher in gaining an appreciation for how individuals perceive and understand the influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe.

3.4.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research focuses on qualitative aspects and this kind of study aims to uncover the inherent reasons, wants and emotions of people regarding a specific subject being explored and this type of research employs organized surveys and meeting questions to gather information specifically The impact of putting sustainable acquisition into practice on improving the status of rural area governmental bodies in Zimbabwe

3.5 Population

Kumar (2018) and Bryman (2020) both described the meaning of population in research as referring to all individuals or objects that share common characteristics relevant to the researcher's area of focus. Similarly, they discussed the target population as consisting specifically of people or subjects possessing the traits the researcher aims to comprehend. Overall, the target population denotes those with viewpoints meant to contribute to understanding the research topic. In this particular study, the target population totaled 50 participants. In this scenario, the research drew from these members on the basis that they had greater familiarity regarding the impact of enacting sustainable procurement practices.

3.6 Sampling procedures and techniques

Directly observing each subject in a population can prove difficult or costly. Therefore, researchers gather data from a subset of participants, which Kumar (2018) refers to as a sample. The sample allows for making inferences about the overall population. Bryman (2012) defines a sample as a portion or part of the total population, which may consist of individuals, objects or organizations. Additionally, Hakim et al. (2019) note each member of the population should have equal opportunity to get selected and included in the sample. Failing to provide fair chances of selection may lead to a sample that does not adequately represent the larger population, potentially yielding irrelevant or misleading information.

In this particular study, the researcher employed a purposive sampling method to identify and choose the sample. The key reason for this approach was that it enabled obtaining a sample knowledgeable about sustainable procurement. In selecting customers, the researcher applied convenience sampling, which entailed picking individuals according to their availability and willingness to participate.

3.7 Sample Size

The entire sample of 50 individuals was chosen as the subset for this research. These participants were selected using a full count method where all items in the defined

population were incorporated. The primary rationale for this approach was due to the considerable number of rural district councils located within Zimbabwe, making it feasible to encompass all of them within the sample size.

3.8 Data Sources

The researcher gathered information from both fundamental and auxiliary sources. Primary data was collected using interviews and questionnaires to acquire firsthand information. Secondary data involved obtaining relevant and dependable information to supplement the study from preexisting sources. As Douglas (2021) notes, data origins refer to the means by which data will be acquired. In this study, the fundamental sources were human subjects providing responses, while auxiliary data was collected from established literature, records and documentation relating to the research topic.

3.8.1 Primary data sources

Primary data refers to information that originates directly from its inherent source, as pointed out by Sarstedt and Moloi (2020). For this study, the researcher employed consistent questionnaires and interviews as fundamental instruments since they can yield substantial volumes of highly organized and uniform data suitable for quantitative analysis. Standardized surveys in particular represent a trusted method for generating explanatory statistics essential to quantitative studies. The study questionnaires incorporated closed-ended and open-ended questions, while interviews consisted only of open-ended prompts. Using both question styles aimed to collect comprehensive details addressing the outlined research aims.

Justification for primary data usage

Primary data ensured the researcher obtained authentic basic information sourced directly from subjects related to what was being investigated, as Khotari (2018) highlighted. However, as Panneerselvan (2019) evidenced, data collection through primary methods was costly and time-intensive given the population was dispersed nationwide.

Advantages of primary data include:

- It originates directly from research subjects, granting a high degree of accuracy focused specifically on the study topic.
- Primary data allows collection through diverse avenues like interviews, surveys, focus groups, enabling broad population inclusion and geographical coverage.
- This information is current, providing an authentic perspective for researchers on the topic under examination.
- Reliability is strong since primary data arises straight from trustworthy involved parties.

3.8.2 Secondary Data sources

Wallen and Fraenkel (2020) noted that statistics methodology involves systematically collecting and evaluating data to describe and understand activities and events that occurred in the past. Secondary data refers to results from other people's primary data collection reported in various formats. Secondary data, already collected and studied by other researchers, includes sources like books, journals, industry reports, statistics, and various surveys. Secondary sources tend to serve as complements to primary sources and as measures of consistency and objectivity for primary responses.

Advantages of Secondary Data

Advantages of secondary data are following:

- The primary advantage of secondary data is that it is cheaper and faster to access.
- Secondly, it provides a way to access the work of the best scholars all over the world.
- Thirdly, secondary data gives a frame of mind to the researcher that in which direction he/she should go for the specific research.
- Fourthly secondary data save time, efforts and money and add to the value of the research study.

Disadvantages of Secondary Data

Following are the disadvantage of secondary data:

- The data collected by the third party may not be a reliable party so the reliability and accuracy of data go down.
- Data collected in one location may not be suitable for the other one due variable environmental factor.
- With the passage of time the data becomes obsolete and very old.

3.8.3 Research Instruments

In collecting necessary information, the researcher made use of questionnaires and interviews. Employing these tools helped furnish pertinent input, which was then analyzed and interpreted to comprehend the impact of implementing sustainable procurement practices on improving the reputation of rural regional councils in Zimbabwe. As Coolican (2019) posited, research instruments are means utilized for generating and accumulating applicable data. Likewise, Collis and Hussey (2020) contended information accrual cannot be achieved without methodically applying one or multiple collection aids like interview schedules or surveys.

3.8.4 Research Questionnaire

A set of questions is a way to collect data from individuals providing responses about their views, knowledge, beliefs and feelings. According to Neelankavil (2015), a research questionnaire consists of inquiries designed to meet the researcher's needs. This method of collecting evidence is both relatively inexpensive and time saving. The research questionnaire contained open and closed questions. These two question types were used with the aim of acquiring sufficient information on the impact of applying sustainable procurement in improving the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. Unlike open-ended questions, closed-ended questions are impersonal and limiting by not revealing rationales, reactions, or other individual response aspects since they constrain a respondent's options.

3.8.5 Closed-ended questions

These questions in interviews are limited to a set number of answers following pre-established criteria to provide precise, identifiable and easily classified responses. With

closed questions, respondents had no freedom as answers follow a predefined pattern and framework by researchers. Though closed questions are easily analyzed, respondents cannot explain misunderstandings, express or elaborate in responses. Provisions were made to allow further explanation to address this limitation.

3.8.6 Open ended questions

Open-ended questions allow participants to freely express themselves on a subject. Unlike closed questions, open questions are non-directive and let respondents use their own terms and direct responses conveniently. While open questions can gather relevant and elaborated information as respondents express feelings, they tend to be difficult to analyze due to ambiguous nature.

3.8.7 Likert scale

Bryman and Bell (2020) define a Likert scale as a rating method used in research to gauge respondent answers. My study will use a Likert scale as it allows respondents to select the most appropriate response from options. A Likert scale gauges a participant's level of agreement or disagreement on the area under examination. Generally, Likert scales are simple to construct and manage, though they take longer to finish than other itemized rating methods.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Table 1:Likert scale

Source: Bryman and Bell (2020).

The research used Likert scale to get responses as it is efficient and does not take much time of the respondents.

3.8.9 Interview

The researcher considered the use of interviews in order to affirm the data that was

collected through use of questionnaires. Semi-structured interview questions were asked so as to provide consistency in the questions that were being asked and also to ensure that the researcher would not deviate from the subject being considered. Personal interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis where the researcher initiated conversations to gather information from different participants. According to Mathers et al. (2018), an interview is a meeting or conversation held between an interviewee and interviewer.

The interviews served to provide participants with clarity on any vague questions needing rephrasing, to ensure respondents gave relevant information. Additionally, the researcher chose this method to facilitate easier communication by allowing flexibility in using language when answering questions while the researcher wrote down participant responses. The interviews were designed to explore the validity and applicability of responses toward answering the research questions.

While interviews provided in-depth information, the researcher acknowledged some limitations such as time constraints as the exercise required full researcher involvement and some respondents were unwilling to participate. To address this gap, the researcher tried to minimize time and also explained the study's advantages to participants.

3.9 Va1idity and Re1iability

3.9.1 Va1idity

According to AQR (2018), validity refers to scientific tests that determine if a study measures what it aims to. It clarifies how well measurement tools and methods actually assess intended subjects, as Babbie (2017) explains. Considering internal and external validity was important.

To ensure internal validity, suitable questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain accurate ground-level information on sustainable procurement's influence on rural councils' reputations in Zimbabwe. Tools were pretested with participants and

corrected. Numerical presentation of collected data ensured legitimate results by showing respondents' true disclosures and understandings.

External validity was also critical since implications involved the whole population from a non-exhaustive study. The researcher considered suitable sample sizes from academics' work. Generalizable results enabled external validity, as Gobo (2019) discusses.

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to consistency of findings regardless of unintentional conditions, encompassing uniformity of results over time using the same methods, as Sekaran and Bougie (2021) note. Greener and Martelli (2015) also highlight that reliability means consistency over a period.

To ensure reliability, the researcher ensured the sample truly reflected the studied population through confirmed procedures in determining sample size. Further techniques applied in data collection were sufficient to obtain neutral, dependable answers. In addition to questionnaires, random telephone follow-ups confirmed results. This reinforced reliability by verifying results independently over time using standardized collection methods.

3.10 Ethical consideration

To ensure confidentiality, a covering letter attached to questionnaires explained the study purpose. The researcher verbally explained this and intended use for academic purposes to obtain informed consent. Understanding ethics involved, high standards were upheld consistently. Ethical benchmarks for research were observed, including avoiding coercion, deception, exaggerating benefits, invading privacy or causing stress, as Denzin and Lincoln (2020) discuss. All data and words from other sources, even if paraphrased or summarized, were properly attributed to prevent plagiarism. Maintaining participant trust and anonymity was prioritized throughout.

3.10.1 Plagiarism

Ethics were considered in using secondary data by properly attributing other researchers' work through consistent citations and references throughout the study.

3.10.2 Respondents' Consent

The researcher obtained consent to distribute questionnaires and conduct interviews with respondents.

3.10.3 Confidentiality

The researcher also ensured confidentiality was strictly maintained by including a letter with questionnaires confirming the study was solely for academic purposes.

3.10.4 Integrity

The researcher maintained morality and honesty by solely utilizing data for research as intended. Participants were informed to alleviate fears of consequences like victimization from their involvement.

3.11 Data presentation and ana1ysis

The researcher personally distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews, strengthening process control as Alexander et al. (2020) noted. Allowing privacy also enhanced confidentiality per Roberts (2022). Questionnaires administration over five days removed intermediaries and increased relevant, reliable and unbiased data collection according to Alexander et al. Interview appointments were scheduled in advance, kept under 10 minutes each.

Frequency tables facilitated numerical analysis and easy data categorization or summarization for comprehension as Sage (2016) discussed. Descriptive statistics were fitting as most data was numerical. Collected data representation through tables, pie charts and graphs allowed for visualization. Personal involvement in collection minimized bias while direct communication aided clarification.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology used in the study.

Challenges arose in determining appropriate methods, sampling procedures, and information collection tools. However, the data gathered proved useful. Purposive sampling identified the population and sample. The following chapter exhibits and examines collected data. Continued investigation and explanation of results occurs in the subsequent section.

Chapter IV

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Data for the study was obtained through the usage of questionnaires and interviews. The findings were presented in line with the framework used and the analysis was based on the objectives of the research. A Likert scale was considered as a basis of measurement of responses and descriptive statistics was considered for analysis which involved the use of graphs, tables and percentages which were established from Microsoft Excel in order to achieve simplicity.

4.1 Response Rate

The participants were selected from top, middle management and head of sections from various departments of the economy. The population constituted of 50 from which a sample of 40 was drawn to participate in the research. From the selected sample of 40 questionnaires were returned and according to the researcher these were deemed valid and suitable for the analysis.

4.2 Demographic features of respondents

The demographic features of the participants considered for the study included years of service and qualification.

4.2.1 Educational level of respondents

The figure below shows the highest academic level of qualification relating to the respondents. The findings indicate that 50% of the respondents who formed the majority had attained bachelor's degree, while 12% had attained master's degree. Those who had Professional qualification were 13% and diplomas 25%. From the findings the respondents were deemed to be well informed participants who would make rational decisions in terms of responding to questions hence the information provided was perceived to be reliable adequate to allow the researcher to arrive at meaningful conclusions about the research.

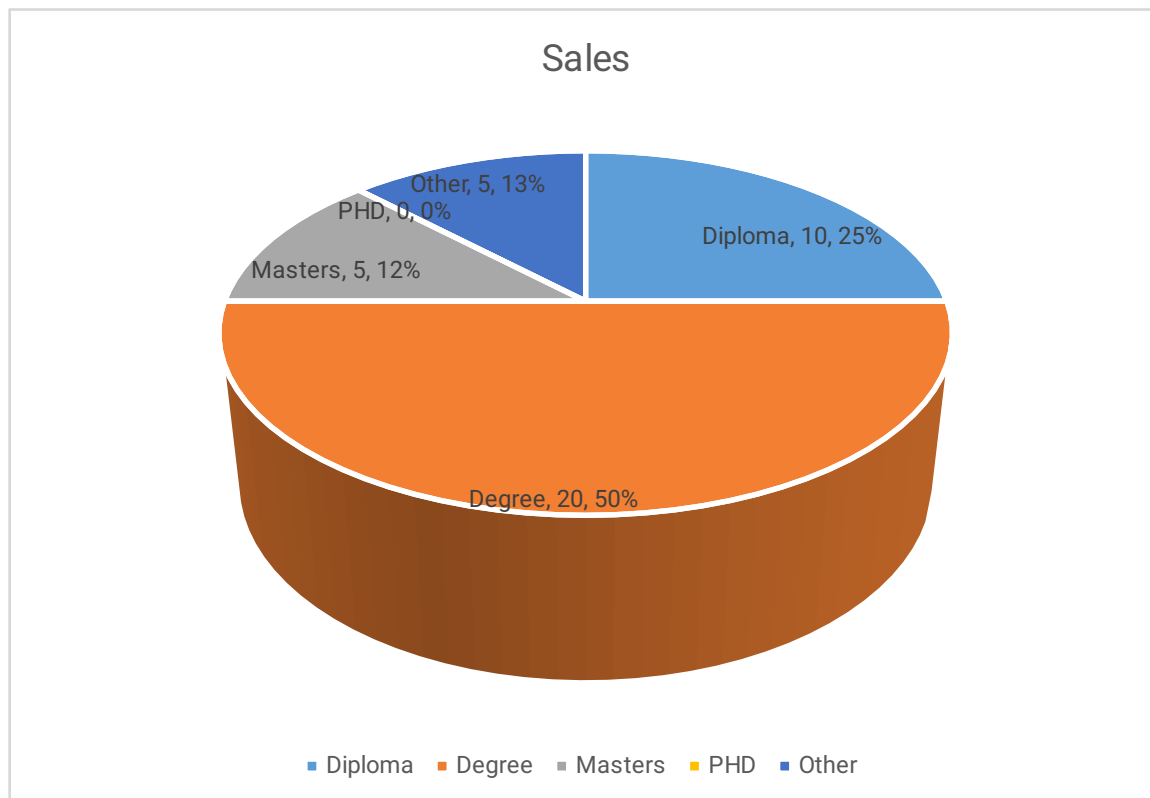


Figure 4: Educational levels

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

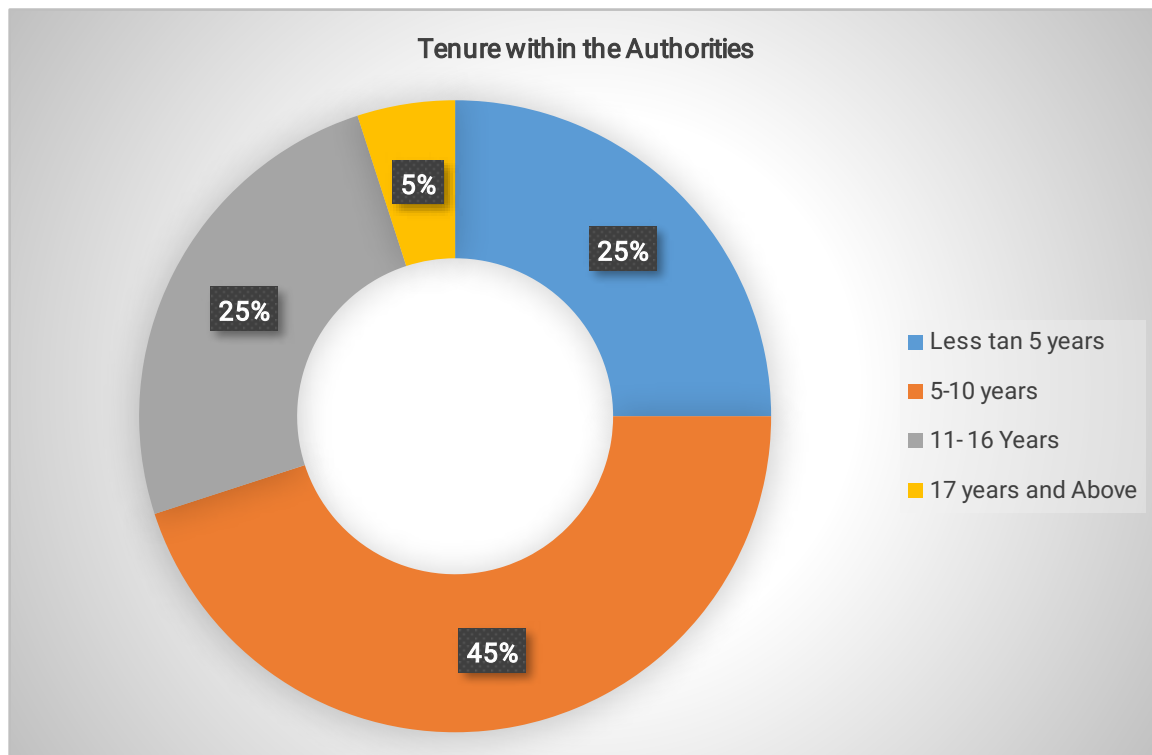


Figure 5:Tenure within the local Authorities

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The chart above shows that 25% of the employees has less than 5 years with the local authorities ,25% with 11 to 16 years with the company, the majority is 45% with 5 to 10years lastly 5 % has 17years and above with the local authorities

4.3 What is the effect of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Attracting Investment and Funding:	0	0	0	20	20	40

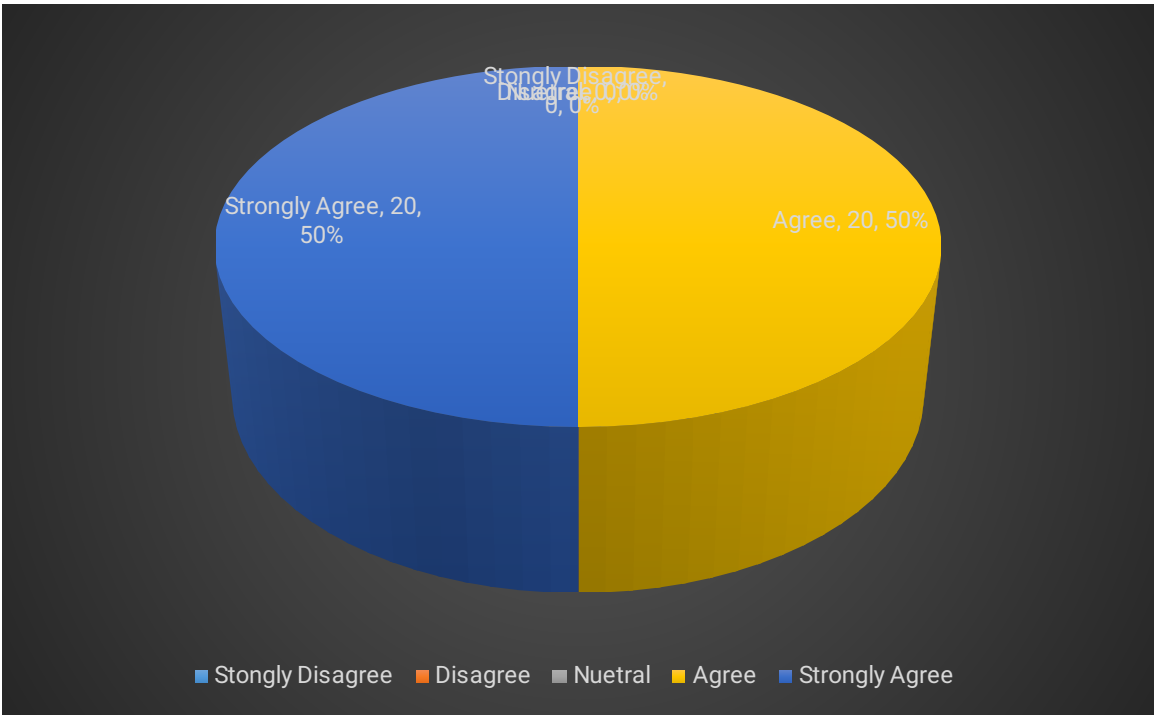


Figure 6:Raw data. Attracting Investment and Funding

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The data presented above shows that 0/40 strongly disagree and 0/40 disagree that Attracting investment and funding affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation, 0/40 were neutral, 20/40 agreed and 20/40 strongly agreed that attracting investment and funding affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Financial Transparency	0	0	5	15	20	40

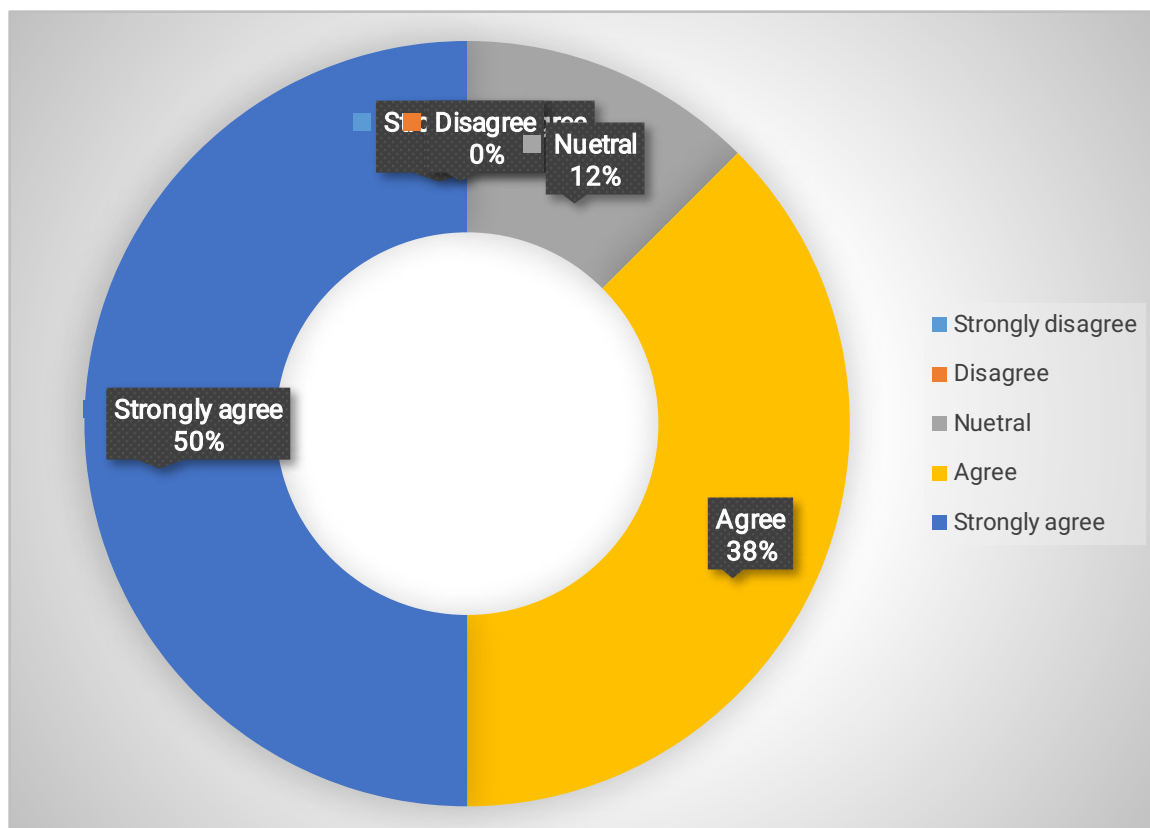


Figure 7:Raw data. Financial Transparency

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that financial transparency affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation, 5/40 (12%) were neutral, 15/40 (38%) agreed and 20/40 (50%) strongly agreed that affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation of local authorities in Zimbabwe.

Most sustainable purchase strategies center on the natural advantages of such

methodologies. Shaky (2019) gave abundant cases of green open obtaining approaches concentrating on natural supportability. Associations keen on progressing natural destinations and diminishing ozone depleting substance outflows are basic contemplations in understanding maintainable obtaining strategies. As of late, associations embraced the natural advantages of obtaining, and greening of obtaining incorporated inside associations. A portion of the examples of the green obtaining hone incorporate "vitality proficient PCs, low vitality structures, reused paper, cleaning administrations utilizing naturally benevolent items, electric, and half and half or low-outflow vehicles" (Theron and Dowden 2017, p. 45). Other authoritative methodologies incorporate maintainable vitality arrangements with sustainable power contract and vitality productivity enhancements, as investigated by Alibašić (2018a, c).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Stakeholder Confidence and Support	0	0	5	10	25	40

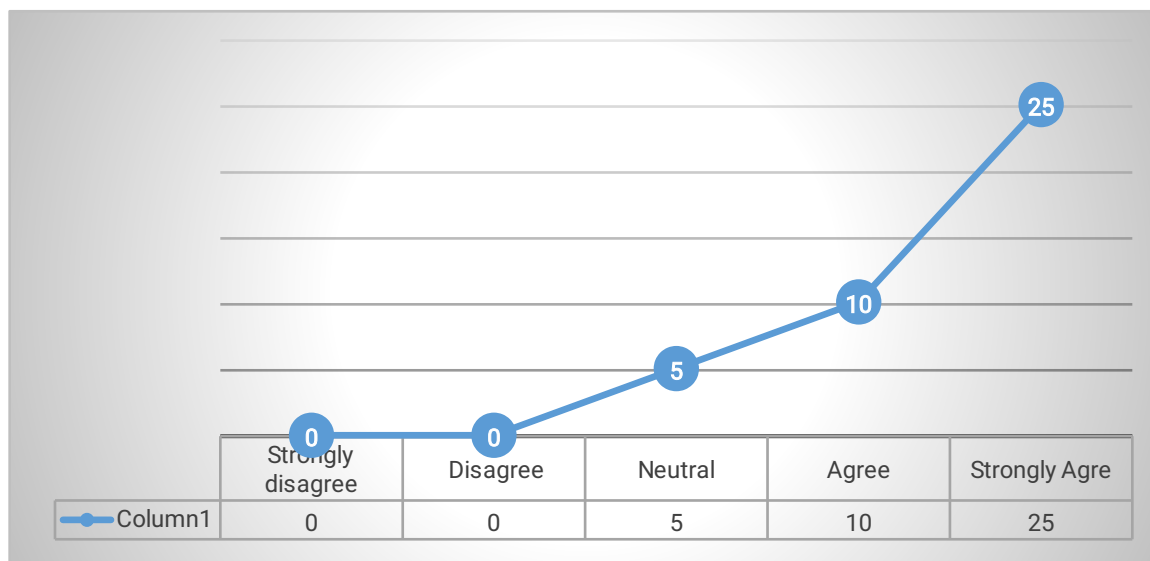


Figure 8: Raw data. Stakeholder Confidence and Support.

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that Stakeholder Confidence and Support affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation 5/40 (12.5%) were neutral, 10/40 (25%) agreed and 25/40 (62.5%) strongly agreed that hat disagree that Stakeholder Confidence and Support affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Collaboration Opportunities	0	0	5	10	25	40

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

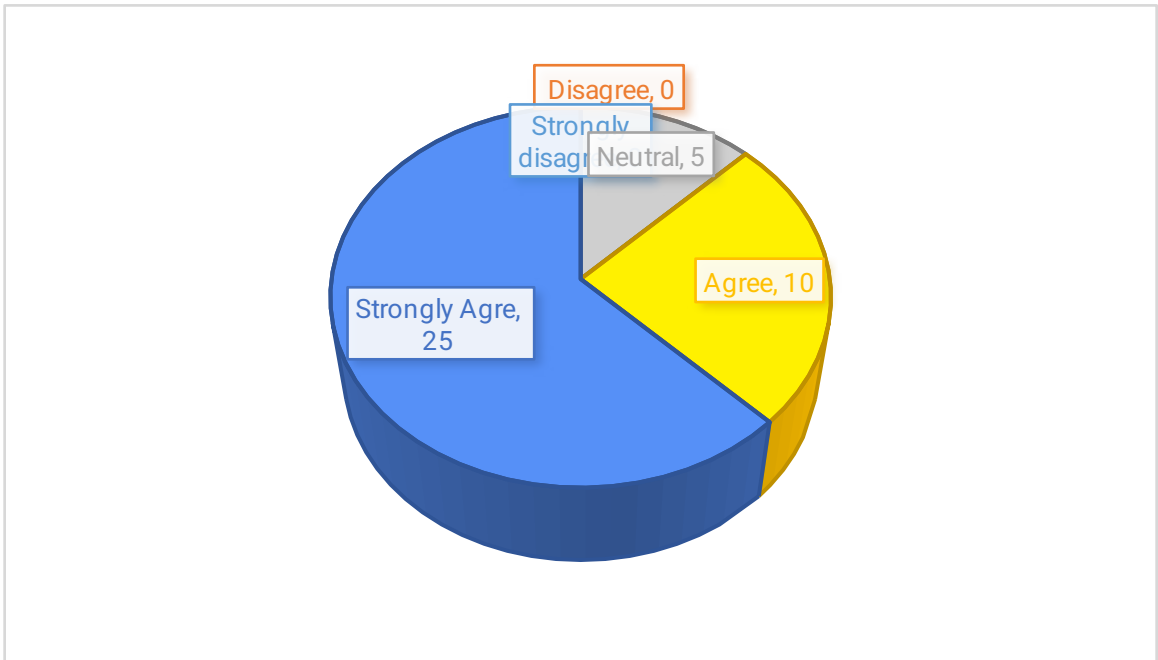


Figure 9: Raw data. Collaboration Opportunities.

Source: Primary Data (2024)

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that Collaboration Opportunities affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation 5/40 (12.5%) were neutral, 10/40 (25%) agreed and 25/40 (62.5%) strongly agreed that lack Collaboration Opportunities affects sustainable procurement of local authorities which leads to bad reputation.

4.4 What are the main challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Limited supplier options	0	0	0	15	25	40

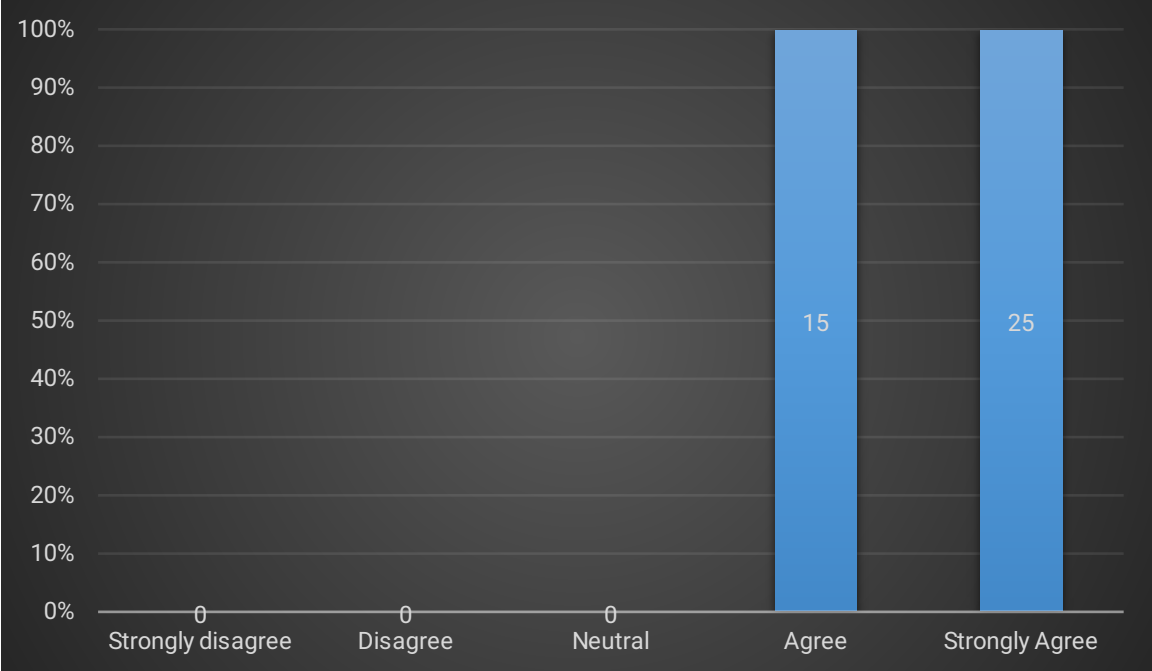


Figure 10: Raw data. Limited supplier options

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that Limited supplier options is a challenge encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices 0/40 (0%) were neutral, 15/40 (37.5%) agreed and 25/40 (62.5%) strongly agreed that Limited supplier options is a challenge encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices

	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly	Total
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	Disagree				Agree	
Resistance to change	0	0	5	18	17	40

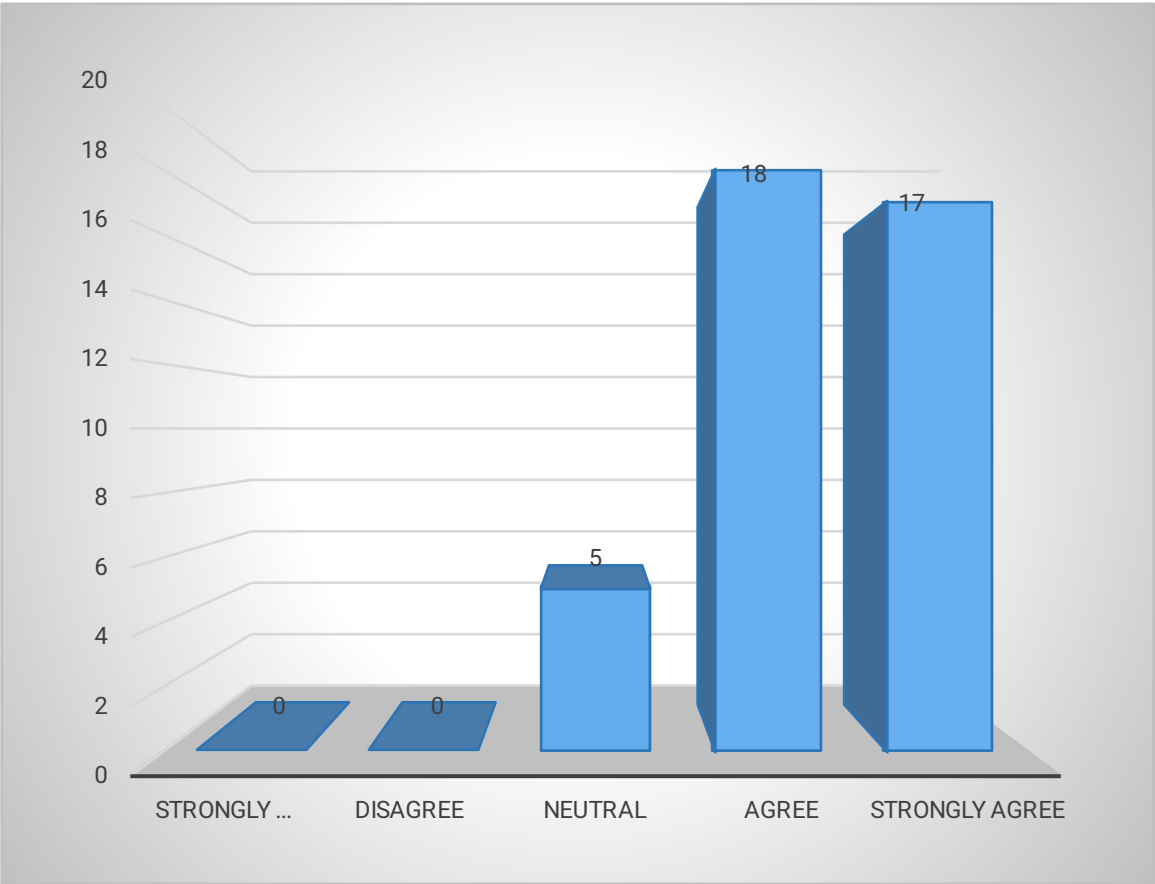


Figure 11: Raw data. Resistance to change

Source: Questionnaire survey data, 2024

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that resistance to change contribute to the challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices 5/40 (12.5%) were neutral, 18/40 (45%) agreed and 17/40 (42.5%) strongly agreed resistance to change contribute to the challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Limited monitoring and evaluation capacity	0	0	0	15	25	40

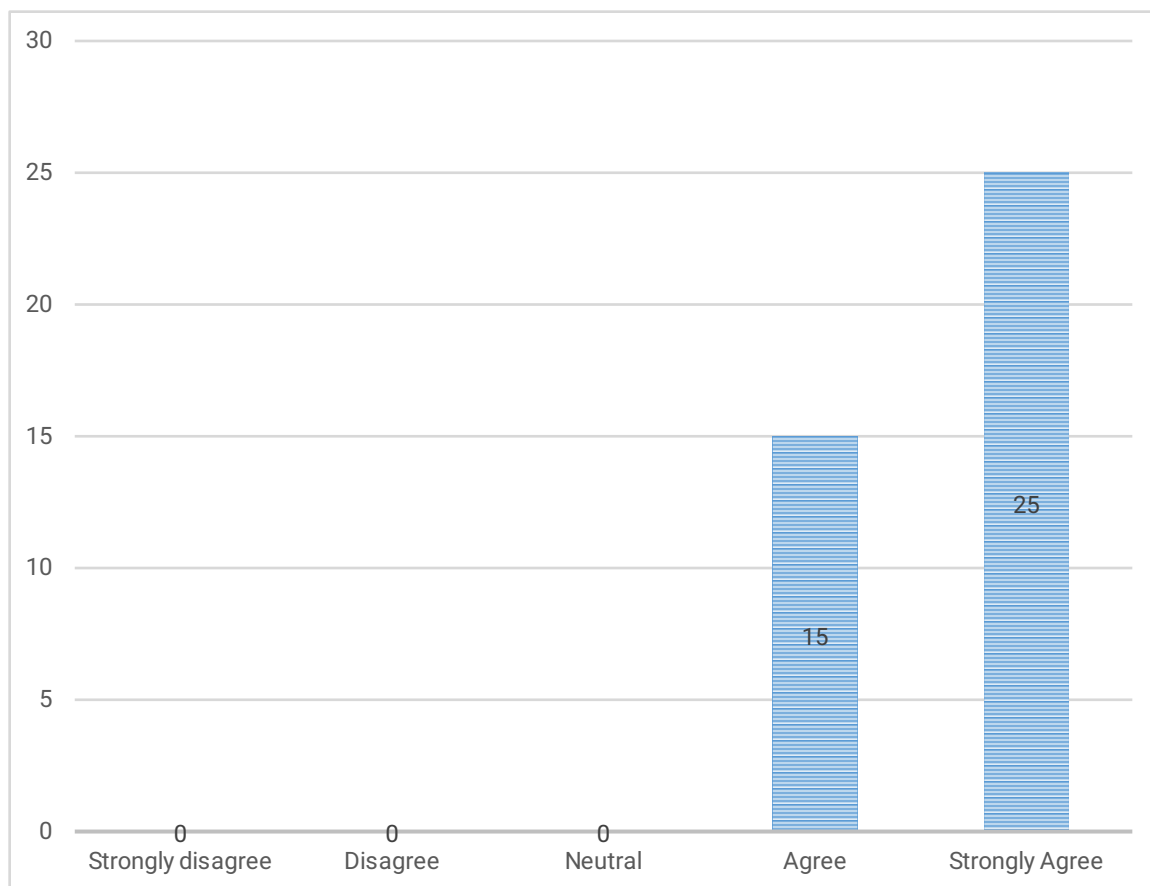


Figure 12: Raw data. Limited monitoring and evaluation capacity

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that Limited monitoring and evaluation capacity is a challenge encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices 0/40 (0%) were neutral, 15/40 (37.5%) agreed and 25/40 (62.5%) strongly agreed that Limited monitoring and evaluation capacity is a challenge encountered by

rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Lack of awareness and understanding	0	0	5	15	20	40

Figure 13: Raw data. Lack of awareness and understanding

Source: Primary data (2024)

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40 (0%) disagree that Lack of awareness and understanding contribute to the challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices 5/40 (12.5%) were neutral, 15/40 (37.5%) agreed and 20/40 (50%) strongly agreed that Lack of awareness and understanding contribute to the challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices.

4.5 What is the influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Compliance with regulations	0	0		20	20	40

Figure 14: Raw data. Compliance with regulations

Source: Primary data (2024)

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40(0%) and 0/40 (0%) were neutral that Compliance with regulations influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe, 20/40 (50%) agreed and 20/40 (50%) strongly agreed that Compliance with regulations influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe

Source: Primary data (2024)

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40(0%) and 0/40 (0%) were neutral that Enhanced partnerships and collaborations influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe, 10/40 (25%) agreed and 30/40 (75%) strongly agreed that Enhanced partnerships and collaborations influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Positive perception by stakeholders	0	0		10	30	40

Figure 15: Raw data. Positive perception by stakeholders

Source: Primary data (2024)

The data presented above shows that 0/40 (0%) strongly disagree and 0/40(0%) and 0/40 (0%) were neutral that Positive perception by stakeholders influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe, 10/40 (25%) agreed and 30/40 (75%) strongly agreed that Positive perception by stakeholders influence of environmentally sustainable procurement

practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe.

Significantly, sustainable buying has been discussed regarding the financial position of a company. As Theron and Dowden (2017) noted, "numerous businesses also see embracing environmentally-friendly purchasing as a way to increase their section of the market and offer improved client services." Companies view sustainable buying as providing commercial benefits like boosting their brand's reputation, growing sales to socially conscious customers, fulfilling their social duties, avoiding bad publicity, and developing good relationships with important audiences.

4.6 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed research results and analysis of how adopting sustainable buying practices can improve the public image of rural councils in Zimbabwe. A synopsis of the research along with conclusions and suggestions from the results are covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

Sustainable procurement, also known as green procurement or responsible procurement refers to the process of integrating environmental, social, and ethical considerations into the procurement and supply chain management practices of an organization. It involves making purchasing decisions that not only meet the organization's needs but also promote sustainability, minimize negative environmental impacts, and support social responsibility

Sustainable procurement focuses on reducing the environmental footprint of procurement activities. This includes sourcing products and services that are environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, and have a lower carbon footprint. It involves considering factors such as the use of recycled materials, renewable energy sources, reduced packaging waste, and minimizing emissions throughout the product lifecycle. Sustainable procurement also takes into account social and ethical aspects. It involves

ensuring fair labour practices, supporting human rights, and promoting diversity and inclusion throughout the supply chain. Organizations may prioritize suppliers that adhere to labour standards, pay fair wages, provide safe working conditions, and respect human rights.

Organizations can actively engage and collaborate with suppliers to promote sustainability. This involves communicating sustainability requirements, expectations, and standards to suppliers and working together to improve environmental and social performance. Collaboration can include sharing best practices, conducting supplier assessments, and encouraging suppliers to adopt sustainable practices. Sustainable procurement involves evaluating and selecting suppliers based on their sustainability performance. Organizations can develop criteria and indicators to assess suppliers' environmental, social, and ethical practices. Supplier evaluations may consider factors such as certifications (e.g., ISO 14001 for environmental management), sustainability reports, and compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

Sustainable procurement extends beyond individual suppliers and encompasses the entire supply chain. Organizations can engage suppliers in responsible supply chain management practices, such as ethical sourcing, traceability, and transparency. This involves mapping the supply chain, identifying potential risks, and working collaboratively to mitigate those risks and ensure responsible practices throughout the supply chain.

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe. This chapter presents a summary of the findings as discussed in the previous chapter, concludes the study and advances the recommendations based on the findings.

5.1 Summary of the Project

Chapter One

The study aimed to look into the impact of adopting environmentally friendly purchasing on improving the reputation of rural local councils in Zimbabwe. The research sought to

evaluate the difficulties encountered and what could be done to address these challenges. The section pointed out the causes of unsustainable procurement. The part introduced the context of the investigation, the problem formulation, goals of the analysis along with the primary subject of exploration. The other elements presented are research and sub-research inquiries, importance, boundaries and limitations of the analysis, and ultimately the meaning of terms.

Chapter Two

This part defined the variables being investigated and examined the conceptual frameworks on which the analysis was grounded. The research also evaluated empirical literature to identify comparable investigations performed by other scholars from diverse nations. Most of the preceding examinations were directed in distinct economic environments from that in Zimbabwe and consequently this exploration looks to fill the gap. Numerous rural local councils' shortcomings transpired after the decline of sustainable procurement which influences reputation and responsibilities of local management.

Chapter Three

This part shone a light on the scholastic strategy implemented to explore the ramifications of leveraging sustainable purchase on improving reputation. The aimed population was also outlined in this chapter and how the sample will be derived from the targeted people. Distinct origins of information are also highlighted in this part. The section moreover specifies research tools to be used and how they will be built. The actions taken to make certain dependability and legitimacy of information was also spotlighted in this chapter.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents and analyses data gathered from both primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire response rate of 100%. Demographic data of the respondents was also discussed. The chapter also presented the objective based findings. The findings will be summarized, concluded and recommendations outlined.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Sustainable procurement practices play a crucial role in shaping the reputation of local authorities. By incorporating environmental, social, and ethical considerations into their procurement activities, local authorities demonstrate their commitment to sustainability, responsible governance, and community well-being. This comprehensive approach to procurement positively influences their reputation in several ways.

Firstly, sustainable procurement showcases environmental leadership. By prioritizing eco-friendly products and services, reducing carbon emissions, and promoting resource efficiency, local authorities establish themselves as environmental stewards. These positions those as forward-thinking organizations dedicated to mitigating climate change and protecting the environment.

Secondly, sustainable procurement reflects social responsibility. By considering fair labour practices, human rights, and diversity in their procurement decisions, local authorities demonstrate their ethical conduct. This commitment to social factors enhances their reputation as organizations that prioritize the welfare and rights of workers, support local communities, and contribute to social development.

Thirdly, sustainable procurement emphasizes transparency and accountability. Local authorities that implement robust supplier evaluation processes, engage in transparent reporting, and openly communicate their sustainability goals and progress build trust with stakeholders. This transparency enhances their reputation as organizations that operate with integrity and are accountable for their procurement practices.

Moreover, sustainable procurement has a positive impact on local communities. By prioritizing local suppliers, local authorities support local economies, job creation, and community development. This fosters a positive reputation as organizations that actively contribute to the socio-economic growth and well-being of their communities.

Furthermore, sustainable procurement attracts investment and collaboration

opportunities. Investors, businesses, and organizations that prioritize sustainability seek partnerships with local authorities that share their values. A positive reputation for sustainable procurement can lead to joint initiatives, funding partnerships, and collaborations, further enhancing the local authority's reputation as a responsible and forward-thinking organization.

In summary, sustainable procurement practices significantly influence the reputation of local authorities, positioning them as environmental leaders, demonstrating social responsibility, fostering transparency and accountability, positively impacting communities, and attracting investment and collaboration. These reputational benefits strengthen the relationship between local authorities and stakeholders, building trust, support, and recognition for their efforts in driving sustainability and responsible governance. Ultimately, sustainable procurement contributes to the sustainable development of local communities and reinforces the position of local authorities as key drivers of positive change.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementing sustainable procurement practices can have a positive impact on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe the following recommendations can be put in place:

a) Develop a Sustainable Procurement Policy

Establish a comprehensive policy that outlines the commitment of rural district councils to sustainable procurement practices. The policy should clearly define the environmental, social, and ethical considerations to be integrated into procurement processes. It can serve as a guiding framework for procurement decisions and demonstrate the council's dedication to sustainability.

b) Conduct Supplier Assessments

Implement a supplier assessment process to evaluate suppliers based on their sustainability performance. Assessments should consider factors such as

environmental certifications, labour practices, adherence to ethical standards, and compliance with relevant regulations. Prioritize suppliers who align with sustainable practices and have a positive social and environmental track record.

c) Empower Procurement Staff

Provide training and capacity building for procurement staff to understand sustainable procurement principles and best practices. Equip them with the knowledge and skills to evaluate suppliers, incorporate sustainability criteria into tender evaluations, and engage in sustainable supplier relationship management. This will ensure that sustainable procurement practices are effectively implemented throughout the council's procurement processes.

d) Promote Local Sourcing

Encourage the procurement of goods and services from local suppliers within the rural district. Prioritizing local sourcing supports the local economy, reduces transportation emissions, and fosters community development. Communicate the council's commitment to supporting local businesses and community growth through sustainable procurement practices.

e) Foster Collaboration with Stakeholders

Engage with local communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to gather input and build partnerships around sustainable procurement. Seek feedback and involve stakeholders in the decision-making process to ensure transparency and inclusivity. Collaborative efforts will enhance the reputation of the council as an organization that values stakeholder engagement and actively seeks sustainable solutions.

f) Communicate and Report on Sustainable Procurement

Develop a communication strategy to effectively communicate the council's sustainable procurement initiatives and achievements. Regularly share updates, success stories, and case studies that highlight the positive impacts of sustainable procurement practices on the environment and the local community. Transparent reporting on

sustainability performance demonstrates accountability and builds trust with stakeholders.

g) Seek Certification or Recognition

Consider pursuing certification or recognition from reputable sustainability organizations or initiatives. Certifications such as ISO 20400 (Sustainable Procurement) or participation in sustainability reporting frameworks can provide external validation of the council's commitment to sustainable procurement. These certifications and recognitions can enhance the council's reputation and differentiate it as a leader in sustainable practices.

h) Continuously Improve and Innovate

Foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation in sustainable procurement practices. Regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable procurement initiatives, seeking opportunities for improvement and innovation. Stay informed about emerging sustainable procurement trends and technologies to ensure the council remains at the forefront of sustainable practices.

By implementing these recommendations, rural district councils in Zimbabwe can leverage sustainable procurement to enhance their reputation. Sustainable procurement practices not only contribute to environmental conservation and social responsibility but also position the council as a trusted and responsible organization committed to the well-being of the community and the sustainable development of the rural district.

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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION



Questionnaire

Dear Respondent

My name is Vimbiso Faith Mudehwe a student at Bindura University of Science Education doing research entitled "The Influence of Implementing Sustainable Procurement on Enhancing the Reputation of Rural District Councils in Zimbabwe. The information from this study would be used for academic purposes only. The researcher assures all participants of security to all confidential information and anonymity of identity if required. May you please respond to the Questions below? Thank you in advanced for your co-operation. Your assistance by filling this questionnaire in this research is greatly appreciated.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Kindly attempt all marked questions.

Section A: Socio- Demographic Profile of respondent

1. What is your Gender

Male	Female

2. How old are you?

26-30 Years	
31-40 Years	
41- 50 Years	
Above 50 Years	

3. What is your highest level of education?

Diploma		Degree		Masters		PHD		Other	
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4. Tenure within the company

(a) Less than 5 years

(b) 5-10 years

(c) 11-16 years

(d) 17+ years

Section B: Study Variables

Instruction: From your opinion put one tick on the scale provided

Key: SD – Strongly disagree; D- Disagree; N – Neutral; A- Agree; SA-Strongly Agree

5. What is the effect of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?

a) Effects of economically sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Regulatory compliance					
Positive brand image					
Enhanced stakeholder perception					
Competitive advantage					
Risk mitigation					
Collaboration opportunities					

6. How do social sustainable procurement practices impact the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?

b) Do social sustainable procurement practices impact the reputation of RDCs

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Stakeholder trust and loyalty					

Employee satisfaction and retention					
Community engagement and development					
Supplier relationships and partnerships					
Compliance with regulations and standards					

7) What are the main challenges encountered by rural district councils in Zimbabwe when implementing sustainable procurement practices?

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Limited resources					
Lack of awareness and understanding					
Limited supplier options					
Infrastructure and logistical challenge					
Resistance to change					
Limited monitoring and evaluation capacity					

8) What is the influence of environmentally sustainable procurement practices on the reputation of RDCs in Zimbabwe?


Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA
Environmental stewardship					
Positive perception by stakeholders					
Compliance with regulations					
Enhanced partnerships and collaborations					
Positive impact on local economy and livelihoods					

Thank You For your co-operation

21:44

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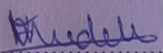
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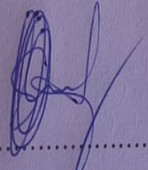
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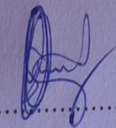
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Approval Form

The undersigned attests to having read and approved for submission to Bindura University of MUDEHWE VIMBISO's project titled " The influence of implementing sustainable procurement on enhancing the reputation of rural district councils in Zimbabwe" as part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Purchasing and Supply.

Student..........Date.....07/06/2024.....

Supervisor..........Date.....30/9/24.....

Head of Department..........Date.....30-9-24.....