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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPLIER RELATIONS IN IMPROVING PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR PROCUREMENT. CASE OF ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ROADS ADMINISTRATION (ZINARA).

BY

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DEDICATION

I therefore dedicate this dissertation to my parents who have been supportive throughout this research. Thank you Dad (Lameck Mungazi) and Mum (Memory Musanhu).

ABSTRACT

In order to deliver high-quality goods and services at competitive prices, both private and public companies rely heavily on their suppliers. An organization's success depends greatly on how these suppliers are managed. The relationship between public companies and their suppliers is investigated in this study, as well as how it affects the overall effectiveness of the public procurement function. Good supplier relations can improve the overall performance of the procurement process, according to studies. This study concentrated on how well supplier relationships affected public sector procurement, particularly the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration. Data was acquired for the study through questionnaires and interviews.

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Contents 1

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The buyer-supplier relations have received a great deal of attention from academics over the past three decades (Wilson 1995).). In Zimbabwe, attention towards maintenance of good supplier relations and better management of the purchasing function gained momentum since the establishment of the new Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets chapter 22.23 in [2017] which made it compulsory for all state institutions like ZINARA to elevate the purchasing department to a strategic department with the executive duties recognized on the organogram. Public sector performance is a key litmus test measure for the performance of government since there is vested public interest which is key in the country's political dynamics (Manzoor, 2014), making it critical to monitor and improve its public sector performance. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the entire world to amenabilities and shortcomings in both health care and the economy. In such an environment, public and commercial enterprises must be creative and efficient (Cankar, 2013). Additionally, because supplier performance fundamentally affects how successful each link in the supply chain is,it is logical that there should be buyer supplier relationships to increase or improve the performance of public sector procurement.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), Competition and Traffic Commission, Air Zimbabwe, Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe National Roads Administration (ZINARA), CMED, RMS, Grain Marketing Board, and National Railways of Zimbabwe are all state-owned enterprises. These state-owned enterprises take pride and responsibility in the proper use of government funds, resulting in effectiveness, public satisfaction, good supplier-buyer relations, and the provision of world-class utilities while considering value for money, thereby improving public procurement performance. Although the world appeared to be stagnant over the last three years, there was a rapid change in technology and a greater need for customer satisfaction. Most government owned entities face a variety of challenges when dealing with suppliers, particularly in transactional relationships, including late deliveries, low quality products, high prices, storage problems, and an inflexible supply chain.According to (Nordin and Kowalkowski, 2010; Tuli, Kohli, and Bharadwaj 2007, Davies, Brady, and Hobday 2006; Sawhney 2006), in response to these challenges, many industries and organizations have resorted to changes and new trends in order to find solutions that not only allow entities to provide products and services, but are increasingly delivering services and products that are prepared based on consumer preference, Consumer-specified problems are integrated and solved.

Between 1980 and 2007, the state-owned enterprise procured manually. It was perhaps unfair for some companies or suppliers because there was no transparency and, to some extent, no meaningful supplier interaction. With recent procurement reforms that included a couple of methods that promoted supplier involvement as a way of increasing efficiency and overall Public Procurement performance, the government can. As a result, supplier relations, which are a set of shared values and relationships shared by suppliers, buyers, and the organization as a whole that allow them to work in conjuction collectively to effectively achieve positive results which benefit both parties, are critical to the achievement of the overall goal of the business, an organization that is based on the relations with buying entities and suppliers is essential for the overall success of a supply chain. This is supported by research from a variety of sources, including Langfield-Smith and Greenwood (1998), Cousins, Handfield et al. (2006), Krause, Handfield et al. (2007), and Lawson, Tyler et al. (2008).The risk connected with supplier relations concerns in the supply chain has become increasingly important. Buyer-supplier connections are now one of the most important factors in gaining a competitive advantage (Chen, Paulraj, and Lado, 2004; Spekman and Carraway, 2006). In this context, relations built between the procurement department and suppliers is a key reliance for the organization, as well as a useful source of extra benefits since it increases performance (Granovetter, , 1992; Moran and Ghoshal, 1999).The buyer-supplier relationship has resulted in the establishment and maintenance of social interactions, which management now considers to be the one which is significant operating tasks for management decision making (Johnston et al., 2004; Narasimhan and Nair, 2005). According to the'relational view' (Dyer and Singh, 1998), firms can increase their advantage in supplier relationships by shifting their focus away from transactional relationships and toward beneficial investments, knowledge sharing, interdependent competencies, and efficient cooperative governance.

Although the government has encouraged good supplier relations in achieving the objective by encouraging good procurement practices in these sectors, these public sectors have been guided by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act chapter 22.23 of 2017, the subsequent procurement regulations of 2012, and Statutory 171 of 2002.In accordance to the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act chapter 22.23 of 2017 it was aligned that all Public owned entities to open the Procurement Management Unit ,ZINARA with that opened its PMU in 2018 department which procure for the organization guided by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act chapter 22.23 of 2017 . With the help of the Act and the PMU department ZINARA has tried to improve its procurement performance in many different ways by centralizing its procurement ,by employing procurement professionals with better understanding of the procurement process a whole , it also engaged in sustainable procurement ,it has managed has also engaged in the buy Zimbabwe program and procuring locally rather than global sourcing as a way to improve its procurement performance and the performance of the whole organization and has engaged in maintaining good supplier relations on the other hand , there are still certain challenges to fully implementing good supplier relations in the public sector. As a result, the aim of this study is to explore the usefulness of supplier relationships in improving the performance of public sector procurement in the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

1.2 Problem statement

Once-off transactions with various suppliers have been blamed for lack of integrity among various suppliers which has compromised on the trust that ZINARA has with its suppliers. Maintenance of long-term relationships and maintenance of supplier records has been argued to have a potential to breed trust between buyers and suppliers. Fundamental among qualities to look out for in a supplier include trustworthiness, organizational connections, and public relations, as well as value for money all of which can be cultivated over a long period of time through deliberate schemes to build relations and manage those relations. In this study, we therefore seek to investigate the effectiveness of supplier relations to improve the performance of public sector procurement.

1.3 Research Objectives

In this study, the researcher will address the following objectives.

• To investigate the various types of supplier relationships used to improve the performance of public sector procurement.

• To assess the impact of supplier realtions in improving public sector procurement performance in Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

• To assess the threats to the performance of public sector procurement in the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

1.4 Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following questions.

• What types of supplier relations are used to integrate public sector procurement performance in public sector organizations?

• How effective is Supplier Relations in enhancing public-sector procurement performance?

• What are the challenges in implementing good supplier relations in public sector procurement?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In an ever-changing world of problem-solving in the public sector, the government is eager and under pressure to implement sourcing strategies and produce long-term solutions for their organizations in order to improve public sector procurement performance. Supplier interactions are perceived differently in underdeveloped and wealthy countries, with some cooperation seen as corrupt relationships and others viewed as important for corporate performance and the requirement for operational efficiency in some economies. The question is how the public sector can improve its performance by using good supplier relations, and how different departments can ensure that the best solutions are obtained from suppliers.

1.6 Assumptions

The researcher assumes that:

• the information she obtains from the respondents will be genuine, precise, and specific; and

• the sample population will be representative of Zimbabwe's public sector enterprises.

• The researcher will use both primary and secondary data collection approaches.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on the impact of supplier relations in boosting public sector procurement performance in public entities such as Zimbabwe National Roads Administration, National Foods, and Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, among others. The research period lasted from June 2018 to July 2022. This time period was chosen because there was an urgent need to create solid buyer-supplier partnerships in Zimbabwe, especially Covid19, as the country's inflation rate rose.

Limitation of the Study

The most significant issues encountered in carrying out the study were difficulties in assembling material that is unquestionably considered confidential by corporations. Not all respondents completed the questionnaires during the research period because they were unwilling to divulge information that the management deemed confidential. The university's approved introductory letter will serve as evidence that this research will be done and used solely for scholarly purposes, and that their ideas and opinions will be treated confidentially. The few firms under consideration may not be fully representative of the entire sector.

1.8 Definition of Terms

- Supplier relations- are the transactions that occur between a business and the businesses that supply it with products or services. Depending on how successfully the two parties interact and collaborate, these partnerships could be advantageous or harmful.

- Procurement - A company's acquisition of products and services is known as procurement. It entails organising, locating, acquiring, and paying for these products and services. Although it can be a difficult process, procurement is necessary to make sure a business has the resources it needs to run efficiently. (Allison Reich 2022)

- Procurement performance- is a measure of how well the procurement function is able to achieve its objectives and goals.(Van Weele 2002)
- Public procurement - is a set of rules that regulates how government agencies make purchases of goods, services, or labour. These rules are designed to ensure that public institutions get the most for their money, that the procurement process is honest and open, and that there is no fraud or corruption. Juan David Arciniegas Parra, 2022.

1.9 Chapter Summary

The research topic of the planned study was introduced at the beginning of the chapter. It also offered a summary of the historical backdrop of the study, a problem statement, a hypothesis, research objectives, and research questions, as well as outlined the relevance, constraints, assumptions, and definitions of key words for the investigation. The rest of the research is outlined in this criteria; chapter 2 will be a literature review that is of theoretical and empirical literature, chapter 3 will analyze the research design, methodology and the data collection techniques utilized to meet the objectives of the study, chapter 4 will examine the data gathered and chapter 5 will summarize and conclude the full research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature review, as defined by Walker and Brammer (2009), is the process of investigating the body of existing literature to determine what has been written or otherwise published on a study topic. The theoretical framework and empirical data pertaining to the associated literature are the main topics of this chapter. The chapter also compares and contrasts the concepts put forth by many authors, allowing the researcher to spot gaps in the body of knowledge regarding the efficacy of good supplier relations in enhancing public procurement performance.

2.2 Theoretical Literature

Theoretical literature aids in developing new hypotheses to test as well as identifying theories that already exist, their connections, and the extent of previous research into them. With a focus on the Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA), this literature study intends to investigate the efficacy of supplier relations in enhancing the performance of public sector procurement. The characteristics of supplier interactions will be covered initially. Social capital theory, institutional theory, and social exchange theory are the guiding theories.

2.1. Buyer-Supplier Relations

Supplier relations refers to the interaction between a business and its suppliers. McDonald (1999) asserts that the transactional-collaboration continuum can be used to represent and elaborate the buyer-supplier relationship. A transactional connection is one in which customers and suppliers are involved but are not reliant on one another, according to He et al. (2011), Gullett et al. (2009), and MacDonald (1999). This link is short-termist, has a wide range of providers, calls for a single, singular transaction, has little to no trust, is closely watched, and lacks confidence. According to He et al. (2011) and Gullett et al. (2009), the most collaborative interaction takes place in the collaborative link, which is frequently referred to as a partnership. A collaborative relationship is a type of supplier relationship that is characterized by a high degree of trust, commitment, and cooperation between the buyer and supplier. In a collaborative relationship, the buyer and supplier work together to achieve common goals, such as improving quality, reducing costs, or developing new products or services. (He et al. 2011; MacDonald 1999).Depending on how well the two parties communicate and work together, such a relationships may be favorable or unfavorable. Mutual trust, openness of communication and a cooperative approach to resolving problems are characterizes good supplier relations. Both sides believe that they work towards a shared goal, and trust has been built between them. This type of connection has the potential to save the organization money while also improving product quality and delivery timeframes. Negative supplier relationships, on the other hand, are marked by contention and mistrust. Communication is frequently inadequate, and issues are not addressed in a timely or efficient manner. This might result in increased costs for the organization, as well as delays in product delivery and lower product quality. An effective supply chain is created by effectively managing relationships between buyers and suppliers. This means that buyers and suppliers need to work together to achieve common goals, such as improving quality, reducing costs, and increasing innovation(Ambrose et al 2010).Listed below are some of the types of good supplier relations used to improve performance in the public sector procurement.

2.1.1 Partnerships

A partnership is a collaboration between two or more parties committed to working together to achieve a common goal. The cornerstones of partnerships are mutual respect, teamwork, and shared goals. In a partnership, the supplier primarily concentrates on meeting the demands of the partner and has few opportunities to do business with the rival. This promotes a high level of trust between them since both sides are assured that they can depend on one another to maintain their promises. Suppliers are able to pool additional resources in order to more effectively address the specific needs of their clients. Here are some of the benefits of partnerships. Improved communication, Partnerships require open and honest communication between the partners. This can help to improve understanding and resolve problems more quickly. Shared resources is another benefit in which partnerships can allow partners to share resources, such as knowledge, expertise, and equipment. This can help to save money and improve efficiency of public sector procurement. By integrating different perspectives and ideas, partnerships can boost innovation, which benefits improved inventiveness. This could lead to new products, services, and methodologies. Partnerships make it feasible to provide better customer service since they give customers a single point of contact for all of their needs. This can make it easier for customers to get the help they need and can lead to increased satisfaction. A crucial element for any firm is the capacity to improve procurement performance through partnerships. Long-term contracts are commonly a part of partnerships, and the corporation will typically reveal particular information to enable their supplier to satisfy their exact requirements. In their contribution, (Hwan-Yann Su et al., 2013) look into how partnerships may be boosted by giving supply chain partners clear information about their Intellectual Capital (IC), which fosters partnerships and boosts procurement effectiveness.

2.1.2 Arms-length

Arm's length buyer-supplier relationships are a type of business relationship in which the buyer and supplier have very little interaction. The buyer simply orders goods or services from the supplier, and the supplier delivers them. There is no long-term commitment between the two parties, and either party can end the relationship at any time. Arm's length buyer-supplier relationships are often used for low-value or non-critical goods or services. They can be a cost-effective way to procure these goods or services, as the buyer does not have to invest in developing a long-term relationship with the supplier. However, arm's length buyer-supplier relationships can also have some disadvantages. For example, the buyer may have less control over the quality of the goods or services they receive. Additionally, the buyer may not be able to take advantage of any discounts or special pricing that the supplier may offer to long-term customers. The Arm's Length Relationship, which stretches back to the dawn of commerce, is a crucial notion in warehouse operations. This relationship occurs between the supplier and the wholesaler and helps to ensure that the quality of products given by one party is equal to or higher than the quality of products supplied by the other party. One of the most significant principles in warehouse operations is the arms-length connection, often known as the supply chain management concept. This idea is used to manage the interactions between the many supply chain parties, which include manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, resellers, brokers, and agents. In a transactional relationship, buyers and suppliers have a very limited relationship. They may only interact once, to complete a specific transaction. There is little trust between the two parties, and the supplier may provide parts to the buyer's competitors.This type of relationship is often used for low-value or non-critical goods or services. It can be a cost-effective way to procure these goods or services, as the buyer does not have to invest in developing a long-term relationship with the supplier. Transactional relationships can be a good option for businesses that need to procure low-value or non-critical goods or services. However, they may not be the best option for businesses that need a more reliable or long-term supplier. He et al. (2011) as well as MacDonald (1999) have suggested monitoring to this type of supplier relations in order to improve procurement performance.

2.1.3 Strategic Alliances (COLLABORATIVE RELATIONS)

A strategic alliance is an extended partnership between two or more organizations that have similar goals. These goals can be anything from developing new products to entering new markets. There are many benefits to forming strategic alliances. For example, alliances can help organizations to reduce costs, by pooling resources and sharing expertise, organizations can reduce the costs of research and development, production, and marketing. Organizations can increase innovation, by working together, organizations can share ideas and insights, which can lead to new products and services. Procurement can help the organizations to Enter new markets by strategic alliances through partnering with an organization that already has a presence in a new market, an organization can reduce the risks and costs of entering that market. Strategic alliances, improve customer service, by working together, organizations can provide customers with a wider range of products and services, as well as a more consistent level of service. Strategic alliances can be a valuable tool for organizations of all sizes. However, it is important to choose partners carefully. The best partners are those that have complementary strengths and expertise, and that are committed to the success of the alliance. Golicic et al. (2003) and Parung and Bititci (2005) define various levels of collaboration that can be related with the usage of various levels of resources, risk and benefit sharing. Consortium ECOLEAD (2007) This project adds a fourth level to the three previously outlined by Golicic et al. (2003) and Parung and Bititci., (2005). As a result, the networking level is increased. It entails the sharing of communication and information for mutual benefit. Furthermore, each of the preceding notions serves as a "building block" for the following definition. Coordination expands networking; cooperation expands coordination; and cooperation expands cooperation. Bititci and colleagues (2009) Collaboration is a tool for maximizing possibilities while minimizing risks by bringing together the proper mix of competencies and building critical mass to boost the competitive advantage of the enterprises involved.

2.2.1 Social Capital Theory

The theory of social capital is one of the most influential and most popular theories to emerge in social sciences over the last two decades (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Fukuyama, 2000; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998).Social capital theory (SCT) has been defined by Bourdieu

(1985) as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition”. Its basic premise is that a network provides value to its members by allowing them access to the social resources that are embedded within the network (Bourdieu, 1985; Florin, Lubatkin, & Schulze, 2003). These social networks need to be developed through investment strategies oriented towards the institutionalization of group relations, which are reliable sources of benefits (Portes, 1998).Social Capital Theory also recognizes that various economic transactions are embedded within a greater social, political and legal context (Granovetter, 1973, 1985). Social Capital Theory in the supply chain, interactions among its members lead to wide acceptance of the norms and values of that chain, as well as the sharing of information, data, and analysis to improve the overall performance of the network (Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006; Hazen et capital provides the conditions necessary for knowledge and information exchange to occur.On this basis, Hazen et al. (2016) argued that Social Capital Theory should be applied in study big data in the Supply Chain Management context, with the need of improving sustainable performance. In terms with this it is noticed that, according to (Matthews and Marzec, 2012), the supply chain management literature has subsequently used the social capital theory, particularly in evaluation the characteristics of buyer–supplier relationships and the effect on performance. Coleman one of the first researchers or writers of the modern concept of social capital he defines the concept of social capital as follows, “Social Capital is defined by its function, It is not a single entity, but a variety of different entities having two characteristics in common: They all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions for individuals who are within the structure.” (Coleman 1990, p.302). In context to this definition it brings up an element of social concept: Action is needed by the actors involved to actually make use the resources available. To summarize, social capital is composed of a social network of relations, actors (which are both recipients and donors), resources available through the social network, and action on the part of the actors (Sherry, 2010).

This theory is found to be relevant to this study by the reseacher because it attempts to explain the different notions which are found in buyer supplier relations like exchange of information and knowledge and these relations may include discussions to deal with improvement of product quality and gain value for money . These will assist in examining the factors have an influence on the implemantation of good supplier relations at Zimbabwe National Road Administration

2.2.7 Institutional theory

John Meyer and Brian Johnson came up with this theory in their research on institutionalized organizations in 1977. In and organisational studies and sociology , institutional theory is a theory which is more deeper and more persistent aspects of social structure focusing in an organisation which is in the public sector and this will enable the organisation to be able to implement good supplier relations at their institution. The authors explain that the institutional environment can have a greater influence the establishment of formal structures in an organization more than greater market pressures. They also note , innovative structures help to improve technical efficiency in pre mature application organizations are validated in the environment when these innovative structures gains a certain level of validity.

According to, Johnsen, Howard, and Miemczyk (2014), a basic hypothesis of the institutional theory suggests that it explains the reason organizations often have a certain behavior which is similar in answers and practices.

This theory is relevant to this study because it attempts to explain the different use of the institutional environment of public procurement and how the social structure components are developed, generated, adopted and adapted over time. These will assist in examining the factors have an influence on the endorsement of social capital at Zimbabwe National Road Administration.

2.2.8 Social Exchange theory

The beginning of social exchange theory was in the year 1958, by American sociologist George Homans who published an article named “Social Behavior as Exchange.” Homans came up with a framework which comprised on the combination of behaviorism and basic economics. In this modern age followed, more researches that further explained the parameters of Homans’ fundamental concepts.

Social exchange theory is a theory which states that any relationship between two people is created through a process of cost-benefit analysis. In other words, it’s a concept designed to determine the effort poured in by an individual in a person-to-person relationship. The measurement of the pluses and minuses of a relationship may produce data that can determine if someone is putting too much effort into a relationship.

The theory is one of a kind with the reason that it doesn't necessarily measure relationships on emotional basis. Rather, its systematic processes rely on mathematics and logic to determine balance within a relationship. While the theory can be used to measure romantic relationships, it can also be applied to determine the balance within a friendship. The social exchange theory has a number of core assumptions which include human nature and the nature of relationships. To begin with the first assumption which states that humans tend to seek out rewards and avoid punishments. The other assumption states that a human begins an interaction to gain maximum profit with minimal cost the individual is driven by what is I am yet to gain out of the relationship And the third assumption is that people or businesses tend to calculate the profit and cost before engaging in a contract or partnership. The last one, the theory has an assumption that individuals know that this "payoff" will differ from one individual to another, as well as with the same individual with due course.

This theory is significant to this research because it is one of the underpinning theories of supplier relations in procurement and it also attempts to bring about the reasons why individuals fall into relations in this case the reason why supplier and buyer might end up in a relationship for what benefits and significant payoff, as it is said anything done by the business is for the business. These will assist in examining the benefits that the public sector procurement will encounter in the endorsement of having good supplier relations at Zimbabwe National Road Administration.

2.3.1 Procurement performance

Procurement performance refers to the extent to which procurement activities fulfill organizational objectives and meet stakeholders' needs effectively and efficiently. The effectiveness of procurement performance is measured by the quality and timeliness of the goods or services acquired and the achievement of cost savings or value-added. Procurement performance is crucial in ensuring the delivery of value for money for the organization and building its reputation in the industry. A public procurement system's main objective is to employ public monies in an efficient and economical manner. Effective procurement performance can benefit the organization by reducing costs, increasing productivity, and enhancing stakeholder satisfaction. Procurement performance is influenced by several factors, including procurement strategy, procurement processes, procurement expertise, stakeholder engagement, and the use of technology. Procurement strategy sets the direction and priorities for procurement activities in organizations. Appropriate procurement processes help to ensure the procurement process is efficient, timely, and cost-effective. Procurement expertise involves staff with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to manage procurement activities effectively. Engaging stakeholders, such as suppliers, end-users, and regulators, throughout the procurement cycle is essential to improving the procurement performance. The use of technology, such as procurement software and e-procurement systems, can also enhance procurement performance by improving the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of procurement processes.

Effective procurement performance can be challenging to achieve, especially in public sector organizations. Public procurement is susceptible to issues such as corruption, conflicts of interest, and poor accountability. The use of good supplier buyer relations can help to promote stakeholder engagement, trust, and ethical behavior, ultimately improving procurement performance. Building and maintaining good supplier relations are essential components of effective procurement performance.

2.3.2 The concept of supplier relations and its role in procurement has been widely discussed in the literature. Supplier buyer relations can improve procurement performance by facilitating trust, reducing transaction costs, and providing access to information. A supply chain's characteristics must be subject to the necessary governance in order to manage the relationships between customers and suppliers effectively. According to Chen and Paulraj (2004), Rajagopal and Rajagopal (2009), Wagner et al. (2011), Doney and Canon (1997), and Ganesan (1994), some of these attributes include commitment, communication frequency, relationship longevity, and reputation. In this research paper, factors which facilitate performance outcome are operationalized as: (1) trust, (2) networks, (3) reducing transaction costs, (4) access to information, and (5) quality.

2.3.3 Trust

(Barny and Hansen 1994) suggested that trust is the confidence in which both parties share that no party to an exchange will take advantage another's vulnerabilities. According to several scholars, trust is an essential aspect of supplier relations, as it forms the basis for social relations and affects the development of exchange relationships. Trust facilitates coordination, communication, and cooperation among stakeholders in public procurement processes, promoting ethical behavior and reducing the likelihood of corruption.

2.3.4 Networks

Depending on who you ask, a social network is either a "structure of relationships linking social actors" (Marsden, 2000) or "the set of actors and the ties among them" (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). The fundamental components of the human experience are relationships or ties, which map the connections that people have with one another (Pescosolido, 1991).Networks of connections between people and organizations, according to social capital theory, are crucial for facilitating procurement performance. Social networks provide avenues for access to information and resources, enabling the sharing of ideas and best practices, procurement processes, and increased opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders.

2.3.5 Reducing Transaction Costs

Cost is the sum of all costs incurred in producing a something or rendering a service, including labour costs, output, capacity utilisation, and inventory decrease, according to Kruse, Handfield, and collaborators (2007). The concept of supplier can also reduce transaction costs in the procurement process. When good supplier relations exist among stakeholders, it enhances their communication, cooperation, and collaborative decision making. Diminished transaction costs lead to increased procurement efficiency, cost savings, and improved procurement performance.

2.3.6 Access to Information

The social connections embedded in supplier relations also provide stakeholders with access to relevant information. In addition to reducing transaction costs, good supplier can enable access to beneficial knowledge and resources. This access results in stakeholders being better informed about each other's intentions, expectations, and behaviors, ultimately leading to an improved procurement process.

Overall, the theoretical literature strongly supports the effectiveness of good supplier relations in improving performance in public procurement. Collaboration, trust, information sharing, and the creation of social networks and relationships are key components of supplier buyer relationships that are instrumental in promoting ethical behavior and reducing corruption, leading to cost savings in procurement operations. Building and maintaining good supplier relations should be a priority for organizations involved in public procurement if they aim to promote effective governance, and this is important for the welfare and economic progress.

2.4 Empirical Evidence

Daniel Corsten and Jan Felde (2005) investigated the benefits of collaboration between a firm and its suppliers by tying collaboration to key performance measures and contrasting its effects with relationship variables such as trust and reliance. Their findings indicated that supplier collaboration improves buyer performance in terms of both inventive capability and financial results. Trust and dependence, as expected, play a vital role in supplier relationships. The research has limitations because it is based on a single country (Switzerland) multi industry study. It is possible that generalizability to other industries or nations will be limited. Their findings have practical consequences as well; supplier partnerships require governance modes that balance control and relational features. Relationship control is a critical component in developing successful supplier partnerships. To reap the benefits of collaboration for the entire firm, the purchasing department requires incentives that encourage relationship creation. Managers in charge of purchasing departments can discover what structural features and processes are required to get the most out of their supply base.

Chari (2016) investigated the impact of supplier relationship management on Zimbabwean manufacturing businesses' competitiveness. According to the author, transactional ties are critical for increasing organizational competitiveness in bread manufacturing enterprises by improving supplier responsiveness, sustainability, and lowering procurement costs. It was suggested that the bakery manufacturing business benefits from price-focused transactional relationships.

Joy M. Field and Larry C. Meile (2008) conducted research on supplier relationships and supply chain performance in financial services procedures. At the process level of analysis, their study attempted to empirically assess the relationship between supplier interactions and satisfaction with overall supplier performance in a services setting. They used the methodology to develop two hypotheses, one predicting a positive relationship between a multidimensional construct of supplier relations and satisfaction with overall supplier performance, and another five part hypothesis predicting positive relationships between the underlying components of supplier relations and satisfaction with overall supplier performance. The first hypothesis was examined using regression analysis on a sample of 108 financial services processes, and the second hypothesis was investigated using correlation analysis. After controlling for supplier efficiency and responsiveness, usage of information technology, electronic information sharing, supplier type, and firm size, their research indicated that better supplier interactions are connected with satisfaction with overall supplier performance. While the partnering components of the relationship, such as cooperation and long-term commitment, are associated with satisfaction with overall supplier performance, the operational components of the relationship, such as high degree of coordination, information sharing, and feedback, are not. Their study's limitations were a small informant sample, largely single responders, and some single item variables. The study's practical implications also stated that the research findings suggested not only the importance of improving overall supplier relations, but also other specific benefits of building partnerships within the service supply chain through collaboration and long-term commitment in order to increase satisfaction with overall supplier performance.

In a different study, Mercy Mpinganjira, Mornay Roberts-Lombard, and Göran Svensson (2017) investigated how trust, commitment, and both material and non-material pleasure in South African buyer-supplier relationships are related. The goal of the study was to demonstrate how, in South African businesses, dedication, trust, and buyer-supplier satisfaction are all related. The study looked at satisfaction from both an economic and non-economic perspective. Using information from 250 significant enterprises in South Africa, the study model examined the hypothesised correlations between the constructs. The data were analysed using AMOS software utilising structural equation modelling. The results confirmed the differences between those who are happy financially and those who are not, as well as the moderating effect of trust. The results of this study show that economic satisfaction has a direct effect on trust, which in turn has a direct effect on commitment. It was discovered that trust and dedication have a favourable impact on non-economic satisfaction.

Their study concentrated on the effects of supplier relationships in the UK automobile industry. The purpose of their research was to determine the impact of the current recession on the two suppliers as well as the vehicle manufacturer. The study's major purpose was to discover whether the impact was consistent across all organizations. Their case study investigated the need for suppliers to be more responsive during the recession, as well as the impact on supplier relationships. Two production control personnel from the vehicle manufacturer and seven production control personnel from its seven tier 1 suppliers were interviewed face to face in semi-structured interviews. According to Dilek Demirbas, Lauren Wilkinson, and David Bennett (2018), supply chains have improved since the recession because of increased responsiveness, and supplier contacts have had a positive impact. According to the study, responsiveness can provide a competitive edge, which is especially significant in times of uncertainty and market volatility. Solid supplier connections, according to the literature, can also lead to a competitive advantage. Their research is centered on these two notions, which constrain and impact their work. Excellent supplier ties, they discovered, provide a competitive edge when no cost savings can be found in other areas. Furthermore, as a result of the case studies analyzed, this study discovered that provider relations have improved as a result of the recession.

2.5 Gap Analysis

In this study, the researcher assumes that when the procurement team focuses on strategic benefits, the relationship between performance and supplier relations declines at a slower rate than when the procurement team focuses on operational advantages. This occurs because achieving strategic benefits entails greater risks than gaining operational benefits, since suppliers and procurement personnel incur different risks and require more capital for the relationship they both share (Stolze (2018); Brem, Nylund, and Schuster (2019).

Adding up the risks, explorative activities provide a considerably higher risk than exploitative activities because their development is focused on improving the used set of items and processes. Furthermore, due to numerous risky investments, exploratory endeavors necessitate greater commitment to shared ideals and aims. According to Neumann and Zollo (2017), in order to recognize exploratory behaviors, a higher level of reciprocity, respect, and trust are required. Meanwhile, recurring social encounters are necessary for the effective distribution and fortunate recognition of opportunities in order to carry out exploratory procedures. As a result, encouraging these hazardous activities allows the accomplishment of strategic benefits; nevertheless, greater money is required in the case of operational gains that improve performance. However, as with other types of organizational relations, supplier relations will only provide value to a relationship if it is successfully managed, controlled, and governed. The supplier-performance relationship has developed as a key research area in strategic management due to the growing importance of business networks in enhancing a firm's competitive advantage (Gulati et al 2000).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter covered a variety of subjects, including scholarly perspectives. up order to fill up any gaps in the literature for this study, it is necessary to gather information and carry out additional research on supplier relations. The study approach the researcher used to gather information on the effect of supplier relations in public sector procurement will be the main focus of the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter's material on the scope of the research included the implementation of good supplier relations. Research techniques are the steps or strategies used to find, select, process, and analyze material about a subject. This chapter discusses the research strategy, target demographics, and sample population. It also goes through the processes and equipment utilized for data collection, sampling, and analysis. This chapter also analyzes the data's reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Design

A design, according to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), is a program that directs the inquiry in the process of gathering, analyzing, and interpreting observations. Similarly, Cooper and Schindler (2003) defined it as a systematic and organized technique to data collecting in order to acquire information from the data. There are four major research designs: descriptive, casual, explanatory, and predictive. A study design is concerned with how to pick the pieces that will provide valid (legitimate, appropriate) and reliable (constant and trustworthy across time and researchers) information or data. The researcher employed the descriptive research design and a case which is going to be used in this study.

3.2 Case under Study

The research was conducted to determine the effectiveness of supplier relationships in enhancing public sector procurement performance, with a focus on the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration. The case was picked because it enables a systematic analysis of an event or a string of connected events with the aim of describing and understanding the phenomenon of interest. The study employed a study design to collect qualitative data from June 2018 to July 2022 to analyze how supplier interactions in the public sector are executed in reference to a case.

3.3 Study Area

The research was conducted at the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration Headquarters, 489 Runville, Glenroy Shopping Center, Highlands, Harare. 3.5 Target Audience Top management was the target group for in-depth interviews, which included the Executive Director, supply chain managers, risk management, public relations, and transportation and logistics. Employees in supply chain management, creditors, officials of the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration, and suppliers in Zimbabwe's manufacturing industries were the study's target demographic.

3.5.1 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame must be representative of the population being sampled. As a result, Doodley (1998) requires a sampling frame that is representative of the population, which is beyond the scope of statistical theory and involves the judgment of subject matter specialists. A frame thus represents the border from which the sample will be drawn. The sample frame for this study will be made up of employees from Zimbabwe's public sector procurement.

3.5.2 Sample Size

It's a piece or subset of a bigger collection that the researcher has chosen to focus on for a particular study project. 175 workers made up the total population, and 125 were selected as the sample size. Supply chain managers, administration managers, research and development managers, senior executives, and directors were among the participants in the questionnaire survey from a variety of businesses. A sample of 5 Directors were picked for the in-depth interviews for this research because the research must include just those employees whose role is directly related to policy creation and administration and who are knowledgeable about buyer-supplier interactions. The sample distribution is as follows:

Table 1: survey participant's breakdown.

DEPARTMENTS	TOTAL POPULATION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE OF SAMPLE POPULATION
PROCUREMENT	25	24	96
ADMINISTRATION	55	49	89.1
MANAGERS	15	12	80
DIRECTORS	7	5	71.4
ACCOUNTS	73	35	47.9
TOTAL	175	125	71.4

Source: Primary data

The most suitable respondent's name and contact information were obtained from the departments, and they were then given to that person together with the questionnaire and a cover letter detailing the goals of the study and their prospective contributions. In order to increase response rates, follow-up phone calls were placed and respondents were contacted to provide any missing information.

3.6 Source of Data

In carrying out the research, two sources of data were used, namely primary and secondary. Interviews and questionnaires were used as primary sources in this study to collect data, and they were a part of those primary sources. This was used for direct information from the individuals through questionnaire and personal interviews to analyze the subject. The primary advantage of using unique data was that the information obtained was current and pertinent to the investigation. Furthermore, the main data was unique in that it had never been collected for any other reason. Throughout the investigation, the researcher relied on it as a reliable source of information. However, gathering primary data took a lengthy time because a pilot study had to be completed first before gathering authentic data.

The researcher also used secondary sources. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2005), secondary data analysis is the process of locating and gathering secondary data, as well as objectively analysing and assessing it. Secondary sources included the internet, libraries, newspapers, journals, magazines, and textbooks. Secondary information included research expectations, predicted results, and research recommendations**.**

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

This includes information gathered physically by the researcher. It is first-hand information in its most basic form. To acquire such information, the researcher conducted interviews and provided questionnaires to employees. Prior to administering the questionnaires, the researcher made visits to the offices of participants to express the goal of discarding the questionnaires and conducting interviews for academic research objectives. The researcher dropped the surveys on the agreed-upon days with the officials' permission. Data was gathered from Zimbabwe National Roads Administration personnel as well as employees from other public sector organizations. The most obvious benefit of utilizing such an approach is that the data gathered is first hand and accurate.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire, according to Best and Khan (1993), is a written document used to gather data that includes a list of all the questions the researcher intends to ask each respondent. A questionnaire is used to collect demographic information on manufacturing enterprises, such as industry, ownership, size, and location. Seven criteria, including trust, relationship commitment, shared values and culture, and similar understandings of concepts and traditions, were used to assess a company's relationships with its suppliers (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Villena, Revilla, and Choi 2011). They were advanced by Brown, Lusch, and Nicholson (1995), Carey, Lawson, and Krause (2011), and Ganesan (1994). The goods were modified to accommodate buyer-supplier connections. The questionnaire's intended audience included buyers and senior managers, personnel in the Procurement management unit, representatives from sibling companies, and suppliers. The questionnaire was specifically constructed to achieve the study's aims. The researcher constructed the questionnaire structure with the help of the information from the literature review.

Each respondent was asked to name a vital supplier to their company. They were then questioned about that significant supplier, including how that supplier impacted their company's growth. The researcher invited respondents to submit information in response to factual questions, as well as opinion questions about their preferences. The majority of the replies were checklists, in which respondents responded by selecting one of the options provided. Respondents would indicate their responses by checking the appropriate boxes on the checklist and in the categorical responses. The other response styles employed were open-ended responses that permitted respondents to express themselves in whichever way they wanted, with limited control over word choice. The use of a questionnaire in this study resulted in cost savings. It was observed that questionnaires were less expensive to conduct and covered a larger geographical area. It relieved respondents' stress by raising their confidence owing to anonymity, which compelled them to be more likely to provide genuine information.

The questionnaire prevented potential bias, allowing respondents to thoroughly analyze responses without bias. Using a questionnaire, each research subject in the study was given the same set of questions, which helped to increase the uniformity of the research study by requiring all research subjects to respond to specific stimulus. This also contributes to the assessment's validity and reliability. However, one of the drawbacks observed was that some respondents were unwilling to provide sensitive information on their surveys. Open-ended questions supplied in-depth information that the researcher found difficult to generalize

3.8.2 Interviews

Another study strategy for getting information from people in person. It can be used to collect meaningful and reliable information in the form of voice answers, which can then be used to confirm or reject a hypothesis. It is classified into four types: structured, unstructured, non-directive deep, and focused interviews. The same questions are asked to all respondents in the same order, and the restricted response options are limited to a pre-determined list. Unstructured interviews involve questions that are flexible and have few replies constraints. Respondents were free to express themselves, and questions may be tailored to the circumstance. Non-directive deep interviews, in which respondents were permitted to speak freely and fully on a popular topic rather than being given direct or prepared questions, and focused interviews, in which respondents were invited to focus their attention on a specific incident or experience.

3.9 Document Analysis

Document analysis comprises evaluating all readily available materials, such as internal company information, trade journals in the industry, newspapers, magazines, and annual reports of the firm literature, to name a few. According to Lancaster (2005), who claimed that the method was inexpensive since the data was supposed to be readily available from previous publications and studies, it is a rather expensive method of gathering data, and it frequently does not give timely results. On the basis of past tendencies, it might be simpler to anticipate the future condition of affairs. The approach, however, has drawbacks of its own. According to Beri (2000), the data gathered might not be current, hence the inferences drawn and the findings may not be appropriate to the current circumstances. Journals on social capital development, recommendations for buyer-supplier partnerships from different international industries, and supplier relationships rules and procedures were all studied as part of this inquiry.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

According to Leedy (1997), validity is concerned with the reliability and efficiency of the measurement tools. An instrument's validity is based on how accurately it measures the thing it is intended to measure. According to Silverman and Keating (2002), validity is improved when the researcher takes specific precautions toward the survey participants who have various backgrounds and points of view prior to the survey's administration.

This includes determining whether each item is:

- Clear and understandable;
- They interpret each thing as intended;
- Your aim behind each item is obvious to subject-savvy colleagues.
- The items have an intuitive relationship to the study's topic and objectives.

In order to stay focused on the study's objectives, the researcher in this study created the questionnaire while keeping in mind the research questions and literature review. Additionally, the interview procedure double-checked the questionnaire replies, and no difference between the questionnaire results and the interview results was found. Taking these guidelines into account, the researcher asked senior management in a few pharmaceutical businesses who had previously or were now involved in extending credit to complete a survey response instrument and the suggested questionnaire.

The instrument responses were classified as follows:

- Directional clarity
- Question clarity
- the question's relevance as an important component of a major topic, and
- the question's narrowness or constraint of response

Finally, the panelists were asked, "Are there any other issues you believe should be addressed in the survey?" The responses and questions were compiled and analyzed. Appendices 2 and 3 include the survey response instruments. Best and Khan (1993) defined dependability as continuity evidenced by the research tool or technique. This is a reference to the potential for a measurement device to maintain accuracy despite frequent use. This suggests that, assuming a stable population, the instrument should consistently produce trustworthy data. To ensure dependability, the instruments were pre-tested in a pilot study. Before moving on to the primary investigation, the researcher was able to detect and improve on unclear questions.

3.11 Data presentation and analysis

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), raw field data is difficult to interpret unless it is cleaned, processed, and analyzed. To answer the study questions, qualitative analysis entailed evaluating, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining information. To aid in summarizing and organizing the data, qualitative data was classified into significant patterns and themes that were detected. The net effect of supplier relationships is determined by the balance of supplier relationship factors. In the research analysis, the variables of networks, social relationship investment, and associational membership in business were used. These factors were derived from Zhang and Fung's (2006) assessment of Chinese businesses. These are the foundation of supplier relationships. The descriptive analysis of qualitative data was used.

3.12 Summary

The methodology of the inquiry was the focus of this chapter. The sections are as follows: research design, case study design and justification, population, and sample size. It also discusses data collection strategies and procedures, instrument validity and reliability, approaches to data presentation and analysis, and data visualization and analysis software. The chapter that follows delves into data visualization, analysis, and discussion. It focuses on a thorough interpretation and analysis of the study's findings and closes by investigating the relationship between the data presented and the Literature examined in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings and data analysis; it also presents and analyses raw data acquired from the field via questionnaires and personal interviews. To accomplish the study objectives indicated in chapter one, tables, charts, and graphs were used to show and analyse data.

4.2 Response rate

To evaluate the validity of the research findings, the researcher must have a sufficiently high response rate to allow for significant interpretive analysis. The reaction rate makes this possible. The study's high response rate was in part due to the researcher's expertise in conducting and organizing surveys.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Response Rate

Departments	No of Questionnaires Administered	No of Questionnaires answered	Response rate
PROCUREMENT	24	22	91.7
ADMINISTRATION	49	45	91.8
MANAGERS	12	10	83.3

DIRECTORS	5	3	60
ACCOUNTS	35	30	85.7
TOTAL	125	110	88

Source: Primary data

Out of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 110 were returned, yielding an 88% response rate, which was deemed exceptional and successful for the study. The percentage of replies from each department is shown in the table above. Each department had a response percentage that was added together to yield an 88% response rate. These findings are consistent with Bell's (1993) discovery that a well-designed questionnaire has a 70-80% favorable impact on response rate.

Table 4.2: Interviews Response Rate

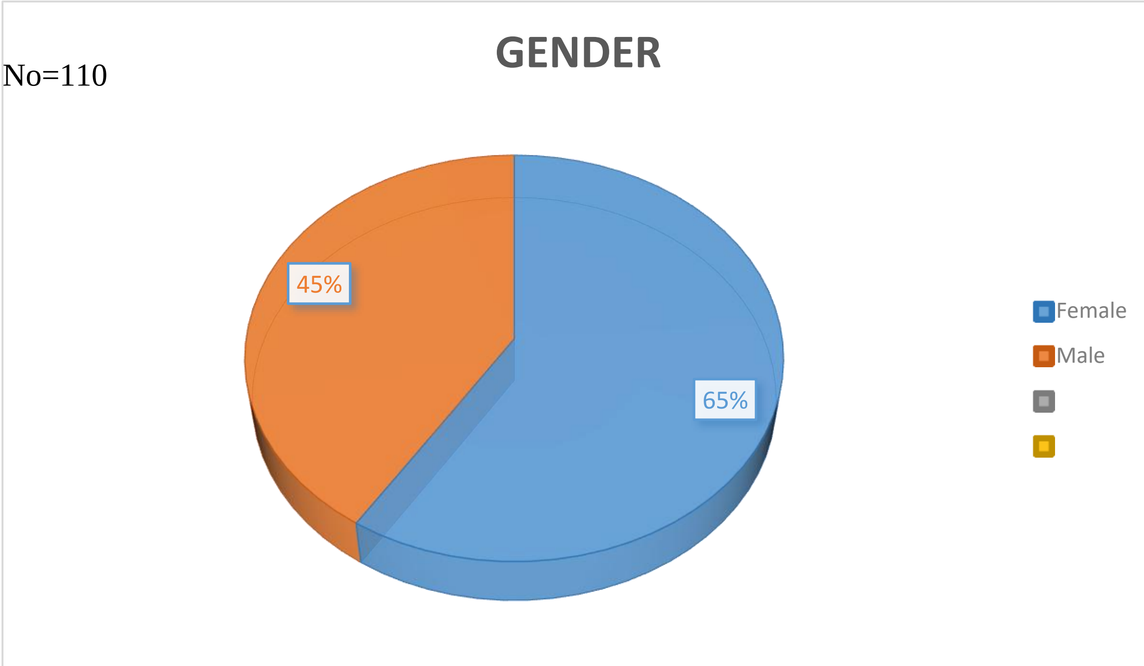
Departments	**No of Interviews Scheduled**	**No of Interviews Conducted**	**Response rate**
PROCUREMENT	18	15	83.3
ADMINISTRATION	20	16	80
MANAGERS	7	5	71.4
DIRECTORS	5	3	60
ACCOUNTS	25	21	84
TOTAL	75	60	80

The researcher arranged 75 interviews for personnel, including top managers and directors from the firm. The researcher was able to complete 60 interviews, generating an 80% response rate, which was judged remarkable and successful for the study. The table above shows the percentage of responses from each department. The response percentages from each department were put together to achieve an 88% response rate. These findings are consistent with Bell's (1993) discovery that a well-designed questionnaire improves response rate by 70-80%.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographic

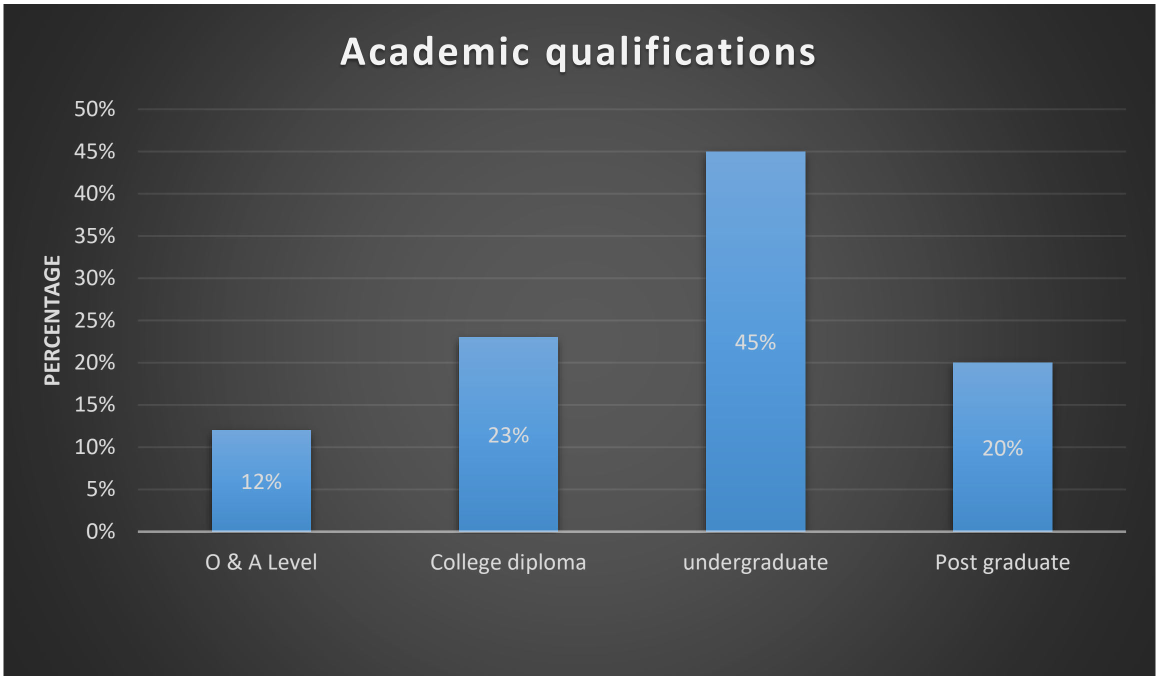
FIG 4.1



It is evident from the pie chart 4.2 above that most of the people who carry out procurement and other related activities at ZINARA are mainly females judging that they had the higher response rate percentage of 65% although there was 45% of male employees that also responded to the questionnaires.

4.2 Organization profile

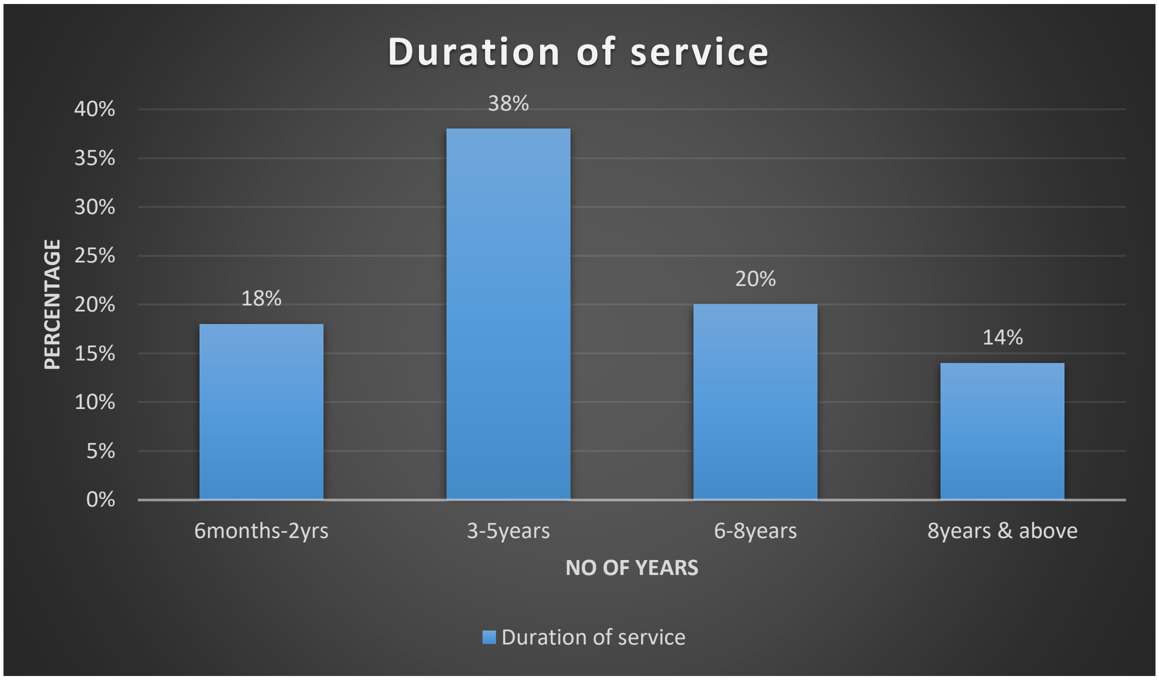
Graph 4.2 shows the results for the qualifications of respondents from ZINARA.



The graph 4.2 above shows that many employees who work in procurement and other associated activities at Zimbabwe National Roads Administration have strong qualifications, despite the fact that 12% only have Ordinary and Advanced level academic qualifications. Because the majority of them had a supply chain background, this is a strong sign that there were minimal errors when carrying out purchasing activities.

4.3 Duration of service in the organization

Graph 4.3 Length of service



The majority of personnel have been with the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration for 3-5 years. This is demonstrated by the 38% of respondents who stated that they have worked for more than three years. This was followed by the 20% who worked for between 6-8 years, 18% who worked for less than two years at the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration, and 14% who indicated they worked for more than 8 years. A close examination of the distribution reveals that the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration has a low labor turnover rate, which is beneficial because they are now familiar with the organizations' procurement methods. The high percentage of employees with few working years was due to the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act [Chapter 22:23], which mandated the recruitment of supply chain professionals in all public organizations in order to meet the Act's requirements. Because most of the respondents have worked for the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration for a long time and understand almost everything that will happen in supply chain management because they are supply chain professionals, this will facilitate a true presentation of the research results. It also demonstrates that they have a longer amount of time to retain buyer supplier connections and can confirm performance improvement.

4.4 Partnerships on supplier relations dimension used to enhance buying performance

Concerning the first purpose of the study, which was to analyse the forms of supplier relations in order to improve the performance of public sector procurement, respondents were asked how much they agreed with the structural social dimensions. Table 4.3 below summarizes their replies to each dimension. 60% of all respondents strongly agreed that supplier performance evaluation is used to improve procurement performance at ZINARA, while 25% agreed only generally that supply performance is used to improve procurement performance at the public sector Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

Table 4.3 Respondents views on partnerships upon supplier relations dimension at ZINARA.

Attributes to the Partnerships of supplier relations	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Total
Supplier Performance evaluation	60%	25%	5%	10%	100%
supplier –buyer collaboration	70%	15%	5%	10%	100%
Information sharing	50%	30%	0%	20%	100%

Of the remaining respondents, 5% disagree and 10% strongly disagree that milling sector procurement performance is dependent on supplier performance, implying that other stochastic elements other than the aforementioned are involved.

All respondents were asked what they thought about supplier-buyer collaboration as a means to improve procurement performance. According to the data in table 4.3, 70% of respondents strongly agree that ZINARA is depending on supplier-buyer development to improve their procurement performance, 15% agreed in general, and 5% were unsure and opted to be neutral. The remaining 10% of respondents strongly disagreed that procurement performance in the milling industry was based on supplier-buyer collaboration criteria, indicating that they were considering other options for improving procurement performance at Zimbabwe National Road Administration.

Furthermore, as shown in table 4.3 above, 50% of respondents strongly agree that ZINARA relies on information exchange to improve procurement performance, while 30% agree in general. Of the remaining respondents, 0% were unsure, and the remaining 20% strongly disagreed that ZINARA procurement performance is dependent on information exchange.

4.5 Effectiveness of supplier relations in improving procurement performance in public sector organisations.

The study aimed to determine the efficacy of supplier relationships in enhancing procurement performance in the public sector. Table 4.1 clearly displays the supplier relations characteristics employed in the study to reveal the effect it has on procurement performance with the respondents' perspectives.

Attributes to the Partnerships of supplier relations	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Strongly Disagree	Total
Supplier Performance evaluation	80%	15%	0%	5%	100%
supplier – collaboration	75%	10%	5%	10%	100%
Information sharing	60%	25%	5%	10%	100%

4.5.1 Supplier Performance evaluation

On the aforementioned supplier relations dimension, respondents were asked how effective they are in improving procurement performance. According to the supplier performance evaluation dimension, 80% of respondents strongly agree and 15% believe that supplier performance evaluation can improve procurement performance. This demonstrates that by examining and approving potential suppliers quantitatively and qualitatively, procurement performance may be effectively improved. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), supplier performance evaluation is a technique used to measure and monitor the performance of current suppliers in order to reduce costs, minimize risk, and drive continuous development within the buying organization. However, 0% employees disagree and 5% strongly disagree with the usefulness of supplier performance review in enhancing ZINARA's procurement performance.

4.5.2 Supplier-Buyer Collaboration

According to this viewpoint, 75% of respondents strongly agree, while 10% think that supplier-buyer collaboration is an effective strategy to improve procurement performance. his is consistent with the findings of Daniel Corsten and Jan Felde's (2005) study, which discovered that better supplier interactions lead to better overall supplier performance satisfaction because they lead to better overall relationships with suppliers, which improve communication, quality, and timing. As a result, leveraging supplier knowledge and integrating it with the buying organization's business needs, and where applicable, is critical. About the respondents, 5% were unsure about this opinion, and 10% strongly disagreed, saying that collaboration between suppliers and buyers should be the first step in enhancing an organization's procurement effectiveness.

4.5.3 Information sharing

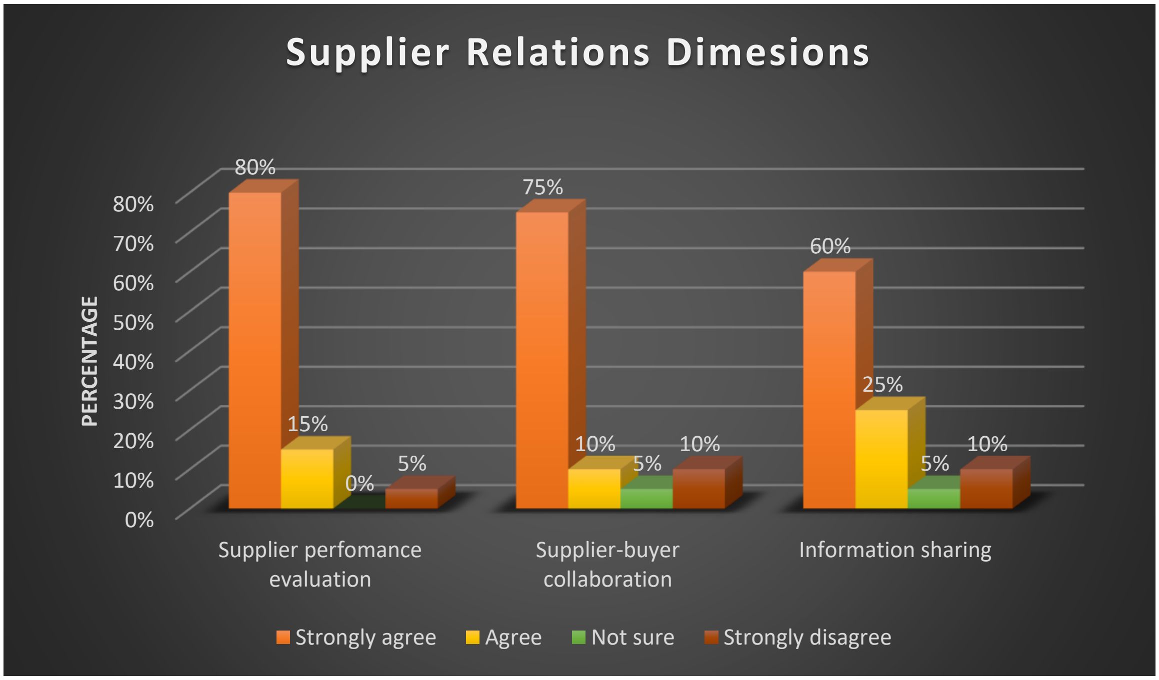
When referring to supply networks, information sharing refers to how much private or important information is made available to chain members. Information about purchasing, operations scheduling, and logistics can be shared on both a tactical and strategic level. Strategic data examples include long-term business objectives, marketing, and customer information. The value of formal and informal information sharing between trading partners has been studied in the past. According to earlier studies (Brennan and Turnbull, 1999; Handfield and Bechtel, 2002), effective information exchange promotes visibility while lowering uncertainty.

When asked whether information sharing is an effective way to boost buying performance in the milling industry, respondents indicated their opinions in table 4.3 above, with 60% of them strongly agreeing that it is. An additional 25% of them expressed a similar opinion. According to Dilek Demirbas, Lauren Wilkinson, and David Bennett (2018), enhanced supplier connections and a higher level of responsiveness or information sharing have improved supply chains since the economic slump. According to the research, being responsive can give an advantage in the marketplace, and it is crucial to be responsive when there is market instability and uncertainty. Positive supplier connections can result in a competitive advantage, according to a second argument made in the literature. However, 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this position, while 5% of the respondents were unsure about it.

4.6 Forms of supplier relations used to enhance procurement performance at ZINARA.

Regarding the first objective of the study, which was to analyze the forms of supplier relationships in increasing buying procurement performance, respondents were asked how much they agreed with the features of the partnership dimensions. Figure 1 depicts the parameters believed to determine procurement performance at ZINARA, as well as replies gathered from primary sources for each dimension.

Overall, 80% of respondents strongly agreed that supplier performance evaluation is used to improve buying performance in the milling industry, and 15% generally agreed that supply performance is used to improve procurement performance within ZINARA.



Among the remaining respondents, 0% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed that procurement performance at ZINARA was dependent on supplier performance, implying that there could be additional stochastic elements besides the aforementioned.

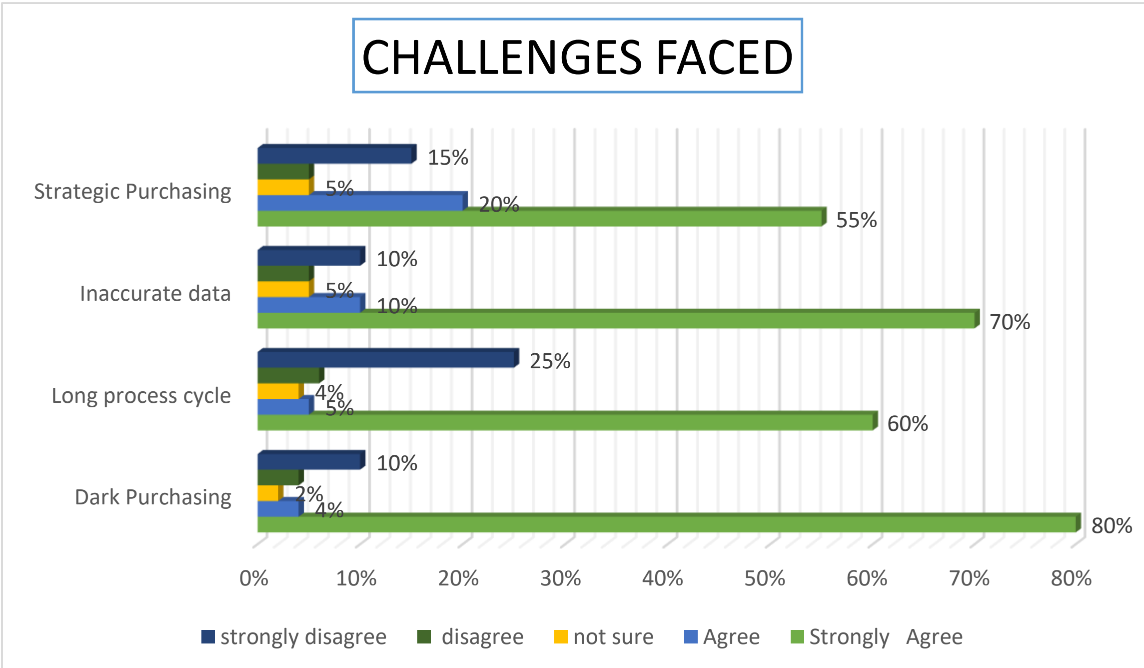
All respondents were questioned about their thoughts on supplier-buyer collaboration as a means of increasing the effectiveness of purchasing organizations. According to the findings in Fig. 1, 75% of respondents strongly agree that ZINARA is depending on supplier-buyer as a means of increasing procurement performance, 10% agreed in general, and 5% were unsure and opted to be neutral. The remaining 10% of respondents strongly disagreed that procurement performance at ZINARA was based on supplier-buyer collaboration criteria, indicating that they were considering other options for improving procurement performance at Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

Furthermore, as illustrated in Fig. 1, 60% of respondents strongly agree that ZINARA relies on information exchange to improve procurement performance, whereas 10% agree in general. The remaining 5% were unsure about this viewpoint, and the remaining 10% strongly disagree that ZINARA procurement performance is dependent on information exchange.

4.7 What are challenges being faced in enhancing procurement performance at Zimbabwe National Roads Adminstration?

The study focuses on four typical procurement roadblocks that prevent companies of all sizes from increasing their purchasing performance, despite the fact that procurement issues differ depending on an organization's size and field of expertise. Regarding the third purpose of the study, respondents were asked to rate the severity of the harm these challenges impose on purchasing performance.

Fig 3 challenges faced in enhancing procurement performance at Zimbabwe National Roads Administration



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4.7.1 Dark Purchasing

Acquisitions that are conducted outside of the defined procurement procedure or when expenses are incurred outside of your company's stated procurement criteria are referred to as dark purchasing. They are prevalent with unapproved vendors and might result in recurring or wasted costs. In the long run, uncontrolled spending can be detrimental to enterprises. When product purchases cannot be justified through capital investment or material inventories, the consequent loss of revenue and control poses a significant management challenge for businesses of all sizes. When questioned, 80% strongly agreed and 4% agreed that dark purchases hamper effective improvement of procurement performance at ZINARA .Dark purchasing is a challenge that can affect the extent to which buying performance can be improved, according to 4% of respondents who disagree and 10% strongly disagree. The following reasons may be due to a misunderstanding of what the term "dark purchase" means.

4.7.2 Long process cycle

Most products and services are acquired at the last minute, under duress. As a result of the lengthy protocols that must be followed, real lead times and the procurement cycle in the public sector tend to be far longer than anticipated or scheduled. Failure to follow the procurement timetable, extending the deadline for submitting bids/proposals, failing to start the evaluation process on time, setbacks in contract negotiation, and supplier delivery delays are all common causes of procurement delays. As a consequence of the findings, 60% of respondents strongly agree, while 5% agree that the long process cycle is one of the primary challenges that has a substantial impact on purchasing performance. Furthermore, 4% of respondents were unsure, 6% disagreed, and 25% strongly disagreed with the same difficulty as inhibiting purchasing performance enhancement.

4.7.3 Inaccurate data

Data that is inaccurate, erroneous, or faulty in any way is referred to as inaccurate data. This could be due to a variety of factors, including human error, data input errors, technical issues, or outdated information. To make efficient procurement decisions, organisations require clear and trustworthy data. Incorrect procurement data can lead to inventory shortages, excess inventory, and other procurement concerns that affect an organization's bottom line. According to the research findings, 70% of respondents strongly agree and 10% agree that erroneous data is a major challenge that negatively affects purchase performance in the public sector. However, 5% of respondents were unsure of this as an issue, while 5% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed, indicating that some respondents were unaware of the critical role of information in procurement as a basis for expressing order specifications.

4.7.4 Strategic procurement

Strategic procurement, also known as procurement strategy, is a long-term, enterprise-wide process that ensures critical goods and services are obtained on time and at the proper price. Organisations are beginning to appreciate the benefits of having a sound procurement strategy in place as the procurement process becomes more strategic and collaborative. Understanding the strategic significance of each phase, on the other hand, is difficult. According to the results of the aforementioned challenge, 55% strongly agree, 20% agree, and the other 5% are unsure about it as an issue that is obstructing effective buying performance within public procurement. In contrast, 10% of ZINARA respondents strongly disagree that strategic procurement is a barrier to efficient procurement performance at the Zimbabwe National Roads Administration.

4.8 Chapter summary

The previous chapter examined data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of research findings. According to the data, the majority of respondents are aware of ZINARA's initiatives to improve procurement performance.. Based on these findings, the researcher would urge all Zimbabwean public sector enterprises to apply best practices to improve their procurement performance. The discussed results were significant to the researcher since they served as the foundation for the summary, conclusion, and suggestions in the following chapter. The following chapter provides a summary of the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarises the major findings, conclusions, and suggestions in connection to the stated aim. It also suggests future study subjects. The goal of this study was to look into the function of supplier relationships in improving and enhancing procurement performance in Zimbabwe's public sector procurement. The study's objectives were to determine the To assess the impact of supplier relations in improving public sector procurement performance in Zimbabwe National Roads Administration, to assess the nature of buyer-supplier relationships in public sector procurement, and to ascertain the challenges faced in implementing good supplier relations concepts in public sector procurement.

5.1 Summary

To explore the behaviors that resulted in the creation of buyer-supplier relationships, the three dimensions of supplier connections (arms length, partnerships, and strategis alliances) were used (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Previous research has identified a variety of activities that result in improved buyer supplier performance (Mpinganjira, Mornay Roberts-Lombard, and Göran Svensson (2017); Chari (2016); Dilek Demirbas, Lauren Wilkinson, Joy M. Field, and Larry C. Meile (2008); Daniel Corsten and Jan Felde (2005)). Improving the transactional and partnership aspects of supplier relationships has been shown to have a significant influence on customer satisfaction. According to the study, the availability of supplier performance evaluation, supplier development, and information exchange has a major impact on organizational performance, including trust, networks, and lower transaction costs, as well as access to information and quality .

In a variety of settings, supplier contacts have been proven to increase performance outcomes (Coleman 1988; Burt 1997; Walker, Kogut et al. 1997; Gulati 1998; Freeman, Edwards et al. 2006; Cooke 2007). Krause, Handfield, and colleagues investigated the influence of supplier improvement actions on the performance of the buying firm in 2007 using social capital theory. Their research was based around three aspects of supplier relationships: arm's length, partnerships, and strategic alliances. According to the findings, supplier relations characteristics such as partnerships, arm's length, and strategic alliances have a cyclical effect on inflows to the firm and are hence critical to firm performance.

The buyer-supplier relationship can have a substantial impact on the performance of both parties. Supplier management is a critical component of the supply chain that can impact a company's capacity to produce high-quality goods and services.

5.2 Conclusion

The effectiveness of Supplier Relations in improving procurement performance of an organization has been established in this study. This study on investigating the effectiveness of supplier relations in improving procurement performance of an organization has revealed that all forms of supplier relations are effective in improving the procurement performance of an organization metrics which are, trust, networks, reducing transaction costs, access to information, and quality . This study is also supported by various authors.

To add on the researcher also found that, long purchasing cycles, dark purchasing and strategic purchasing complexity are the main challenges in implementing and maintaining good supplier relations. However the availability of supplier relations is very vital to the improvement of procurement performance of an organization performance. Recently the Operations management field has begun to recognize the importance of behaviors on performance.

5.3 Recommendations

These rules are intended for organizations, employees, decision-makers, practitioners, academics/researchers, and the general public. These recommendations are based on a review of the research and a discussion of the findings and conclusions. The following recommendations are made:

Based on the study's findings, the researcher will encourage all Zimbabwean public sector firms to apply best practises for improving procurement performance.

As more companies appreciate the need of having a sound procurement strategy in place, they should engage in more strategic and collaborative procurement. The buyer-supplier connection can have a significant impact on both parties' performance. Supplier management is an important component of the supply chain that can have an impact on a company's ability to provide high-quality goods and services.

5.4 Areas for further study

There could be many additional acts that form supplier relationships within the partnership that were not studied in this study. There is room to build on the ideas uncovered in this study. This study's scope was limited to the effectiveness of Supplier Relations in public sector procurement; however, it might be expanded to include other manufacturing and private sectors. Future research could expand on this current experiment by polling both the consumer and the supplier, allowing for the exploration of perception differences throughout the dyadic encounter. When respondents' subjective judgements are compared to objective criteria, the impact of supplier relationships on product performance may be validated further.

APPENDIX A

Bindura University of Science Education

P.O Box 1020

Bindura

My name is Lilian V Mungazi, a student at Bindura University of Science Education, pursuing a Bachelor of Honours Degree in Purchasing and Supply Chain Management. I am conducting a research on the topic: The effectiveness of supplier relations in the improving the performance of public sector procurement .Please kindly respond to all questions as provided. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and the findings are strictly for academic purposes only. Do not write your name or phone number on this questionnaire. I appreciate your contribution in advance and it is my sincere hope that you will enjoy providing 0honest answers in the questions.

For more information and clarity, please do not hesitate to contact me on lilianmungazi500@gmail.com or alternatively call +263714982070

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Personal Details

1. **1Your Organization's Name ____**
2. **Gender male [ ] female [ ]**

Please check the necessary boxes.

1.2. Departments

Procurement [ ]

Administration [ ]

Managers [ ]

Directors [ ]

Accounts [ ]

1.2 How long has your organization been around on average?

2 years and below	3-5 years	6-9 years	45 years and above
1	2	3	4

1.3 What are your academic qualifications?

A & O Level	College diploma	Under graduate	Post graduate
1	2	3	4

1. 4 How long have you been employed by the company?

6 months-2 years	3-5 years	6-8 years	Above 8 years
1	2	3	4

SECTION B

2.1 Your organisation relied on the following forms of supplier relations(partnerships)!

Please tick where appropriate

	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Attributes to the Partnerships of supplier relations	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Supplier Performance evaluation					
Buyer-Supplier collaboration					
Information sharing					

2.2 To what extent has your organisation relied on the following forms of supplier relations (strategic alliances)?

	5	4	3	2	1
Attributes to the strategic alliances of supplier relations	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Buying organization's commitment to improving its performance					
Buyer dependence on supplier for improvement					
Supplier dependence on buyer for business					

2.3 Does your organisation rely on the following form of supplier relations (Arms-length)?

Do your business and its suppliers share the same values?

Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Disagree [ ] Strongly Disagree [ ] Not sure [ ]

SECTION C: Performance measure of Supplier relations.

3.1 The supplier has helped in the following. (**Please tick where applicable)**

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

Supplier assisted in lowering the total cost of our services.					
Supplier assisted in improving service quality.					
Supplier contributed to the increased dependability of our service delivery schedule.					
Supplier aided in increasing work flexibility					
Supplier assisted in the enhancement of process design					
Suppliers assisted in shortening product development life cycles.					
Suppliers assisted in improving the capabilities of developing new products.					

Section D: challenges of supplier relations in improving buyer performance

	5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree
A too close association with this single provider may disrupt the balance of our company's other suppliers.					
Working with this particular supplier could be advantageous in certain respects but detrimental to our standing with some other businesses.					
Although close collaboration with one supplier will probably have some advantages, it's possible that other significant suppliers won't be pleased.					

I APPRECIATE YOUR PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX C

1. **Which forms of Supplier relations affect the performance of the buying organisation exist within your firm?**

Partnerships		**Strategic alliances**		**Arms -length**
Performance evaluation		Buyer commitment		No Shared value
Buyer-supplier collaboration		Buyer dependence		
Information sharing		Supplier dependence		
		Reciprocity		

2. **To what extent does the relationship between buyers and suppliers improve the performance of the buying organisation?**

It significantly affects the quality of our services.

- It has a significant impact on the level of service provided.

- It has a significant impact on access to infomation

- It has a negative impact on the organization's ability to adapt, as well as

- the firm's ability to advance its innovations.

3. **What are the challenges being faced in implementing good supplier relations to improve buyer performance?**

- A lack of understanding of effective supplier connections.
- A lack of managerial backing.
- The unwillingness of other providers to cooperate.
- The reputation of the purchasing organization may suffer from collaboration with other vendors.

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