BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULY OF COMMERCE

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS ON PURCHASING PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF McDONALD TIMBER INDUSTRIES (PVT) LTD.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONOURS) DEGREE IN PURCHASING AND SUPPLY OF BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION. FACULTY OF COMMERCE

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS ON PURCHASING PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF McDONALD TIMBER INDUSTRIES.

Submitted by CHOMBA DIANA

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONOURS) DEGREE IN PURCHASING AND SUPPLY.

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DEDICATION

It is with genuine gratitude and warm regard that l dedicate this project to my beloved family. A special thanks to my sister Evidence Chomba, who has been my pillar of strength and source of inspiration throughout the course of my education. I thank you for your unwavering support.

ABSTRACT

McDonald Timber Industries manages the procurement function manually as well as through the recently implemented e-procurement system. Manual procurement is impeding the organisation's buying efficiency and purchasing performance, prompting the researcher to conduct research on the effectiveness of e-procurement systems on purchasing performance at McDonald Timber Industries. To collect relevant data, the researcher used questionnaires. Graphs, tables and pie charts were used to present information.

According to the researcher, buying efficiently plays a critical role in e-procurement systems and thus has an impact on purchasing performance. Resistance to change and e-procurement service providers' immaturity were identified as factors influencing the effectiveness of e-procurement systems on purchasing performance at McDonald Timber Industries. According to the findings of this study, McDonald Timber Industries should implement an electronic procurement system in order to increase productivity and bridge the gap between the industry and its suppliers. Employee training to use the system effectively was also recommended.

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The last few weeks of processing my dissertation have been difficult, with numerous challenges and obstacles. To compete this work, l received tremendous support from a large number of people, to whom l am grateful.

First and foremost, l am grateful to the Almighty God, whose love, peace and mercy enabled me to finish my studies. I would also like to thank my beloved family for their unwavering support throughout this course of study, who have given all of their time, encouragement and financial support in the pursuit of this degree. They helped me get back on my feet when I was down and motivated me when l had lost faith in myself. `Above all, they assured me that there is nothing to be a stumbling block in life because everything works out, no matter how difficult it appears. Last but not least, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my supervisor, Mr Magura, for his guidance throughout the competition of this dissertation. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my academic colleagues at the university who supported me throughout my studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Procurement is most usually defined as the acquisition of products and services for a company's day-to-day operations. In general, indirect purchases are not automated in today's businesses. E-procurement is much more than an online shopping system. It's all about automating and bringing this process online with the primary purpose of saving money. In order to upsurge organisational competitiveness, e-systems must be incorporated and connected with business processes due to the dynamic business environment in which organisations operate.

E systems are valued as a strategic approach to innovation and transformation in the dynamic corporate environment, using information and communication technology resources such as e-procurement platforms and others. Consumers, governments and households around the world have significantly relied on e-commerce networks to acquire everything from vital items to holiday gifts since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic accelerated the use of e-commerce systems, thanks to the widespread stay-at- home orders and concerns about the virus.

It is now possible to interconnect electronic data within and between firms using global standards, thanks to the internet and related technology (Cagliano et al., 200 3). With this as a backdrop, the internet's impact on business has been rapid. The internet has transformed into a means of mass communication, a global sales channel, a collaborative platform, and a vital component of business strategy in just a few years (Allen and Morton, 2004).

1.1 Background of the Study

Due to inefficiencies and obsolescence of the current system, the purchasing function has failed to accomplish its goal. Inventory levels have been out of balance and have been running out frequently, resulting in losses. As a result, more sectors are turning to e-procurement solutions to cut costs and increase profits. Organisations have begun to use e-

procurement systems to acquire inventories and capital goods that are required for the daily processes of the business.

Electronic procurement (e-procurement) was defined by Pressutti (2003) as a technology solution that facilitates corporate buying via the internet. E-purchasing according to Carabello (2001), is a technology designed to facilitate the acquisition of goods by commercial or government organisations via the internet. In other words, an e-procurement system enables individual employees to order goods directly from their computers via the internet in real-time. Requests and orders are routed through various hubs or databases. Individual employees can also search for items, check availability, place and track orders, and initiate payment for delivery.

A multitude of industries in Zimbabwe have yet to completely embrace the services of e-procurement systems due to a range of barriers. Constant electricity outages, a scarcity of computer-savvy staff, particularly in acquiring stock, necessitate the acquisition of credit lines in order to acquire effective e-procurement systems. Lack of funds, strong trade prohibitions, and a high initial purchase price for e-procurement resources without considering the total cost of ownership in the long term are all factors to consider.……scholar….

In today's world, electronic procurement has become an integral part of many organisations' daily operations. E-procurement is an online system that attaches businesses with suppliers directly in order to buy items and services at the lowest feasible price. According to Baily (2008), electronic procurement effectively replaces the offline equivalent known as tender. Many Zimbabwean industries are participating in technological initiatives that encourage information exchange and mutual sharing in the country. McDonald Timber Industries, on the other hand, continues to use time-consuming and costly traditional e-procurement technologies for stock acquisition.

In the manufacturing industry, procurement is a critical procedure. Procurement utilities are required since enterprises often purchase a big quantity of materials to maintain daily operations. The use of efficient and cost-effective information technology in procurement systems is currently a significant goal of supply chain management in many industries. McDonald Timber Industries' flow of products, services, and communication should be arranged so that the business can run smoothly. Getting rid of paper-based traditional or

manual procurement processes and toward online procurement saves money, boosts productivity, and improves operational capabilities (Thompson et al., 2006).

1.2 Scope

The study was conducted in Harare at McDonald Timber Industries with data collected for the period covering 2015-2020.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The usage of e-procurement in supply chain management is on the rise all over the world, resulting in increased organisational efficiency and delivery. Procurement, on the other hand, is related with a number of inefficiencies at McDonald Timber Industries. Extensive procurement procedures and long hierarchies of authorizing purchase orders, maverick buying patterns, and backlogs of transaction records are all examples of inefficiencies.

McDonald Timber Industries has experienced theft as a result of its manual procurement technique. This was demonstrated by the suspension of O. Makoto, the interim General Manager, in April 2021, for purchasing timber from a fictitious firm called "Kawarika Timbers." The acting General Manager also accepted a truss order for the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority's Chipinge office development at an inflated price of ZWL $2 920 442.00 from the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. Quotes for the delivery of doors for Reegul Investments, an Econet Wireless-sponsored enterprise, were similarly exaggerated by ZWL $2 520 450.00. McDonald Timber Industries Journal (McDonald Timber Industries Journal, 2022). As a result, the study was inspired toward assessing the effectiveness of electronic procurement systems on purchasing performance.

1.4 Aim

The study's purpose is to see how effective e-procurement solutions are improving purchasing performance at McDonald Timber Industries.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The goals of the study are to:

- Examine McDonald Timber Industries present procurement processes.
- Determine McDonald Timber Industries' influence on e-procurement.
- Identify the elements that influence the use of e-procurement systems in purchasing departments.
- Understand challenges that organisations face when implementing e-procurement systems in an organisation.
- Make suggestions for how McDonald Timber Industries could strengthen its e-procurement systems.

1.6 Research Questions

- What are McDonald Timber Industries' present procurement processes?
- What are the consequences of using e- procurement in an organisation?
- What factors influence e-procurement systems and procurement performances?
- What are the obstacles to e-procurement implementation that an organisation faces?
- What are the recommendations for improving McDonald Timber Industries e-procurement systems?

1.7 Significance of the study

1.7.1 To Zimbabwean Industries

The study will aid Zimbabwean businesses in identifying the drawbacks of manual procurement procedures. It will also enable Zimbabwean enterprises to improve their purchasing departments' e-procurement processes. This study will produce a body of information that will enable Zimbabwean businesses to cut expenses associated with the purchase of goods and services.

1.7.2 To Bindura University

By serving as a literature review for several relevant topics, the work cleared the path for future research by other students at Bindura University.

1.7.3 The Researcher

The study will assist the researcher in developing and designing useful research skills in e-procurement systems for Zimbabwean industries. Furthermore, the investigation will assist the researcher in expanding her expertise by exposing her to procurement issues that Zimbabwean firms face. Finally, the researcher will understand the advantages of using electronic procurement systems.

1.7.4 Assumptions

According to the report, e-procurement solutions in Zimbabwean industries lower operational costs and improve procurement efficiency. Documentation in the purchase of products and services by industries results in more information being lost, making the maintenance of transactions conducted in the purchasing division cumbersome, and making both internal and external audits extremely difficult to conduct.

1.7.5 Delimitations

E-procurement systems necessitate e-sourcing, e-requests, e-negotiations, e-payment, e-receiving, and e-communication with internal and external stakeholders. The data for the study will come from Zimbabwe's industrial industry. Personnel will be picked for the sample using a convenience sampling approach designed specifically for the study.

1.7.6 Limitations

A part of the material required was categorized as sensitive, hence access to it was restricted. The researcher contacted management and emphasized the study’s role in resolving the organizational process. Furthermore, the research process is influenced by financial resources, time, and other resources such as the internet. To circumvent this, the researcher created surveys that respondents could complete on their own leisure, away from their daily responsibilities.

1.7.7 Definition of terms

The researcher highlighted the need of defining several key phrases that will be used often during the investigation.

1.7.8 Efficiency

According to CIPS (2005), efficiency entails "doing things right" and evaluating the company's utilization of resources within a process. Because the entire process is computerized, the electronic procurement process improves efficiency by minimizing paperwork and expediting the purchase process. Generally, it is a system to correctly accomplish tasks so that the organization functions well.

1.7.9 Effectiveness

Van Weele (2010) defines purchase effectiveness as the degree to which a previously stated aim or criteria is reached by choosing a particular course of action. According to Gardenall (2013), it is critical to acquire favourable costs while maintaining a high degree of quality. Electronic procurement platforms can be used to tap into large marketplaces and negotiate product price concessions.

1.7.10 Electronic Procurement

Internet-based (integrated) information and communication technologies (ICTs) are used to complete any or all steps of the procurement process, including search, sourcing, arbitration, ordering, receipt, and post-purchase evaluation (Croom and Brandon Jones, 2004).

1.7.11 E-Purchasing

Is the electronic acquirement of goods and services, which encompasses all procedures from determining the need for purchases through paying for them, as well as post-contract activities such as contract administration, supplier management, and development (CIPS, 2012).

1.7.12 Traditional Procurement/Buying

It is a method of writing orders, inquiries and requisitions on paper documents.

1.7.13 E-Sourcing- Embraces the potential of electronic communication during the upstream processes of identifying and securing goods and services, as well as the relationships necessary to get the delivery of end-user requirements across diverse purchasing methods (Alder, 2012).

1.8 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to highlight a study that looked at the influence of e-procurement systems on purchasing performance in Zimbabwean industries, as well as to detail the present issues that the country's businesses are facing. It also includes a statement of the problem relating to the current old-fashioned purchasing methods, objectives, research questions, research problems, the significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, and term definitions, as well as a description of the study's background, including what prompted the researcher to conduct the investigation in this exact area.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The impact of e-procurement systems on the purchasing performance of Zimbabwean manufacturing industries is assessed, evaluated, investigated, and critically examined in this chapter. The purpose of the literature review is to learn more about electronic procurement systems from other authors. With the passage of information communication technology corporate governance law, the influence of information communication technology systems, which include e-procurement, has recently attracted tremendous interest in Zimbabwe as a whole.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

According to the study, there is a link regarding e-procurement systems and procurement performance, as illustrated in Figure 1. E-procurement systems were the independent variable, and buying efficiency and purchasing performance were the dependent factors.

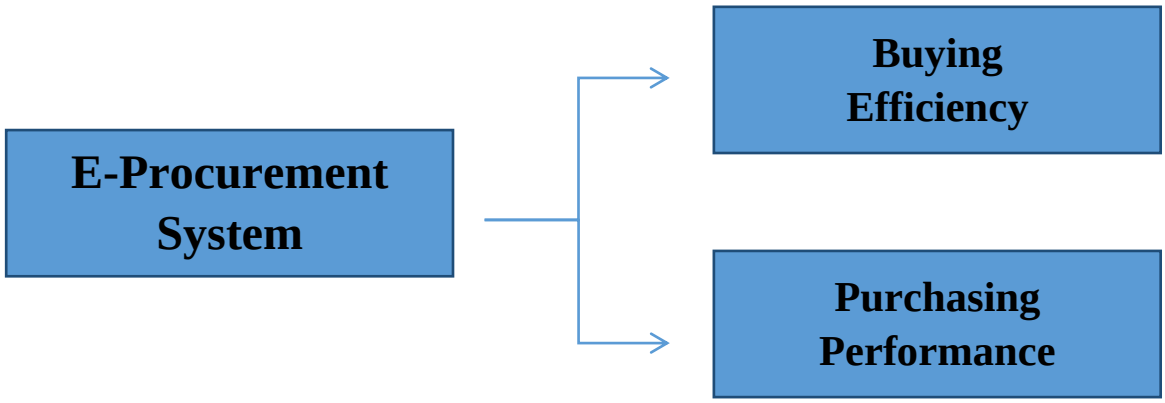

Figure 1.7.12:1 - Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Theoretical literature

2.2.2 Technology Led Theories

One of the greatest influential technology led models, the technological imperative model (Smith, 2005), investigates the influence of technology on organisational dimensions such as structure, size, performance, and degree of centralization, as well as occupational satisfaction, and task complexity, aptitude levels, and productivity. Technology, like physical science rules, has an autonomous, unidirectional, and causal impact on persons and organisations. Some technology driven theories claim that technology entirely determines society and that new technologies affect society at all levels, including institutions, social interaction, and individuals. The technological determinist perspective is a technology-driven social transformation theory. Technology is regarded as history's "prime mover." This is referred to as a "technology-push" hypothesis rather than a "demand-pull" theory in economics.

2.2.3 Electronic Commerce Theory (EC)

Modern business practices like electronic commerce satisfy the need to reduce costs while enhancing the quality of products and services and accelerating the provision of services to customers, merchants, and companies. (Kalakota and Whinstone, 1996). Electronic commerce is becoming a more widespread type of trade around the world. Before purchasing a product, the majority of purchasers search the internet for product information, descriptions, and quality attributes. To give clients with greater convenience, an increasing number of enterprises and established stores are opening online storefronts where customers may shop at their leisure, even when normal stores are closed.

E-commerce, according to Mansell (2003), boosts global competitiveness. For the whole value chain of commercial operations that organizations engage in when they trade, business-to-business (B2B) electronic commerce is regarded to present challenges. The efficiency of internal corporate operations will increase, and inter-firm linkages will be streamlined, thanks to internet-enabled B2B electronic commerce. Businesses of all sizes are anticipated to benefit from decreased information asymmetries and improved commercial ties as a result of employing a variety of electronic commerce technology.

2.2.4 Value of e-Procurement

The benefits of B2B e-procurement have been documented as realized or expected in the academic literature. Additional advantages of e-procurement include cheaper clerical costs and purchasing prices, process shortening, and greater information exchange and

management. The operational and strategic taxonomies are used to categorize the advantages (Croom, 2005). E-procurement offers significantly more cost-cutting and business-improvement potential than online shopping or enterprise resource planning systems (ERP), and it will radically alter how we do business in the future (Neef 2010).

E-procurement solutions beat comparable features of ERP programs in terms of attainment and implementation costs, allowing even small businesses and highly fragmented industries to profit from connecting into supply chains. Product expansion sequences which are shorter are found in shorter order cycles, considerable advances in project administration and team partnerships throughout supply networks, and integrated information sharing across supply chains are all benefits of shorter inventory growth sequences, all of which are enabled by e-procurement systems, are other recurrently mentioned benefits of e-procurement.

Quality is improved through the usage of e-equipment and systems, that enhances the company's bottom line (Mukhopadhyay, 2007). This type of influence is mostly operational, resulting in cost savings, enhanced productivity, and improved quality (Mukhopadhyay, 2007). E-procurement, according to Hawking and Stein (2004), is both a strategic participant in the value chain and a primary driver in the extended supply chain. Electronic commerce solutions can help with two components of the procurement process which are transactions and communication (Oslomebekor et al., 2002).

Firms have indicated that e-commerce technologies and IT clarifications have improved the procurement process while also lowering expenses (Croom and Johnston 2003). Because all processes will be handled electronically, there will be a decline in procurement cycle and order period (Davila et al.2003). Consequently, innovation and speedy technological transformation, lead suppliers to have an increased the number of products they offer (Baily, 2004). E-procurement, according to Angels and Nath (2007), resulting in inventory savings and lower purchase prices.

2.2.5 Procurement process

One of a company's most important processes is the procurement process. Due to activity times and supplier connections, the procurement process differs from firm to company (Trkman and McCormack, 2010). A standard procurement procedure initiates with a need specification and concludes with imbursement and settlement. E-buying systems, according

to (Presutti, 2002), have the ability to alter the purchasing procedures because they have an effect on all of the described processes.

By regionalizing the functioning procurement procedure, purchasing minimizes buyers' operational workload, boosting purchasing process effectiveness and efficiency, hence permitting buyers to concentrate on other planned activities (Puschmann and Alt, 2005). When a firm deploys e-purchasing resolutions, it should keep in mind that business variations or process enhancements can sometimes result in much more funds than a simple technology implementation (Trkman and McCormack, 2010).

In the timber manufacturing industry, the purchasing department is responsible for a varied range of undertakings such as purchasing spare parts used for factory machinery and equipment, stores, fuel allocation, and service provision. Management in manufacturing firms can better their purchasing practices in terms of cost effectiveness by using e-purchasing, from quotations to requisition and thus, asking for payment and delivery.

2.2.6 Adoption of e-purchasing

Larger businesses, according to the widely held literature, have a preference towards the use of e-purchasing because of reasons such as monetary capacity, setup, technical skill, and knowledge (Dawn and Larry, 2008). According to other research, large businesses exploit e-commerce for a variety of purposes, including optimizing inside operations and enhancing supplier relations (Oliveira and Martin, 2008). In theory, buying firms with a greater buying unit are more likely to embrace e-purchasing since it allows them to take advantage of its powerful data processing capabilities. Aside from that, large businesses frequently have the monetary resources to invest in innovative systems, create e-commerce information links (Minand and Galle, 2003), and employ more complex technologies such as websites, the internet, and extranet. Advances in such infrastructure technologies are critical in the implementation of an online scheme that comprises of the e-purchasing component, in order to carry out on-line business transactions efficiently.

Large businesses have numerous trading associates and have enormous needs. They're more likely to benefit from system economies of scale simply because of this factor. Implementation is a development that commences with the concept of creating a system and continues until the task is completed. Nevertheless, according to Chan and (Swatman, 1998), implementation is best designated as a long-term organisational change procedure.

2.2.7 Benefits of e-purchasing

In the literature, the benefits of implementing e-commerce technologies have been extensively examined (Croom and Brandon-Jones, 2005). The key drivers for firms to adopt e-purchasing solutions have been cost discounts and operational competences. Croom and Brandon-Jones (2005) discovered that price savings in items acquired are the result of three important issues which are joining of buy specifications, reduction of supplier numbers, and enhanced contract compliance. E-commerce reduces transaction costs while simultaneously improving efficiency of processes and potentially lowering administrative together with additional costs. Traditional manual ways of communication, as well as the costs connected with them, are being phased out.

E-purchasing technologies, according to (Davila et al., 2010), have a positive impact on a business's buying procedures and procurement enactment. The development of operational duties in the procurement occupation is enabled by a positive impact on procurement processes, resulting in continual improvement. As operational activities are accomplished more efficiently, procurement performance improves. E-procurement is related with lower transaction costs, higher process efficiency, increased contract compliance, shorter cycle times, and lower inventory costs (Aberdeen Group, 2005), as well as enhanced operational and cost competence (Roma and McCue, 2012).

Using e-procurement systems, businesses can save 42% in paying for purchasing expenses (Davila et al., 2010). According to another study (Croom and Johnston, 2003), e-procurement can save up to 78% on procurement costs and 16-18% on indirect purchase prices. Agreement with current contracts is a key strategy for recognising lower costs and reductions, according to (Croom and Brandon-Jones, 2005). The cost benefits come from reducing transaction expenses and cycle period, as well as restructuring and programming the audit track and approval course (Neef, 2001). While the cost reductions can be substantial, Boer et al., (2002) suggest that in order to reach the above-mentioned savings, the total volume of purchases together with the number of inside customers must be large.

Despite significant progress, organisations involved face significant challenges to successful e-purchasing implementation. According to Angeles and Nath (2007), there are two primary obstacles to e-purchasing adoption that are a non-existence of system incorporation and regulation apprehensions. The lack of structure incorporation and standardization challenges

originates from the point that e-commerce remains a moderately new industry application, and there are few available point of reference models.

Provider enablement: Initially, providers undervalued the quality of time, determination, and assets needed to enable providers to conduct business by electronic means. Leading companies, according to Bailey (2008), employ a combination of provider-enablement strategies. Despite tremendous progress in provider enablement, parties involved, including end handlers, sellers, and solution providers, are working to make the process as simple and lucrative as feasible.

2.2.8 E-purchasing dangers

This possibility is related to the safety and handling of the e-purchasing process. Fraudulent suppliers, exaggerated bids, and other concerns linked to data security and fraud prevention are examples. Embracing these resolutions can deliver significant cost savings, effectiveness, proficiency, and other benefits, as documented in prior e-purchasing literature reviews. Nevertheless, there are also hurdles and hazards that firms must take into considering when implementing e-purchasing acceptance. Making use of e-purchasing technologies can help to streamline and speed up the procurement process.

However, in order to reduce the problems and risks that organisations may face, the implementation process must be meticulously designed and implemented. While indirect purchases can make up a large amount of a firm's general expenditure, it is vital that these purchases follow company standards and processes. Businesses can start by using e-purchasing simply for indirect purchases as a stepping stone before shifting to a more comprehensive procurement system that includes direct acquisitions.

2.2.9 Obstacles to e-procurement implementation

Procurement levels in their totality

Lack of knowledge and comprehension of e-commerce, lack of expertise and training, and lack of awareness of the benefits associated with e-commerce adoption were identified as inhibitors of e-procurement adoption by Pease and Rowe (2003) in an e-procurement

research. A company's ability to absorb and use a new innovation is enhanced by the presence of competent labour and the requisite cash.

Resource availability

Another study by Molla (2005) highlighted the fact that government initiatives are important in the adoption of e-procurement and other ICT in general. They may involve encouraging the use of ICT, providing financial incentives, promoting education, and creating an effective regulatory framework for e-commerce that includes taxation and tariffs on profits from e-commerce as well as intellectual property rights. Numerous elements, such as the company's political climate, economic climate, and foreign influence from other countries, have an impact on government activities.

In a 1972 article, Nathan Rosenberg contends that worker level of skills and capacity of the capital goods sector are two significant elements of technology transmission to individual firms, because workers in cooperation with capita loads are essential for successful enactment and operation of a new invention. Adoption sometimes is slow if successful adoption of a technology necessitates the acquisition of complicated new skills that are time consuming or costly to obtain. As a result, the total levels of skills available to the company, as well as how those skills are obtained, are key determinants of adoption.

In a second study, Clarke (1999) identified weak infrastructure and technological slackness as impediments to B2B procurement implementation.

Attitudes and discernment

Workers' attitudes and resistance to change, according to Premkumar et al. (1995), are crucial factors in diminishing perceived advantages and hence discouraging technology implementation. E-procurement know-how remains unacceptable for some due to the lack of generally acknowledged standards for their adoption and practice. Others are hesitant to invest in a technology that could be restrictive. Such risk perceptions can operate as a deterrent to technology adoption. In particular, the innovation's mismatch with current value arrangements or work practices may generate unfavourable sentiments and intensify user resistance.

2.2.10 Other influences on e-procurement adoption

Perceived dangers

The major barrier to e-procurement adoption, according to Hoffman et al. (1995), is internet connectivity, which encompasses concerns such as inadequate bandwidth, security and privacy, and technological issues. Furthermore, Whysall (2000) added to our understanding that one of the major concerns concerning e-procurement is the exploitation of certain e-procurement technologies, such as cookies, which could jeopardize individual confidentiality and confidentiality.

Costs of switching are high

Sulaiman (2000) found that high expenses of setting up e-procurement are one of the causes for limited adoption of e-procurement applications among Malaysian enterprises. Problems keeping up with evolving technology, a shortage of qualified staff, uncertainty regarding its operations and regulatory elements, together with high changing charges were all mentioned as barriers to e-procurement adoption by Malaysian businesses.

Helper (1995) went on to say that adopting innovative technology is frequently quite expensive for a variety of reasons. The procurement of new machines and the training of personnel to drive or control the new technology are some of the reasons. If there are network impacts, complementary machines must be replaced and updated, and there will be a cost from missed output if the operation is disconnected for installation. As a result, even if the technology has the potential to improve productivity or product quality, it may not be viable for them to adopt.

2.2.11 E-procurement recommendations

Most sectors are transitioning from old school to electronic procurement as a result of rapid technological advancements. The emergence of e-procurement, which satisfies the needs of many users through online requisition, ordering, authorizing, payment and receipting has resulted from a need for ease. Organizations are getting more sophisticated as technology continues to increase rapidly, according to Puschmann et al. (2005). In addition, they desire the convenience that exists with these rising technological abilities. Because it is the most convenient way to conduct procurement services, e-procurement is now more of a norm than an exception in many countries. They range from a strictly defined technology intensive perspective to a considerably broader business-focused one, and they differ in scope and depth. E-procurement research studies typically prioritize technology and application,

concentrating on the adoption and implementation of specific technical solutions such as integrated catalogues, reverse auctions, and market systems.

While such research might provide useful information about technology adoption, it usually focuses on a small number of procurement activities. Requisitioning, including product selection, authorisation, order assignment, and operational components of e-procurement, is their core focus. The focus is on using technology to replace or improve transactional operations in order to increase operational efficiency (Essig and Arnold 2001, Osmondbekover e t al.2002).

The ability to make procurement of products and services more transparent and efficient is becoming more accessible thanks to ongoing developments in internet connectivity (Carayannis and Popeau, 2005). E-procurement, according to Knudsen (2003), is a set of tools rather than a single application. When it comes to improving market efficiencies, Knudsen lists six categories of e-procurement: e-sourcing, e-tendering, e-informing, e-reverse, e-auctions, e-MRO, and web-based enterprise resource planning. Communication and transactional parts of the procurement process can both be improved with e-commerce platforms (Oslomebekor 2002).

E-procurement is divided into three phases by Berger and Gattorna (2001): e-sourcing (contracting via e-auctions), e-requisitioning, and e-intelligence (collection of performance management information). When a competitor adopts the technology, many businesses sacrifice their brand due to the requirement for network compliance. The extent to which other organisations in the network adapt and recognize their success are examples of network

effects (Soares, Aguiar and Palma Dos-Reis, 2008). Industry norms or rules that facilitate information sharing and application may also be included.

Meanwhile, while such researches can deliver valuable understandings about technology acceptance, they usually focus on a narrow range of procurement operations. Their primary focus is on requisitioning, which includes product selection, authorization, order assignment, and other operational and clerical components of e-procurement. The focus is on using technology to replace or improve transactional tasks in order to improve operational efficiency (Essig and Arnold 2001, Osmondbekover e t al.2002).

Continuous advancements in internet connectivity present an opportunity to make goods and service procurement more transparent and effective (Carayannis and Popeau, 2005). Knudsen (2003) reminds scholars that e-procurement is a collection of technologies rather than a single application. Six types of e-procurement have been identified by Knudsen when organisations aim to improve market efficiencies: e-sourcing, e-tendering, e-informing, e-reverse, e-auctions, e-maintenance, repair and operations, and web-based enterprise resource planning. E-commerce platforms allow you to improve two areas of the procurement process: communication and transactional factors (Oslomebekor 2002).

Berger and Gattorna (2001) divides e-procurement into three separate processes: e-intelligence, which is concerned with the collection of performance management data; e-sourcing, that involves contracting via e-auctions; and e-requisitioning. When they see a competitor using the technology, many businesses jump on the brand wagon due to the requirement for network uniformity. The degree of adoption by other organizations in the network and perceptions of their success are two examples of network effects. (Soares, Aguiar and Palma Dos-Reis, 2008).These may also include industry standards or policies that promote sharing and application of information.

2.3 Empirical Evidence

Murungu (2019) investigated the effects of e-procurement. The study's purpose was to see how e-procurement affected supply chain management (2018 - 2019). The research was channelled by three goals: To determine the benefits of e-procurement in organisational purchasing supplies, to identify the critical success factors influencing e-procurement success

and to identify the challenges faced by e-procurement. The descriptive part of the research design was employed to discover the effects of e-procurement in supply chain management. Kreije and Morgan formulas were used to calculate the sample size of 65 (1970). Primary and secondary sources of data were used. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data, while papers, internet and journals were used to collect secondary data. Based on the data, pie charts, graphs and frequency tables were made used. According to the results, e-procurement is important in organisational purchase supply because it helps improve the organisational purchase function by lowering costs, shortening the response time to customer demand, and reducing inventory investment. However, organisations that use e-procurement in Zimbabwe face a number of challenges, including difficulties in implementing e-procurement in developing countries like Zimbabwe. There are several success factors in e-procurement implementation in Zimbabwe, including stakeholder buy-in, commitment of senior management to e-systems and adherence to procedures and guidelines. The majority of respondents agreed with the study's conclusion that e-procurement is vital in supply chain management, as did the researcher.

Alan Smart conducted a research on the role of e-procurement in procurement management in June 2010. The exploratory approach was used by the researcher. In this type of research, the researcher's role was to investigate organisational phenomena, find relationships, and provide clarifications. Observing the tender process during the data collection phase revealed that it could be shortened by using online or electronic documentation. Through participant observation and interviews, the study investigated the issue of price and price-related factors. An intriguing finding was that both buyers and suppliers were still investigating the mechanism's price impact. The majority of respondents prepared systematically and contributed in a consistent and planned manner, according to the results of the supplier interview answer counting. These same suppliers proved their potential to obtain business at the events by offering competitive prices.

MarcRennis (2002) also looked at the impact of persuasion strategies on e-procurement implementation awareness. In order to better understand the impact of external circumstances, he conducted four case studies in his research. They're being used to learn more about the relationship between external circumstances and e-procurement implementation awareness. Each case study was placed in an organisation where e-procurement had just been adopted and interventions were put in place to improve system adoption by a large number of people. Interviews were conducted with people who had

participated in an intervention program. The case study reveals a clear benefit disparity between business goals and end-user perceptions. E-procurement, according to the study's conclusions, increases the performance of the organisation.

To investigate the effects of procurement on internal and external customer service, Aslo, Mibenge, and Okeye (2007) conducted an e-procurement internal customer service and external customer service study. The researcher produced and delivered a questionnaire to the two companies. E-procurement has dramatically impacted the way organisations do business, according to both the questionnaire and the interview answers. Although e-procurement has brought many benefits, there are still certain challenges to solve. It leads to lower procurement costs, better supplier relationships, less paperwork, and easier inventory management. E-procurement models are proving to be useful as a data structure for electronic messages. According to the data, worldwide e-procurement model transactions reach over $19 billion each year and are still expanding for purchasers that manage several transactions. E-procurement can save millions of dollars every year because of prompt payment discount.

In 2011, Damavandi (2011) performed research in Tehran on the introduction of e-procurement and its effects on ship management firms. The study's purpose was to see how e-procurement influences ship management businesses' performance. The study employed the qualitative research approach, with data acquired via questionnaires and interviews. Interviews by all departments involved in procurement activity were performed. According to the conclusions of the study, employing electronic procurement systems in the Islamic Republic Shipping Company (IRISL) decreases expenses in procurement procedures both directly and indirectly. According to the study's conclusions, the Islamic Republic Shipping Company's overall performance has improved since the deployment of computerized procurement. E-procurement has been proven to improve performance and can be utilized as a beneficial tool in shipping enterprises, especially during economic downturns. In the case of efficiency enhancement, more research is needed to uncover the obstacles to system success or failure.

Al-bayati (2011) investigated the effect of electronic commerce in supply chain and e-marketplace practise. By investigating the influence of ecommerce earnings on supply chain management in organisations that use e-commerce in Amman city, the primary purpose of this research is to clarify the effect of e-commerce on supply chain and e-marketplace practise in companies that use B2B e-commerce in Amman city. Descriptive researches

gather data to test theories and answer questions regarding the study's topic's status. All companies in Amman that exploit e-commerce, as demarcated by the Amman Chamber of Commerce, were included in the survey; 47 companies answered. Administrative and procurement managers and other staff linked with the purchasing function and e-business, made up the sample unit. Only 82 of the 130 questionnaires sent to companies were usable, meaning that only around 63 percent were examined. This study included both primary and secondary data, with data for the model acquired through journals and books as secondary foundations and a questionnaire.

In Amman enterprises that use ecommerce, the relevance of e-commerce benefits, e-marketplace utilisation, and supply chain management was extremely close. Respondents believe that none of the variables are more important than the others. In Amman, the use of e-marketplaces in enterprises that use e-commerce 24 has a large indirect effect on supply chain management. Using e-marketplaces and implementing e-commerce benefits will increase supply chain management performance.

The researcher gives various recommendations as a result of the findings, such as adopting e-commerce in Jordanian firms don't currently use it. Its total performance improves as a result of this. Improve the use of e-commerce in organisations that already do so and figure out how to get the most out of it. Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of supply chains. The company's total performance will be improved by employing supply chain management e-market usage and e-commerce. More variables should be included to future studies, according to the researcher, in order to explore their influence on the present variables.

2.4 Gap Analysis

The present study looked at effectiveness of e-procurement in a manufacturing organisation and the benefits it provides to the procurement function. Previous research had not looked into the efficiency of e-procurement systems at McDonald Timber Industries.

2.5 Summary

The collected works provided a thorough examination of the notions associated with e-procurement research. The groundwork for figuring out how the use of technology affects

organisational enactment and how to exploit it to enable a company to outperform its competitors has been laid. Literature review should be used in aggregation with Chapter 4 to illuminate and generate concepts that try to provide solutions to the research questions and thus resolve the research difficulty cited in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

This chapter focuses primarily on the methodology used to achieve the research's objectives. There was also a breakdown of how the questionnaires and interviews were conducted. The study also demonstrates how the various data collection approaches were applied in such a way that they can counterpart the weaknesses of another. The benefits of employing each method were emphasized. Secondary sources of data were used in adding to methods above because of the research question's nature.

3.1 Research design

To measure facts, perceptions, opinions and attitudes of respondents on the impact of e-purchasing on a company, the researcher used descriptive design. Research design is defined by Kombo and Tromp (2006) as the construction of research. It demonstrates how all of the major components of the research task work collaboratively to provide answers to fundamental research problems. The researcher employed a case study as the research design and questionnaires and interviews as the data collection methods. A thorough grasp of the case study's e-procurement issues was made possible by the research design.

3.1.1 Descriptive research design

According to Shuttle (2008), descriptive research design is a scientific approach that entails observing and describing a subject's behavior minus influencing it at all. The descriptive research method was utilised in this study, and it is defined by Cohen and Manion (1989-90) as being concerned with existing circumstances or relations, prevalent practices, beliefs, points of view, held attitudes, and felt effects. The researcher used a descriptive survey design, which presents the variables under study in a clear manner. The findings on data presentation were presented using a combination of tables, pie charts, and bar graphs. The meanings of qualitative facts collected through personal consultations and questionnaires, as well as secondary facts, were inferred. The method's main benefit is that participants are observed in an entirely usual and unaffected setting.

3.1.2 Explanation of the use of case study

According to Wegner (2001), the population is the sum of all conceivable observations of the random variables under investigation. The population was chosen for its ability to provide information on e-procurement, and the researcher gathered data from McDonald Timber Industries' procurement workforce as well as all of the company's stakeholders. The sample size is 20, and the total population is 48. It is made up of management and employees from various departments.

3.1.3 Research sample

Purposive sampling was used by the researcher, which allowed her to determine the structure of a sample based on a variety of factors. As a result, the researcher was able to think about those stakeholders at McDonald Timber Industries who have integrated e-procurement into their systems. Because the researcher is targeting McDonald Timber Industries employees, the researcher used censes on the entire employee population to ensure that they were included in the sample.

Purposive sampling

Sampling with a purpose According to Tripathi (2004), during purposive sampling, a model is chosen that is presumed to be representative of the universe in terms of the characteristics to be studied. The procurement staff was purposefully chosen by the researcher because they are the ones that are most affected by the use of e-procurement. The same sampling method was used to choose suppliers because some were unable to implement e-procurement in their purchasing functions, so the researcher chose suppliers centred on their ability to implement e-procurement in their system.

3.1.4 Research instruments

In order to collect primary data for the study, two instruments were used: questionnaires and detailed interviews. The respondents were given a fortnight to complete the questionnaires, allowing them to clarify on any questions that may have risen.

3.1.5 Pilot test

To determine the questionnaire's reliability, the researcher used SPSS to conduct a reliability test, which yielded a positive result of 0.836, as well as a pre-test involving a test-retest on the sample. Each department was given two questionnaires to complete.

Questionnaire

In order to collect as ample information as possible from McDonald Timber Industry's various functional units, questionnaires were used.

A questionnaire is a list of questions used to gather information for the objectives of the research endeavour. The survey conducted to gather data on the types of e-procurement in manufacturing sectors in Zimbabwe together with their sources. The researcher sent out two questionnaires to each of the five procurement departments.

The researcher will assist those who have challenges understanding the questionnaire by explaining it to them. Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to the Purchasing, IT, Logistics, Finance and Production department. Most importantly, the questionnaires provided respondents liberty to respond because the researcher was not present when they were filled out. Due to a low proportion of response, questionnaires may be skewed. To address some concerns, questions were reduced and simplified; hence the researcher herself went to gather the data to assure a comprehensive response.

Justification of questionnaires

A questionnaire was selected because it is affordable, simple to use and enables the capture of a lot of data quickly. Participants are given time to consider each question before replying by being able to complete questionnaires at their own leisure. Adamchank claims that it is simple, quick to tabulate and evaluate survey responses (2000).

3.1.6 In-depth Interviews

Ample and well-organized interviews were done with staff from the procurement department in order to get their ideas, viewpoints and thoughts on the topic at hand. Interviews with respondents were scheduled, and a timetable was created. The Finance Manager who authorises all payments was questioned after the Stores Controller and the Buyer together with their assistants. Thorough interviews were used to supplement survey data. This has the benefit of evoking more detailed comments and highlighting different facet of McDonald Timber Industries adoption of e-procurement systems. The key advantage of carrying out thorough interviews according to Adamchank, is that quick responses were received, permitting explanation of concerns and creation of additional specific data (2000). Furthermore, the face-to face interviews enabled nonverbal communication which improved comprehension of the answers.

The researcher was competent to keep within the objectives of the research by following a planned sequence of queries. The researcher had freedom to ask complement questions and more complicated questions, which was advantageous to her.

To ensure greater simplicity during interviews, the questions were repeatedly asked. The biggest drawback of the interviews was that of some employees being reluctant to share all the material they know due to confidentiality issues. To avert this, the responder was compelled to submit the most sensitive information available. The interview questions were an addition to the questionnaires when it came to providing answers to the questions of the study as propounded by Adamchank et al (2000). By adhering to a predetermined investigation process, the researcher was competent to keep within the objectives of the research. She profited from conducting interviews since it gave the interviewer the chance to pose more in-depth inquiries.

3.1.7 Justification of using interviews

The instrument was utilized by the researcher because it records nonverbal and verbal inquiries, reveals respondent's level of uneasiness by means of questions and aids in maintaining interviewee focus. Although there are several methods in which thorough interviews can be obtained, there are some guidelines to remember as suggested by Adamchank et al (2000).

3.2 Reliability and validity of data

According to (Troachim 2006), validity is the paramount accessible approximation to the truth of a given conclusion. Cook and Campbell (2000) describe validity as the top available estimate to accuracy or falsehood of a given proposal, suggestion or deduction.

The reliability and validity of data were ensured by using a pilot study and the appropriate research tools. A pilot test conforms the feasibility of the research, clarity of language used in every question, the consistency of how every question appears to respective respondents and the analytical ability of the obtained data. Additionally, it made sure that the right demographic was receiving the necessary information.

Reliability is characterised by Saunders et al. (2005) as the extent to which the data gathering process or procedures will result in dependable findings, comparable interpretations, or

deductions by other authors and how logic was created from unprocessed information. One way to think of reliability is dependability or consistency. The data was genuine and credible because it was acquired in a private and anonymous manner. The respondents' responses were kept confidential and their identities remained a secret. This gave the responses freedom of expression.

3.2.1 Data types

Primary and secondary data were used in the study of the impact of e-procurement structure on performance of an organisation to come to logical findings and suggestions.

Primary data

Primary data for the study was acquired via interviews and questionnaires. For the purposes of the study, primary data was gathered through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The management and staff of McDonald Timber Industries were the information's original source. Among the procurement experts who provided the much of the data were Stock Controller and Buyer together with their assistants and the Finance Manager. Utilizing data from primary sources was advantageous since it suited the goals of the study and was up-t0-date because it was current. Additionally, data from primary sources is remarkably accurate.

Secondary data

Information that has previously been made available to the public was collected as secondary data for drives unrelated to the present study. McDonald Timber Industries news (monthly financial plan and monthly sales examination) were used to acquire secondary data. The benefits of secondary data include the low cost of collection as well as the ease and speed of collection due to the lack of travel or appointment-making.

3.3.3 Data analysis presentation

To summarise the results, the researcher employed descriptive statistical approaches including graphs, charts and tables constructed on numbers and percentages which were

coded. Themes like belief, ideas, aspirations and notions that were significant to people in regard to a specific situation were looked at in order to gather pertinent information. This was carried out after the compelled surveys had been checked twice for data dependability and to assist to identify those who had not responded. This technique made it possible to draw conclusions that may possibly later be supported by additional data gathering techniques. After that, the data was examined in Microsoft Excel to ascertain its frequency, percentages and mean. Data lessening is a method of narrowing down, conceptualizing, and altering data such that it is easier to handle and more relevant to the current problems. A narrative interpretation of the data was gathered. The techniques used helped in the examination of the data and the creation of trustworthy inferences as a result.

3.1.4 Summary

The chapter's main objective was to describe and defend the study's methodology. This chapter gave background information about the research's methodology. In-depth descriptions were given of both the administration of the instruments and the sample of respondents. Different data gathering techniques and tools were examined, along with their benefits and drawbacks. In the chapter that follows, the researcher analyses and interprets the information gathered. The chapter concluded by going over the procedures dor data examination and presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Data Analysis and Presentation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the presentation of the results of surveys given to five McDonald Timber Industries divisions that are involved in making purchases of raw materials and services. The respondents that answered most frequently and gave the researcher useful data were those who were directly involved in buying. Data is presented using pie charts, tables and bar graphs. Under every diagram, there is a small description to complement these tools. The results of the questionnaire are also succinctly reported in descriptive form. The results are interpreted in the context of the theoretical analysis and first-hand data covered in the earlier chapters.

4.2 Primary data analysis

The evaluation of the impact of e-procurement on McDonald Timber Industries' purchasing performance was the main objective of collecting primary data. Using primary sources allowed the researcher to investigate first-hand data that was more pertinent to the study. Data from primary research is trustworthy since it is centred on actual accounts.

4.2.1 The response rate

75% of respondents responded. This might be explained by respondents' curiosity in the issue of e-procurement systems' efficacy. It might also be explained by the researcher's on-going supplement and personal reminders to the research participants to complete the surveys.

Table.4.2.1 Shows Response Rate of Questionnaires

Department	Number of questionnaires sent	Number of questionnaires returned	Percentage returned %
Purchasing	2	2	100
Logistics	2	2	100
Production/Factory	2	2	100
Finance	2	1	50
Information Technology	2	2	100
Total	**12**	**9**	**75**

Table 4.2.1:1: - Source: Primary Data 2021

Table 4.1 shows that there were four departments (Purchasing, Logistics, IT and Production) with a response rate of 100%. 50 percent of responses came from the Finance department. The researcher was happy with the level of response and less than three-day time frame given to responders to fill the questionnaire.

In order to identify which gender dominates the manufacturing industry, the study tried to identify the gender distribution of respondents. This is not one of the study's specific objectives and is merely provided for general knowledge. The bar graph represents the findings. The gender breakdown in each department at McDonald Timber Industries is shown in the bar graph below. Figure 4.2.2 demonstrates that men made up the bulk of research participants, with 60% of respondents coming from the Purchasing department, 100% from the IT department, 25% from the Finance department, 80% from Production, and 80% from Logistics. This suggests that the manufacturing sector in Zimbabwe is dominated by men.

4.2.2 Distribution of gender at McDonald Timber Industries

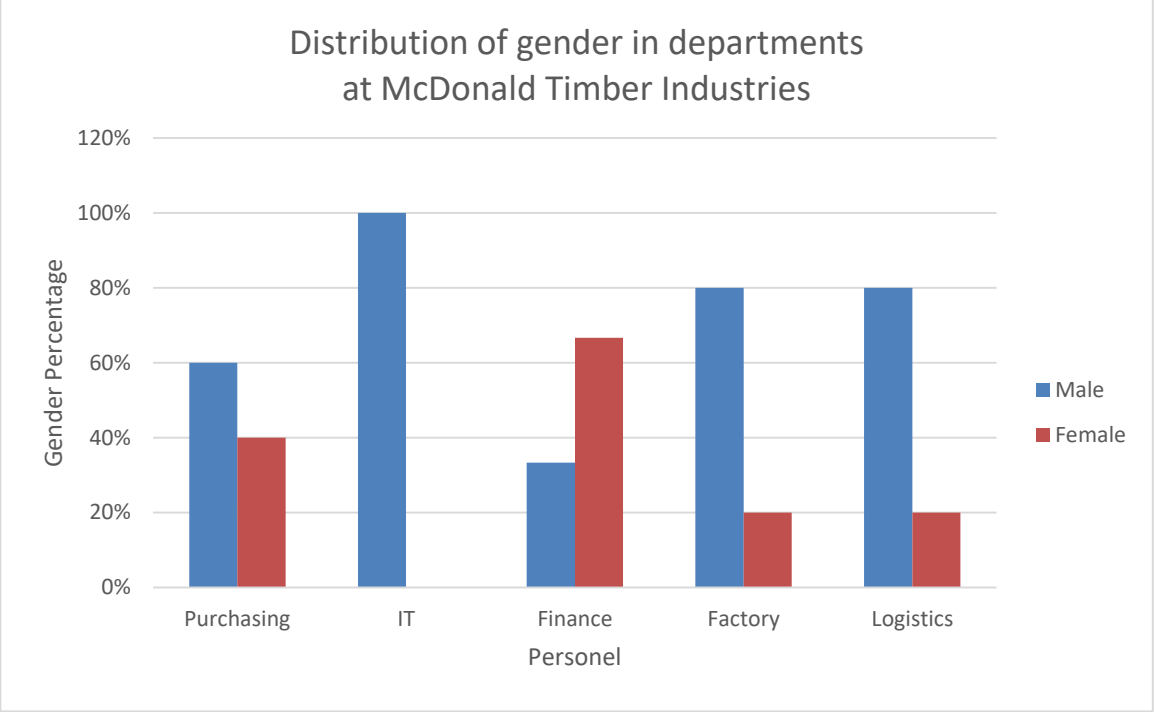

Figure 4.2.2:1 - Distribution of gender in departments at McDonald Timber Industries

4.2.3 Level of education of respondents at McDonald Timber Industries

To establish if the researcher can depend on the worker's responses, the researcher looked at their degrees of education. The researcher might have additional faith in responders with education.

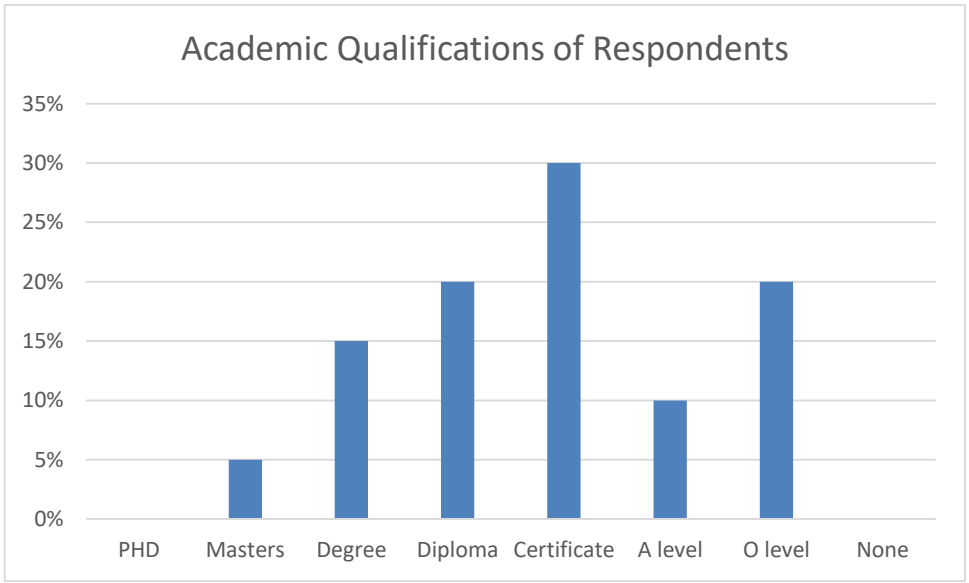

Figure 4.2.3:1 - Academic Qualifications of Respondents

Figure 4.2.3 Source: Survey Data 2020

The above table indicates that most of the employees have credentials like CIPS. This might be the case since historically; procurement has been seen as a cost centre that serves the demands of other departments. The graphs, however, show that purchasing staff education has increased, in contrast to Musanzwika's (2013) findings that procurement issues were naturally controlled by inexperienced staff in Zimbabwe institutions, which frequently lead to general ineffectiveness and the let-down of significant projects being undertaken who discovered that procurement matters in Zimbabwe institutions were typically handled by untrained staff, which often resulted in general incompetence and the failure of major projects being commenced in Zimbabwe.

4.2.4 Service duration in procurement

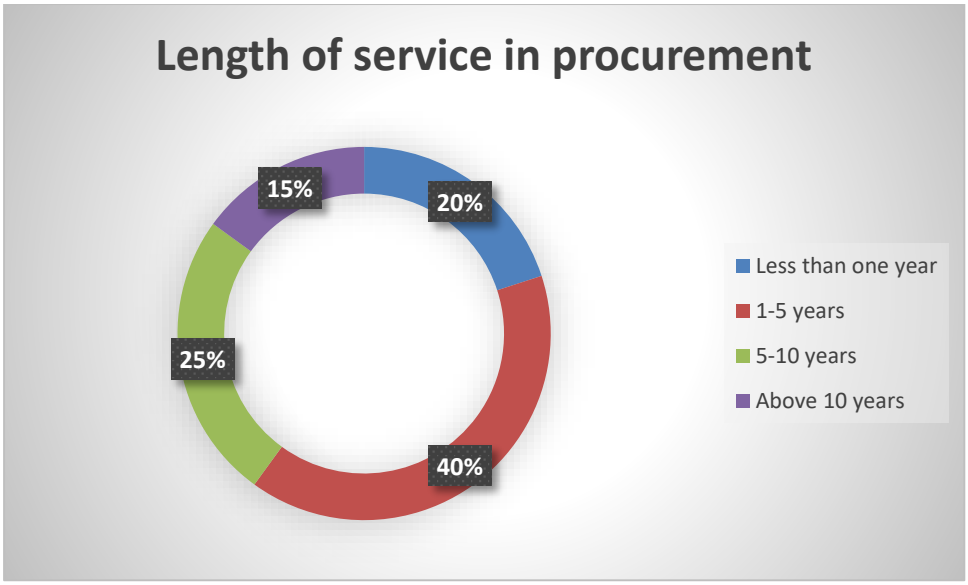

Figure 4.2.4:1 - Service duration in procurement

The duration of each respondent's employment at McDonald Timber Industries was a question for the study. The results, which are shown in figure 4.2.4 in the pie chart, shows that 25% of the respondents had worked in the field for five to ten years. The graphic also reveals that 40% of employees have been with the organisation for one to five years, and 15% have worked for ten years or more. The findings could imply that McDonald Timber Industries is a good employer and retains its employees. Many of the respondents had worked for the business for an extended period and had familiarity with procurement activities, therefore their responses were reliable. Because they are familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of McDonald Timber Industries' existing traditional/ manual systems, the procurement personnel will offer trustworthy information.

4.2.5 Familiarity with electronic purchasing

Responses	Employees	
	Number	**Percentage**
Yes	**12**	**60**
No	**8**	**40**
Total	**20**	**100**

Table 4.2.5:1 - Familiarity with electronic purchasing

Table 4.2.5 shows that 60% of the procurement staff at McDonald Timber Industries acknowledged that they were mindful of using E-Systems of procurement in purchasing processes. This occurred as a result of the staff receiving thorough training and education of e-procurement. The other 40% do not know how to make use of the systems. Employees in procurement are now expected to be proficient in e-procurement technologies in order to successfully and efficiently subcontract from any provider due to the volatile business environment in which purchasing is conducted.

Al-bayati (2011) claims that the sample unit consisted of executives, buying managers, and other personnel involved in electronic business and the purchasing role.

4.2.6 Response to the use electronic procurement to improve performance

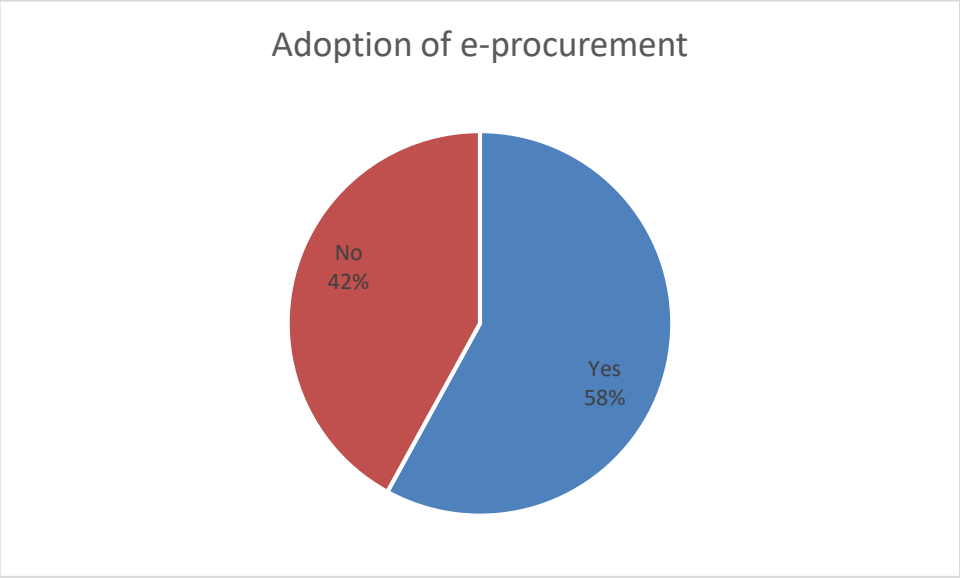

Figure 4.2.6:1 - Response to use of electronic procurement to improve performance

Source: Survey Data 2022

The study found that 58% of respondents agreed with the assertion that e-procurement usage increases industry performance, while 42% differed. The use of computerised procurement systems, according to Dmavamdi (2011), lowers expenses in the procurement process at Islamic Shipping Company both indirectly and directly (IRISL). Irungu's research indicates that the use of e-procurement has increased the effectiveness of the purchasing department, which has resulted in high production and efficiency that passengers are deal with more quickly and that information is disseminated right away.

4.2.7 Benefits of e- Procurement

Rating of benefits of e-procurement

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Prompt delivery	20	1	5	2.123
Broad sourcing of suppliers	20	1	5	2.4992
High levels of competition	20	1	5	3.232
Profitability and cost-savings	20	1	5	3.773
Low procurement cost	20	1	5	1.323
Enhanced supplier relationships	20	1	5	2.11

Table 4.2.7:1 - Rating of benefits of e-procurement

The idea that e-procurement improves worth to purchasing by giving a sizable competitive advantage was supported by the maximum average mean of 3.232. With an average mean greater than, respondents mostly approved that e-procurement results in broad sourcing of suppliers, prompt delivery, enhanced supplier relationships and cheap procurement costs, proving that workers believed e-procurement brings value to the procurement function. The majority of respondents were ambivalent on the value addition of the aforementioned factors, as seen by the average mean for broad sourcing of suppliers and profitability and cost-savings being less than 2.5.

The results of the present study which shows that e-procurement lowers procurement costs seem to be in agreement with those of Mayasa (2007), who found that e-procurement lowers purchasing expenses by removing non-adding purchases.

Similar findings about how e-procurement has increased productivity in the supplier organisation came from interviews. The results indicate that the organisation’s performance is mostly focused on cost-cutting and efficiency practices, hence making it necessary to create

practical in procurement goals. Additionally, they cited improved efficiency, quicker handling of orders and transparency. Instantaneous information dissemination throughout the firm, data allotment between the customer and supplier and the processing of massive volumes of data are some benefits of electronic purchasing.

Customer contentment is higher, security products based on communication technology are more effective, process management is better, other departments' workflows are better monitored, and work is completed more accurately, quickly and in greater quantities. Additionally, the results showed that e-procurement has increased effectiveness through quicker delivery of services and relatively lower expenses of communication. Utilising apps and communication platforms that adhere to industry standards and perform business rule validation, data accuracy is obtained.

According to the results from the survey of the employees, everyone was in agreement that technology should be used to enhance operations and give businesses a competitive edge. They all showed that embraced technology outperformed those that stuck to more conventional operating procedures.

Irugu (2012) conducted research and discovered that most respondents highlighted higher production and efficiency and timely information distribution as ways that IT has improved efficiency in their department.

A list of the justifications presented for denying the value of e-procurement

Reasons presented to dispute the relevance of e-procurement	**Frequency**
E-procurement systems need to be updated frequently to remain effective	1
Institutionalizing it is a costly process	2
Merely pertinent to persons who qualify	3
Adds to the amount of work for non-managerial staff	5

Table 4.2.7:2 - justifications presented for denying the value of e-procurement (Source: Primary data)

One of the workers argued that e-procurement is irrelevant. The arguments made against the importance of e-procurement are listed in table 4.2.7. Since it needs constant updating to be efficient, one employee questioned the significance of online purchase. Due to the high implementation costs, two workers concurred that e-procurement is impractical to the organisation.

4.2.8 The impact of the procurement process buying effectiveness

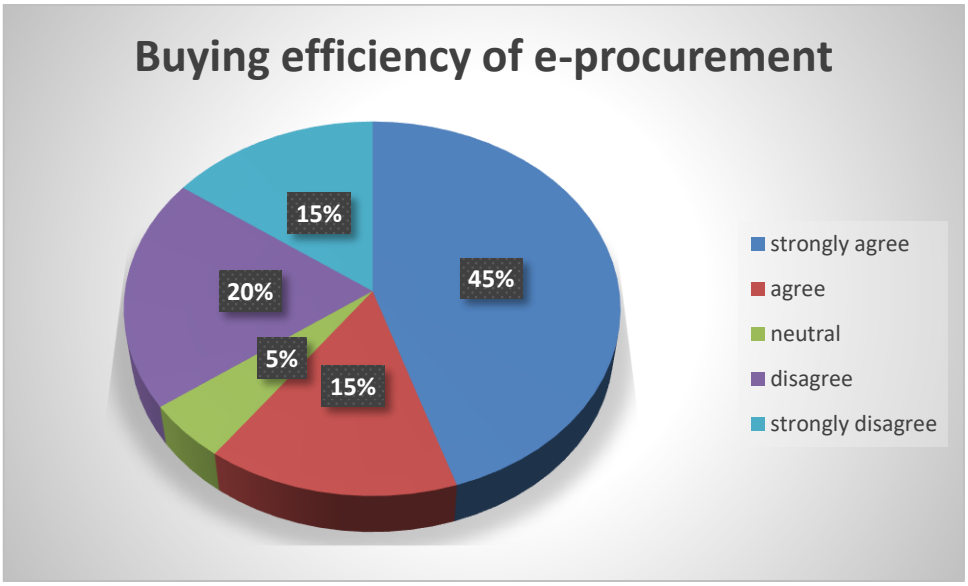

Figure 4.2.8:1- Impact of the procurement process buying effectiveness

45% of respondents strongly agree, conferring to the results of the survey that the company's purchasing efficiency is impacted by the procurement strategy. The remaining 15% are split into three groups: strongly disagree (15%), disagree (15%), and neutral (5%) while another 15percent agree with the matching statement.

The following results were also obtained from the interview. Everyone who took part in the study agreed that an e-procurement system increases effectiveness and proficiency of the purchasing function by lowering costs through e-sourcing, reduction in the amount of work since it is computerised, lowering mistakes and fastening up the process. The researcher noted that complications including fraud and mistakes come from offline purchase procedures. Others held that there was no need to upgrade since the purchasing function has no planned course and only reacts to requests from other company functions and that staying offline is the best option since it is inexpensive.

Al-bayati (2011) provided support for the conclusions of his study, which were intended to enhance the usage of online shopping and identify its advantages. The performance of the organisation as a whole will improve with the implementation of marketplace utilization and e-systems. Turban et al. 2000, found that adopting software of e-procurement lowers mistakes in procurement processes and provided additional support for this.

4.2.9 Use of electronic purchasing to improve performance

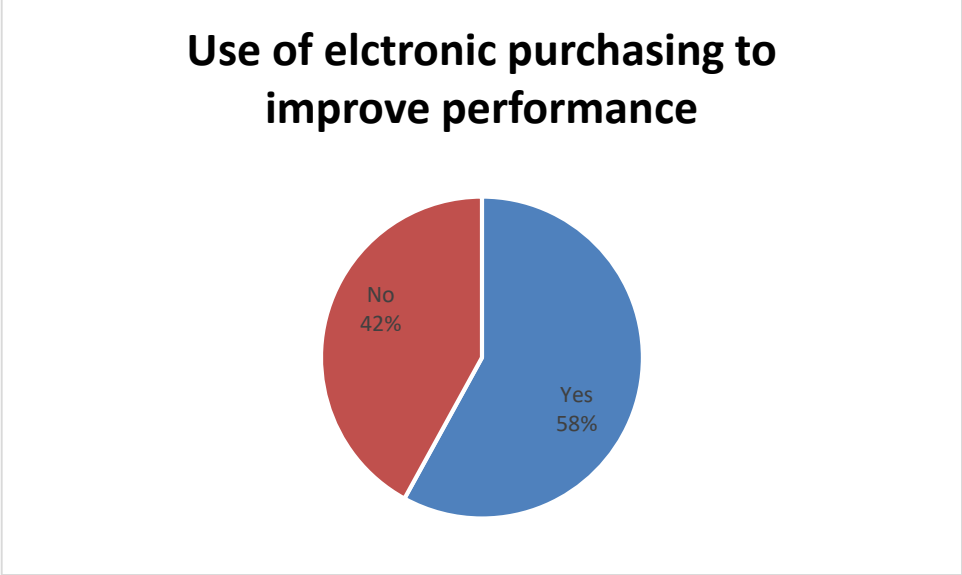

Figure 4.2.9:1 - Use of electronic purchasing to improve performance

Because it benefits all organisational divisions as well as external stakeholders like creditors, Figure 4.2.9 reveals that the majority of respondents of 58% concur that e-procurement will enhance the effectiveness of McDonald Timber Industries' procurement department. The feedback also suggests that after the e-purchasing system is put in place, several expansions will be made.

The results of the interviews show that the vast majority of participants of 78% think information technology may be simply used to enhance the organisation's procurement efforts. According to the findings, handling of transaction times will be shortened overtime and the system's tracking, data safekeeping and flow of information will all increase. Merely 20% of respondents claimed that employing an e-procurement system would result in a decrease in the labour force, an increase in business and a loss of productivity because training staff members to use the software requires specialists, which may require taking time away from business hours.

More respondents concurred that e-procurement improved the effectiveness of the purchasing function, according to the findings of both the interviews and questionnaire. This was corroborated by the study conducted by Mayasa et al. (2007), which discovered that e-procurement led to cost reductions, the reduction of paperwork and easy inventory management.

4.3 Issues encountered with integrating e- purchasing

Every responder was able to list a few justifications for why they favour conventional versus electronic procurement when making purchases. Both at once understood the advantages that such a solution might provide. Most of the advantages noted were connected to cost reductions and process improvements. Despite the fact that respondents were aware of the advantages of e-purchasing, simply the administration personnel had any plans to implement it. The subsequent concerns with the adoption of e-purchasing were noted by study participants. Most firms still use traditional procurement methods; there is rigidity, scarcity of resources to implement the system and a lack of human expertise.

The majority of providers do not have internet connectivity and are resilient to embrace E-Systems. There are issues with standardisation, a lack of flexibility, deficiency of resources, low volumes of transaction, economic hardships and incorporation problems. The results of the interviews and the questionnaire are in line with those of Kansainvalinen's (2004) study, which revealed the aforementioned issues. Suppliers therefore, need to develop means to solve these problems and simplify the deployment process for businesses if the procurement resolutions are to succeed.

4.3.1 Using the e-procurement approach for purchasing

The study found that businesses employ all types of procurement procedures, with 40% citing e-sourcing as their top suggestion for increasing purchasing effectiveness, followed by e-payments (31%), tendering (15%), and e-invoicing (14%). Figure 4.3.1 below illustrates this.

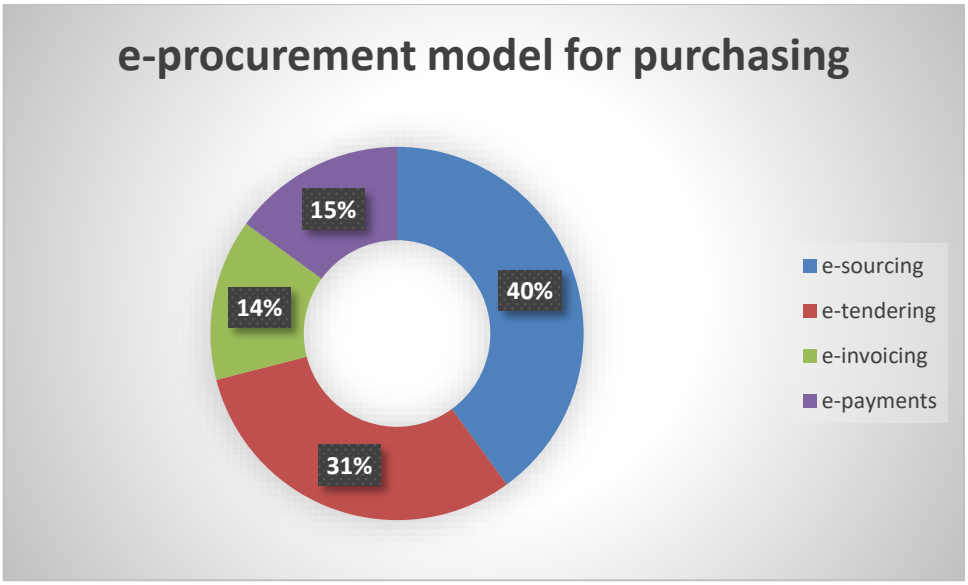

Figure 4.3.1:1 - E-procurement model for purchasing

The results of the survey show that the majority of respondents listed the subsequent as means in which Information Communication Technology has value-added in their unit: greater output and effectiveness as well as instant transmission of information.

The researcher made meetings with 8 members of the procurement team and conducted all interviews timely, resulting in a 15% response rate. Two-thirds of a percentage, or 23%, and 10%, 52% of those people practice e-payments, e-tendering, e-payments, e-sourcing and e-invoicing in that classification. A thorough evaluation of the industry's consensus opinions on the efficacy of e-purchasing was possible, thanks to the 100% interview speed.

Similar conclusions were reinforced by an investigation carried out by Mayasa et al. (2007), who found that for purchasers who hold frequent contacts, the yearly capacity of worldwide e-purchasing approach transactions reach $20 billion and is continually expanding. E-procurement can save millions of dollars every year because of prompt payment discounts.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion

In order to reach the study's conclusions, this chapter presented, interpreted, and analysed data. The main conclusions showed that e-procurement enhances the role of purchasing and

boosts effectiveness and efficiency by speeding up order handling. The summary, conclusions, and suggestions from the study will be the main topics of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This section presents a summary of the outcomes from the facts and data shown in Chapter 4. The findings are then used to draw conclusions that address the objectives of the study. Recommendations and areas for further investigations conclude the chapter.

5.2 Summary

Given that it allows for both manual and electronic purchases, procurement processes at McDonald Timber Industries' looks to be impartial. As a result, certain transactions are carried out physically whereas others are completed using technology. The use of e-procurement solutions, according to the purchasing staff, considerably increased the purchasing function's effectiveness and efficiency and, consequently, the end goal of the business. Since McDonald Timber Industries is keen to adjust to world trends global trends in order to contest in the market, the outcomes from industry interested parties' further support the conclusion that McDonald Timber Industries can entirely integrate e-procurement systems.

The method does, however, run the danger of eliminating jobs by firing people as well as meeting retrenchment costs and as noted in the literature review by Sulaiman (2000) on accompanying costs associated with implementing e-procurement. Certain respondents were against the concept of deploying e-procurement technologies in the sector since it had laid off some employees and set aside a number of posts in the procurement department. Additionally, since training takes up company time and contributes nothing to output, it can be foregone for production. E-procurement solutions, in the opinion of the purchasing personnel, are essential to just not the function but likewise to every unit inside the organisation. They stressed how e-procurement unites all divisions and helps the organisation

accomplish its overarching objective. Since the approach is advantageous to all parties involved in the business, many respondents choose to use it.

An organisation can benefit from e-purchasing in a number of ways, conferring to the investigation, including better sourcing, cost savings, increased transparency, better organisational integration, faster order processing, improved security in procurement activities, improved buyer/supplier relationships, and improved relationships.

The adoption of e-procurement systems can also improve the organisation's performance because it involves less paper work and can process large amounts of data in a short period of time. Nonetheless, the use of an electronic system may result in an increase in procurement work, putting employees under pressure.

5.3 Conclusions

Collins (2001) defines conclusion as reaching a verdict when considering a topic or hearing what someone else has expressed or found out. It can also be well-defined as a view formed after careful consideration of the aims of the research problem studied.

According to the findings of the thorough dialogues, e-purchasing activities are currently significant functions that can enhance value to the organisation because they help organisations realise many benefits such as cost savings, speedy raw material movement, and a shorter sequence time, access to creation and process technology, and quality enhancement. This is only possible if an organisation's purchasing activities are carried out effectively and efficiently. This can be accomplished by implementing e-procurement systems. Due to the benefits associated with the electronic purchasing system, the majority of the employees at the industry were in favour of its implementation. Due to the system's complexity and the fact that it does not require a large number of workers, the bulk of purchasing function personnel opposed its installation.

According to the research, the benefits of e-purchasing to an organisation include improved sourcing, reduced costs, improved transparency, improved integration in organisations, reduced order processing time, improved security in procurement activities, enhanced image reputation for the organisation, and improved buyer or supplier associations. E-procurement has a positive impact on the purchasing department in terms of on-time delivery, lower or lower procurement costs, a diverse supplier base, improved buyer-supplier associations, high profitability, and increased firm competitiveness.

E-purchasing increases the competence of an organisation's purchasing function by lowering transaction costs, reducing time wastage, and adding significance to each procurement process. The implementation of an e-purchasing system can also improve the organisation's performance because there is reduced paper work-load involved and large amounts of data can be handled in a short period. Additionally, it was found that e-purchasing will increase the firm's supplier rivalry and sourcing possibilities, increasing the quality of every purchase the procurement unit does. However, using an electronic system is expensive, which is an expense for the business and can be a big problem for small suppliers that don't have access to the system's features.

The biggest obstacles to establishing e-buying in an organisation are the expense of obtaining hardware, software for the e-purchasing system, and user training. According to the research findings, one of the major challenges encountered when implementing e-purchasing is employee resistance. When implementing electronic purchasing, challenges include a lack of management support and supplier involvement that necessitates a large amount of resources.

Moreover, the idea that the purchasing department should only be reactive, rather than proactive, in addressing departmental demands The results also showed that e-purchasing can result in disruptions in procurement activities because of network outages, fraud in the procurement process that can be committed by computer hackers, and resource and information loss. Employees have apparently drawn a conscious connection between the value of employing information systems and the threat of losing their jobs, which is why they object to the thought of using cutting-edge purchasing technologies.

The findings indicated that implementing an e-purchasing system at McDonald Timber Industries is feasible because the system advances the activities of the industry procurement function and strengthens relationships with suppliers. The use of electronic systems appears to be relevant in the eyes of management due to the costs incurred by the firm and the competition exerted by rivals. Due to the current technological shifts in the business environment, it was determined that fully implementing an e-purchasing system is feasible; thus, the electronic system will bridge the technological gap between the industry and other stakeholders who have adopted technological advancement in carrying out business activities.

5.4 Recommendations

In light of the foregoing deductions, it is suggested that McDonald Timber Industries fully implement an electronic purchasing system in order to escalate productivity. This will be extremely beneficial to the firm's information storage and retrieval problem. Because it is a paperless system that promotes sustainability, the organisation may embrace it.

Based on the findings of the research question, the industry is advised to implement e-purchasing systems in order to bridge the technological cavity between the industry and its suppliers. The executive should also create an information technology tactical plan so that all industry process activities are done electronically.

It is also suggested that the industry provide regular training to its employees so that they can use the system effectively. Finally, it is recommended that McDonald Timber Industries implement a SAP electronic purchasing platform in order to reduce procurement expenses, improve documentation retrieval and storage in the procurement processes, and replace the current software ellipse, which is not designed specifically for purchasing activities.

5.5 Areas requiring more study

It is advised that additional research be done to determine or establish the following in light of the study's findings:

- The author believes that research must be conducted concentrating on the disadvantages of e- procurement through industries.
- Research must be conducted to determine which types of organisations e-procurement would be most fitting and positive in.
- The researcher suggests that similar studies be conducted in other manufacturing industries in Zimbabwe to determine the purchasing competence of e-procurement.

Summary

This chapter concentrated on the key findings, the conclusions reached as a result of the findings, and the researcher's suggested actions to McDonald Timber Industries in order for them to appreciate how e- procurement adds significance to the purchasing function's buying efficiency, allowing them to compete and increase the organisation's bottom line.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent

My name is Chomba Diana. I am an undergraduate student at Bindura University of Science Education pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Purchasing & Supply. As part of the University's degree program, l am conducting a research study. EFFECTIVENESS OF E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEMS ON PURCHASING PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF MCDONALD TIMBER INDUSTRIES is the tittle of the research study (2015-2020).I am kindly request your participation in this questionnaire. I assure you that your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes. This questionnaire seeks your feedback on issues concerning an e-procurement system. Please put a tick on the answer that best describes your perspective on the issue at hand.

SECTION A

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Highlight were suitable. 1). Gender? ☐ Female☐ Male

2). What is your career alignment?

☐ purchasing manager ☐ buyer ☐ stores controller ☐ purchasing employee

3). How long have you been in procurement?

1-5years ☐

5-10years ☐

Above 10 years ☐

4). Do you know how to use an e-procurement system? ☐yes ☐no

5). What is your highest education level?

Degree	Diploma	Certificate	A level	O level	None

SECTION B

Importance of e-procurement

5a). In your judgement, does the adoption of e-procurement improve the performance of McDonald Timber Industries? ☐No ☐Yes

b). If yes to Question 5, kindly highlight ways how the system has enhanced the proficiency in your division

……

……

……

……

6) Does the procurement model affect the purchasing at McDonald Timber Industries?

☐Strongly agree ☐Agree ☐Neutral ☐Disagree ☐Strongly disagree

7). Highlight by a tick if e-purchasing adds value to the following factors

	SA	A	N	D	SD
Statement	01	02	03	04	05
Prompt delivery					
Reduced procurement fee					
Increased supplier sourcing					
Enriched supplier relationship					
Increased profitability					
Increased competitiveness					

7). Is information technology (e-purchasing) appropriate in purchasing at McDonald Timber Industries? ☐Yes ☐ No

If you agree, tick the suitable reasons for your response.

- ☐ E-purchasing allows the administration process to be easy and fast.
- ☐ E-purchasing aids data capturing and retrieval of documents.
- ☐ E-purchasing combines different functions of the organisation.
- ☐ E-purchasing gives an economical advantage to organisation.

Other reason(s)……..

…….....

If no, tick appropriate reasons for your answer.

☐ E-purchasing requires constant advancements to be effective

☐ It is an expensive instrument to incorporate

☐ Only significant to those who are skilled and eligible?

☐ E-purchasing is a work load to non- executive personnel

Other reason(s) …….....

.....…….....……

…….....…….....

.....…….....

.....

Challenges of applying e-procurement

8). Specify by a tick if the following issues are considered when applying e-purchasing

• Recurrent staff development	
• Adoption of information systems	
• Replacement of long-standing systems	
• Incorporation of the organisation's functions	
• Bearing in mind non executive opinions pertaining e-purchasing	
• Consultation of other businesses in that industry	
• Embracing of strategies used by other businesses in that industry	

9). Kindly specify by a tick how e-purchasing can influence the following benefits in procurement

Benefits	**SA 01**	**A 02**	**N 03**	**D 04**	**SD 05**
Better logistics administration					
Reduced procurement expenses					
Vibrant and comprehensive sourcing					
Enhanced order precision					
Competent conversation of data					
Reduced interval between billing and payment					