



**The effects of e-procurement on business
competitiveness in the food and beverages industry. A
case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe.**

BY

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***This dissertation was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
B.com Honours Degree in Purchasing and Supply***

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THE EFFECTS OF E-PROCUREMENT ON
BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGES INDUSTRY. A CASE
STUDY OF COCA-COLA ZIMBABWE.

PROGRAMME: BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PURCHASING
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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my father (M.J Shereni), mother (Memory Shereni), little sister and brother (Tinotenda and Tawananyasha Shereni. I thank you for your unwavering support. May God bless you abundantly, Glory to God.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry using a case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. The study applied a descriptive statistics methodology and a sample size of 20 from a total population of 25. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews and analysed as well as presented in tables and graphs. The study found out that e-procurement has a positive effect on competitiveness of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. Results indicate that e-procurement reduces Coca-Cola Zimbabwe production costs, market prices of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe products as well as increases quality of the products due to efficient procurement systems. The study therefore recommends Coca-Cola Zimbabwe to promote the use of e-procurement to procure all its inputs. The organisation is further recommended to upgrade its e-procurement infrastructure to increase the benefits associated with digital procurement processes. Further, the organisation is also recommended to capacitate its staff to empower them with skills amenable with digital modern world. The study also consequently suggests that additional research be done to compare two businesses operating in similar industries for instance the clothing and fashion sector, in order to determine the effects of e-procurement on variables relating to business performance. Furthermore, a look on how to improve the use of e-procurement towards achieving competitiveness should be looked into.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Complement of this research has been an exhilarating learning curve for me. I want to thank all who helped me to complete this endeavour. Firstly, I would like to thank the Lord Almighty in whom all things are possible for being my provider in relation to all aspects of life, particularly for the life, wisdom, inspiration and guidance in this research. My supervisor and mentor Mr D Chikabwi, he offered valuable inspiration, creative energy and advice through his academic and practical criticisms he provided provoking questions and comments, which have made immeasurable contribution to this research. Not forgetting my girlfriend, Angeleen Mukonyo for her love and support. I am also grateful to Coca-Cola Zimbabwe for granting me the permission to conduct my research study. I would also like to express gratitude to my family and fellow students for their support.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BUSE: Bindura University of Science Education

CCZ: Coca-Cola Zimbabwe

PRAZ: Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe

E.D.I: Electronic Data Interchange

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The study investigates the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverage industry, using a case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. This chapter focuses on the background of the study which covers the purpose context of this research by identifying and describing the history of this topic, the gaps and missing links which needs to be addressed and the significance of addressing these gaps, the problem statement which describes the area of concern, a condition to be improved and the troubling questions that exists in scholarly literature thus in theory or in practice that points to the need of meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. Research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions, delimitations and limitations of the study and definition of key terms will also be covered in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

Over the last few years, the internet has evolved from being a scientific network only, to a platform that is enabling a new generation of business. It is changing the way business is done in every industry and is playing an important role as it is revolutionizing the way in which business is conducted around the world. With the emergence of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), companies have been forced to shift their operation from the traditional style of paper procurement to e-Business, e-Procurement, and e-Supply Chain philosophy to sustain themselves Lee, (2007).

Traditional procurement systems included manual steps, and at one point, managing

transactions involved slower systemic steps Hawking, (2004). Traditional procurement systems were not efficient and cost saving for they did not consider any other variables such as quality and after sale services like warranties but only focused on price. This led to low standard outputs, increased costs and loss in sales and profits. The system gradually introduces e-procurement, as recommended by experts in the industry, using the existing traditional procurement procedures as a foundation. Companies began moving their procurement activities online along with the development of the internet as they realized how much it would help them if all procurement procedures were carried out accurately and efficiently.

E-procurement has been introduced into the corporate community as a result of significant global improvements being made to the manual procurement system World Bank, (2011). It is believed that the reforms eliminate the paper-based procurement system which causes loss of money due to inefficient and improper administration of funds as well as expensive and time-consuming bidding processes that are corruptible Chigudu, (2014). Similarly, Farringtons, (2012) acknowledged that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has reduced expenses and paperwork for most organizational operations, ultimately resulting in more efficient and effective business operations. It is also believed that ICT is a driver of business competitiveness.

Acceptance and implementation of the ultimate e-procurement system in the African societies is still in the planning stages and will change over the time because of things like the region's slow technical progress Kayungi, (2013). Similarly, according to the World Bank, the lack of e- procurement adoption in Africa is a result of poor progress in building the necessary capacity, lack of ICT infrastructure, and lack of creativity in government culture. Slowly, e- procurement is moving into Africa and developing countries.

In Zimbabwe, the spread and increasing popularity of social media has fueled

workers' demands for similar e-capabilities to be implemented at their places of employment in order to simplify their daily work lives. The Zimbabwean government took things a step further in 2017 by passing the State Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, a statute whose goal is to implement several reforms including e-procurement to address some of the issues with manual procurement, which is still utilized by a number of entities. Little efforts have been made in Zimbabwe to date towards the effort to implement e- procurement as a strategy to enhance the performance and competitiveness of business institutions.

In a monopolistic market structure of food and beverages were a number of large firms such as Delta, Schweppes, Lyons, Dairy board, Varun and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe exist, the market position/share price, and quality of the beverages are the variables which matter most and can be used in measuring the firm's performance and competitiveness. Coca-Cola Zimbabwe is among entities which embraced and institutionalized ICT and social media systems in their day-to-day operations. In 1948 the company started its operations in Zimbabwe as a Company Bottling Operation with the first factory premises at Telford road in Granite side, Harare and since expanded to the present site known as coke corner. This was after the drink originated in 1886 by an Atlanta pharmacist John S Pemberton at his Pemberton Chemical Company. Coca- Cola Zimbabwe has employed over 6000 people over its 36 depots around the country. It has a large product portfolio. Its product line is 3 because there are 3 core products within the product mix, soft drinks, minute maid and mineral water.

Table 1.1: Coca-Cola Zimbabwe performance and competitiveness comparison

Variables	Before (period 2000-2009)	After (2022)
Beverages Quality	45-47%	74%
Beverages Sales	59-63%	85.6%
Market Share	55-60%	65.4%

Source: primary data

From **table 1.1**, Before e-procurement was introduced in the organization Coca-Cola Zimbabwe, the statistics from the year 2000 to 2009 indicated that the beverages quality ranged between 45- 47%. In the similar days, the beverages sales and market share ranged between 59-63% and 55-60% respectively. Coca-Cola Zimbabwe currently holds 65% of the market share in the beverages industry, thus after the introduction of e- procurement. Its sales and beverages quality have also increased to 74% and 85% respectively after the introduction of e- procurement in the early days of 2018.

Despite the organization being among the pioneers to adopt the concept of e-procurement and other strategies which include supplier base optimization and global sourcing, there has never been a clear identification on competitiveness of the organization in the food and beverage industry.

1.2 Problem Statement

For the past sixty years since its operations in Zimbabwe, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share ranged from 55 to 60% in the carbonated soft drinks industry until 2016. Through the Special Economic Zone designation, Varun beverages a competitor came and took over the market position using its lower priced beverages which boosted its sales as consumers were opting for a cheap and ever available beverage. Due to the competition, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's sales dropped by 35% and lost its market position as the top supplier of soft drinks to 25%, sales dropped from 72% in 2010 to 60% in 2016 and so as it shares on the Stock Exchange Market.

In trying to manage competition and boost back the firm's competitiveness in the beverage industry, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe in the late days of 2018 introduced strategies such as e- procurement, supplier base optimization, global sourcing and rebranding of its packaging to attract customers back to the brand. Competitiveness which is measured in terms of product quality, price and market share was restored in Coca-Cola Zimbabwe.

Before the implementation of the mentioned strategies, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe was distributing a lesser quantity of its beverages at a higher price of 1 US dollar per each 500mls drink in the market which made its sales to drop in reference to the above-mentioned statistics. This made its rival Varun to lead in the market for it was charging 50cents (USD) per each 500mls drink. However, after the implementation of these strategies, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe restored a compatible price of 65cents (USD), and because of an improved quality of the beverages, sales improved from 45% and currently stand at 85.6% and the market share was restored from 25% to 65.4% making Coca-Cola Zimbabwe a leader in the market.

Given that Coca-Cola Zimbabwe implemented a hive of strategies in fighting back its market position, it is less known which strategy worked for the company. Coca-Cola Zimbabwe itself is giving credit to e-commerce without any strong justification of disqualifying other strategies. This study, therefore seeks to investigate the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverage industry, using a case of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe.

1.3 Research objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the role of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry.
2. Analyze the effects of e-procurement on product quality, product price and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the role of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry?

2. What are the effects of e-procurement on product quality, product price and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share?

1.5 Significance of the study

To the student

The study is conducted as part of the Bachelor of Commerce in Purchasing and Supply requirement. The study gave the researcher the best chance to use the research techniques and knowledge they have learned in their current degree program in real life scenarios. Additionally, this boosts the researcher's ability to conceptualize a research study within an organisation to advance problem solving abilities through research.

To the academic field

The research is intended to benefit the academic field by contributing to ongoing reforms on the adoption of e-procurement and its effects on business competitiveness in the private sector.

To the food and beverages industry

Additionally, findings from this study would shade light on the effectiveness of e-procurement on organisational competitiveness and as a result would encourage its implementation in the food and beverages industry.

1.6 Assumptions

The researcher assumes the following:

- i. Respondents will voluntarily assist in providing access to data and information that may be regarded as sensitive and confidential.
- ii. The study period will be spent in a constant research atmosphere.

- iii. The information gathered will be true and accurate to allow the researcher to make inferences and recommendations that are worthwhile.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

A case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe was used in the study to analyze the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry in Zimbabwe. Although there are a number of food and beverages in Zimbabwe that are facing competition challenges, the study only focused on the case of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe because it has a huge percentage of 65% market share compared to other competitors. The study will exclusively cover the years 2021-2022. The study was also constrained by its scope as it tried to identify the variables that influence the competitiveness of businesses.

1.8 Limitations of the study

Time factor- due to the researcher's requirement to attend classes and do research at the same time, the time frame was constrained. The researcher planned a working schedule within the time range that was available and avoided procrastination to ensure that the task was completed on time in order to address the time limitation.

Confidentiality- the primary providers of the data did not divulge important information, which can be considered as a threat to the organization's image and operations. To address this issue, the researcher thoroughly demonstrated the value of the study to company management and how the findings will contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives when the project was finished.

Limited resources- the research was restricted because it required financial resources and significant sums of money for travel, printing and other expenses. The project was also not funded by any company or organization. The researcher asked family, friends and acquaintances for funding to try to solve this problem. Less expensive alternatives were also adopted by the researcher.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Procurement – is the procedure by which private or public entities purchase commodities or services to fulfill a variety of needs, including those for shelter, transportation and infrastructure Thai, (2017)

E-procurement- is the utilization of internet- based information, communication and technology being used to carry out all individual steps in the procurement process such as sourcing, negotiation, ordering, receipt and post- purchase review (Nawi, 2016)

Supply chain management- is a network of relationships between businesses and within firms, as well as between various dependent organizations. It consists of suppliers of materials, facilities for production, purchasing, logistics and marketing, as well as systems that facilitate the forward and reverse flow of materials and services (Hugo, 2018)

Competitiveness - A company's or organization's capacity to manufacture goods or services with favorable quality and cost that guarantees strong profitability and consumer preference over rivals.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study and its components which were the background of the study and went on to highlight the problem statement, research objectives, the research questions as well as the significance of the study. The assumptions, delimitations and limitations were also discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will focus on literature review both the theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical framework will introduce and describe the different theories that explain why the research problem under study exists whilst the empirical literature focuses

on practical experiences or past studies carried out rather than theories.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and its components which were the background of the study and went on to highlight the problem statement, research objectives, the research questions as well as the significance of the study. The assumptions, delimitations and limitations were also discussed in the chapter. This chapter focuses on literature review both the theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the different theories that explain why the research problem under study exists whilst the empirical literature focuses on practical experiences or past studies carried out rather than theories. Lastly, the chapter would give the theoretical framework of analysis.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

A theory is a body of interconnected variables, definitions and suggestions that gives a systematic view of events by finding relationships among variables with the intention of illuminating natural phenomena Snyder, (2019). According to Kumar,

(2018), the major objects to be researched, concepts or variables and the ostensible link between them, are all explained visually or in narrative form in theoretical literature. Relevant theories in this study are resource-based view theory, transactional cost theory and diffusion of innovation.

2.1.1 The resource-based view theory

A company's resources might be both tangible and intangible. According to Barney (1991), the majority of a company's resources consist of all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, firm attributes, information, and knowledge that are controlled by a firm to enable the firm to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness, and it gives the organization a competitive advantage. For instance, the adoption of cutting-edge technology can generate, process and disseminate information quickly and reliably, giving the party involved competitive advantage over their rivals Weishaupl et al. (2015)

Resource-based theory is a method of designing and putting strategies into action by focusing on internal and external resources, assessing the likelihood of value creation and optimizing value production. In order to produce value and boost their industry competitiveness, the business can use resources from outside their own organization. Companies are switching from traditional purchasing, where it is typically impossible to create value without sufficient resources, to electronic procurement, where suppliers, buyers and consumers are connected to form a supply chain and enable value creation Drechsler, and (2011). According to Bowman (2000), value creation depends on the transformation of tangible resources including time, human and social capital plus claims.

RBV theory is important in relation to this study as it highlights that a company in the food and beverage industry benefits from having resources like e-procurement at its disposal. It gains increased market share, competitiveness and improvement on products quality. This enhances the business's ability to provide value.

1.1.2 The Capability-Based View Theory

According to Grant (1996), resources are the source of capabilities, whereas capabilities are the source of competitive advantage. According to Grant's (1996) idea, an organization's talents, not its resources, determine its competitiveness. He endorsed the value of capabilities and argued that an organization can increase its competitiveness by using its capabilities to carry out crucial tasks inside the company.

Grant described capabilities as an organization's power to deploy resources, typically in combination via organizational procedures, as opposed to resources. They are information-based, tangible or intangible business processes that have evolved through time as a result of intricate interactions between the organization's resources. According to the theory under consideration, a company's capacity to integrate, develop, and reconfigure internal and external competences can help it respond to settings that change quickly. According to Grant (1996), a firm's capacity to create value by enacting the transformation of inputs into outputs is directly or indirectly related to the ability of an organization to perform a productive task. For an organisation to have a competitive advantage, it must be able to learn and develop new information. Due to the organization under investigation's ability to compete in a market with competitors, this hypothesis plays a significant role in the study. The introduction of e-procurement is viewed as fresh information and a resource that may be used to boost competitiveness. The ability of the organization to carry out a useful activity, such as e-procurement, which links either directly or indirectly to a firm's ability to create value by enacting the translation of inputs to outputs, is crucial to the research.

2.2 Empirical literature review

In an effort to establish the viability of literary interpretation, Schmidt (2010) defined an empirical literature review as a reaction to and an attempt at doing so. This

section will carry out a thorough review of the empirical literature to help in the formulation of the most effective methodology for this study. Case studies and surveys from various geographic places are detailed in this study under the guidance of the empirical literature. Giving the essential framework within which the subject under research is presented, examined, and interpreted is the goal of this.

Suman Tiwari et al (2019) took an investigation on the application and implementation of e-procurement technologies in Malaysian manufacturing firm. Their research sought to ascertain the degree of e-procurement deployment in Malaysian enterprises as well as the connection between supply chain performance across Malaysian businesses and the e-procurement system. The research design for the study was descriptive. Data collection involved using a questionnaire. The results showed that the enterprises had moderately adopted electronic procurement. According to the respondents, E-procurement was heavily used in the firm to significantly improve supply chain performance. This study is comparable to the current study in that both authors focus on manufacturing companies and the concept of e-procurement. The current study continues by examining the impacts on corporate competitiveness. It examines Coca-Cola Zimbabwe rather than just any random manufacturing company because it belongs to the food and beverage sector.

Ilya's Masudin et al (2021) did a study on the impact of e-procurement adoption on company performance, evidence from Indonesian manufacturing industry. The goal of the study was to ascertain how the implementation of e-procurement will affect the performance of Indonesian manufacturing enterprises. Respondents received the final questionnaire after the pilot test was completed. The findings show that the deployment of e-procurement is significantly impacted by top management support. Other findings indicate that while e-procurement installation significantly affects corporate performance, information quality significantly affects e-procurement implementation. This study and the one that is now being conducted are related since both focus on the effects of e-procurement on the industrial sector. Therefore, the consequences on business competitiveness rather than simply the performance

of the business as a whole are the focus of the current study. The current study additionally emphasizes the elements of pricing, quality, and market position. It will also use excel in data presentation and evaluation of findings.

Conrad et al (2022) investigated the functional integration and competitive advantage of food and beverages manufacturing firms in Kenya. The study's main goal was to determine the connection between functional integration and competitive advantage of Kenyan companies that manufacture food and beverages. The study discovered a significant positive linear association between functional integration and a competitive advantage. Furthermore, it is projected that the competitive advantage would rise with each unit of functional integration that is added. The study comes to the conclusion that improving a company's competitive advantage in the food and beverage market requires careful consideration of the functional integration characteristics. The authors' techniques were comparable, and both studies focused on competition within the food and beverage sector. This study, however, examines e-procurement as a strategy and seeks to ascertain whether it has an effect on corporate competitiveness. It will also use a research design of a case study.

Musran Munizu (2015) looked on improving the competitive advantage through information technology: A case at food and beverage industries in Indonesia. The study made an effort to look into the impact of information technology (IT) on competitive advantage, particularly in the South Sulawesi, Indonesia, food and beverage sector. The study employed a survey methodology, and questionnaires were utilized to gather the data. The findings demonstrate a considerable impact of information technology, which includes IT for administration, IT for communication, and IT for production, on competitive advantage. IT for production has a greater impact on competitive advantage than IT for administration or IT for communication combined. The same industry is being examined in both the prior study and this one, and both investigations include the ICT idea. The current study, however, is being conducted in Zimbabwe a developing economy and will attempt to produce the right

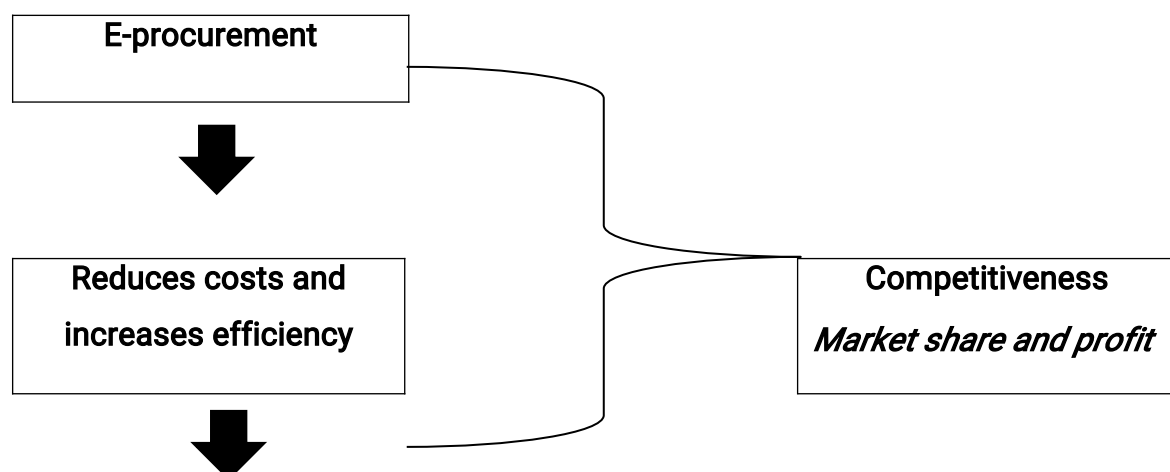
results by using both primary and secondary data.

Fujun Lai et al (2006) studied the impact of information technology on the competitive advantage of logistics firms in China. In line with their research, a firm's competitive edge might be enhanced by a stronger IT focus. It is crucial to integrate IT, align IT strategy with business strategy, acquire managerial skills linked to IT, and attain IT proficiency in order to gain competitive advantages effectively. When IT deployment is higher than normal compared to competitors, 3PL managers might anticipate seeing competitive advantages from their IT investments. Both studies center on ICT, but the difference is this one will be conducted in a developing nation and looks into the food and beverage manufacturing industry rather than logistics companies.

2.3 Conceptual framework Analysis

According to Roth (2004) conceptual framework is a collection of broad ideas and hypotheses that let the analyst to identify challenges in the analysis, sketch solutions, and discuss the pertinent writing for the research. The variables of this study are quality, price and market share.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework



**Improves Quality and
prices**

Source, Owner compilation, 2022

In the conceptual framework above, e-procurement works on reducing costs and increasing efficiency which is expected to have effect on price and quality, all leading to competitiveness indicated by market share and profit.

2.4 Gap Analysis

There hasn't been enough research done in Zimbabwe on how e-procurement affects corporate competitiveness in the food and beverage sector. Coca-Cola Zimbabwe encounters a variety of difficulties, including rivalry from businesses like Varun Beverages, insufficient technological infrastructure, and environmental problems. Most of the empirical studies examined were conducted in developed nations and pre covid 19 pandemic eras, including the ones by Altunbas et al. (2013), Waters (2012), and Holt and Bossler (2012). As a result, their findings cannot be generalized to Zimbabwe due to significant geographic and economic development differences. This study therefore seeks to investigate the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness using a case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on literature review both the theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical framework introduced and described the different theories that explain why the research problem under study existed whilst the empirical literature focused on practical experiences or past studies carried out rather than theories. Lastly, the chapter gave the theoretical framework of analysis. The next chapter will solely focus on research methodology, and it comprises of the following key aspects; research design, targeted population, sampling methods which includes the techniques and size, research instruments, data collection methods, procedures and analysis plan.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on literature review. Both theoretical and empirical literatures were reviewed. Conceptual framework and gap analysis were also discussed as well. This chapter solely focuses on research methodology and it comprises of the following key aspects; research design, targeted population, sampling methods which includes the techniques and size, research instruments, data collection methods, procedures and analysis plan. The methodology's major goal is to make sure that the proper data collection techniques are used and effectively presented. On the study, the researcher combined qualitative and quantitative research methods even though the study is mainly quantitative in nature.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the methods a researcher uses to gather and analyse data.

To examine the effects of e-procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe competitiveness, the study used the descriptive research design. This research design was using qualitative research method. Hair, et al., (2006) explains that descriptive design uses a set of scientific methods and procedures to collect raw data and create data structure that describes available characteristics for instance attitude, intentions, preferences, purchase behaviours, evaluation of the existing marketing mix of a defined target population.

A descriptive study is used when a researcher wants to understand the characteristics of certain phenomena underlying a particular problem. Descriptive research is typically concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or relationship between two variables Ortinau (2003). In this study the research approach was also quantitative in nature thus it sought to discover the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness.

3.1.1 Descriptive research design

According to Shuttle (2008), descriptive study design is a scientific methodology that entails watching and describing a subject's behavior without in any way altering it. According to Cohen and Manion (1989–1990), who utilized the descriptive research approach in their already done studies, this method is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, behaviors that are common, beliefs, points of view and impacts that are being felt.

The descriptive survey approach utilized by the researcher gives a clear description of the variables under investigation. The findings on data presentation were presented in the study using a combination of tables, pie charts, and bar graphs. Through the use of questionnaires, in-person interviews, and secondary data, the data gathered was inferred into the meanings of qualitative data. The method's main benefit is that subjects are observed in a totally unaltered and natural context.

3.2 Target Population

According to Saunders et al, (1995) target population refers to the segment of the

population on which the study is based. This establishes the totality of the components from which information is to be deduced. A sample size of employees was made of all the employees at the Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. The targeted population of 25 persons in the administration was made up of 5 people from top management, 6 from the procurement department, 7 from sales and 7 from the production department who would provide necessary information towards the variables under investigation.

3.3 Sampling

A sample, according to Kotler P. (2000), is a subset of a population that is studied and from which conclusions about the traits of the population under discussion are formed. Yin (2003) state that sampling is used when it is impractical to research every single member of the population because doing so would be time- and labor-intensive and expensive. Because time was of the essence to the researcher, the researcher decided to select only a tiny sample from the overall population.

3.4 Sampling techniques

This refers to techniques used to choose study participants who would make up a sample that was representing the population. These are divided into two categories: probability and non-probability sampling procedures. A probability sampling technique is one in which the likelihood that each element will be selected is known to be non-zero, Hair (2006). Non-probability sampling is dependent on the researcher's judgment and is only representative to the extent that their expertise allows. For this study, the researcher used the non-probability sampling approach.

3.4.1 Non-Probability Sampling

The researcher used non-probability sampling techniques to choose the participants from top management, procurement, sales and production. In non-probability sampling, it is impossible to determine the likelihood that a specific member will be chosen. The judgmental sampling method was the non-probability sampling methodology used because it allows the researcher to go directly to the targeted population of interest. It was also applied because it increases the relevance of the sample to the population of interest as only individuals that fit particular in the study are included in the sample.

3.4.2 Judgemental Sampling

Kotler P. (2000) claims that judgmental sampling entails the researcher locating and interviewing a predetermined number of people while using his or her own discretion. This assisted the researcher in deciding to whom to give questionnaires and to whom not to give them. The researcher's primary informants were the employees of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. The researcher chose the top managerial, procurement, sales and production employees whom believed possessed information that could aid in the assessment of the effects of e-procurement on the competitiveness of the organization. Judgmental sampling was used in order to come up with the mentioned employees who could provide more adequate and reliable information due to their positions and departments within the organization.

3.5 Sample Size

According to Aaker (1999), sample size often specifies the population of people to be included in the sample. By choosing respondents from a representative sample of the target population, the researcher was able to calculate the sample size. Using a straightforward random procedure, the researcher selected a sample of the demographic target by asking the top and human resources management for people who had the knowledge and information needed for the investigation. The sales, production, procurement and top management were the sample populations employed in this study. The population for this study consisted of 25 Coca-Cola Zimbabwe administration personnel, from which a sample was taken.

Under sales and procurement departments, 7 and 6 individuals respectively were picked in their highest level of qualifications and number of years they have been working in the organization. 5 from the production department were chosen for they were the ones who mostly worked in hand with the information concerning production quality which was necessary for this research whilst 2 from top management were picked in order to provide information concerning the variables under survey mainly market share and profit perspective. The sample size totaled to 20 individuals from the 4 departments.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments are specialized tools used to gather information on a particular area of interest, and they offer the researcher instructions on how to gather, analyse, and interpret data. The instruments could take the shape of questionnaires, observations, interviews, focus groups, discussions and experiments. The researcher will employ interviews and questionnaires as the main instruments in this study because they are relatively cheap, quick and efficient way of obtaining information from a sample of individuals. They were also used because they provide useful information when participants cannot be directly observed.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a list of questions that are distributed to particular people in order to collect statistical data on a particular topic for study. Individuals in the study region received hand copies of questions from the researcher. Because they limit respondents' options for answering questions, closed-ended questionnaires were utilized, and a Likert scale form was also used (Agree, Disagree or neutral). The respondents respond to the researcher's questions using the Likert scale.

The researcher also included open-ended questions in the questionnaire, giving respondents the chance to express their opinions in more detail. 20 questionnaires were issued out to the respondents, asking them to respond on the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness. To prevent bias, a good questionnaire should be succinct and to the point. The researcher, as a result divided the questionnaire into sections, each of which contains similar pertinent data.

3.7.1.1 Advantages of the questionnaire

- ❖ A lot of information on e-procurement's effects on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe is gathered as the respondent has enough time to give all the information regarding the study questions.
- ❖ Respondents are free to respond at their own time, hence, reducing

interviewer bias.

- ❖ Quality and desired information about the effects of e-procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe is obtained as respondents have ample time to research on the area as well.
- ❖ Easy to administer as they were only 20 which is not too big of a number for the researcher.
- ❖ They provided anonymity, thereby allowing the Coca-Cola Zimbabwe selected employees to provide information without fear of being disclosed to the public for non-educational purposes.

3.7.1.2 Disadvantages of Questionnaires.

- ❖ False information may be given by the respondents in trying to protect the organisation's confidential information such as profits.
- ❖ Some of the questionnaires might not be returned because the respondent might have failed to complete the questionnaire.
- ❖ Some respondents can be ignorant and choose not to attend to the given questions.

3.7.2 Direct Interviews

An interview is a structured conversation where one participant asks questions, and the other provides answers. The word "interview" refers to a one-on-one conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee. A face-to-face interview, a telephone interview, and a question-and-answer session with the respondents at the time all made up the interviews that were done. Direct interviews where a participant asks questions and the respondent provides answers were used to gather data in order to gain first-hand primary information. Interviews were the method of choice for the researcher because they allow for additional probing, which helps the researcher gain a comprehensive knowledge of the respondents' responses. Interviews have the benefit of supplying qualitative data.

Face-to-face interviews and both closed- and open-ended questions were employed by the researcher. The researcher also employed semi-structured interviews, which allowed them to probe participant responses by requesting clarification. The researcher used this technique because it records both verbal and nonverbal inquiries, allows the subject to maintain concentration by indicating how uncomfortable they are with a question through body language. Although there is a set format for in-depth interviews, they can be presented in a variety of ways Adamchuk et al, (2000.)

3.7.2.1 Advantages of Direct Interviews

- ❖ They provide an opportunity to reflect on the events surrounding the effects of e- procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe with no need to write anything down.
- ❖ They achieve a higher response rate than using questionnaires because the respondent will be available to give answers without leaving for later responses as done in questionnaires.
- ❖ Enables detailed assessment due to depth questioning and responding where the information may seem to be not clear.

3.7.2.2 Disadvantages of Direct Interviews

- ❖ It is affected by time constraints as the researcher has limited time especially with the top management, for they will be a lot to ask about concerning the study.
- ❖ Interviews demand the researcher to observe more protocol as compared to other methods of data collection like questionnaires which end up delaying the interview process.

3.8 Data sources

3.8.1 Primary Data

Primary data, according to Mwamadzingo (2011), is material that has been created by the researcher specifically for the project at hand. In order to answer research

questions and fulfil the researcher's purpose, the researcher complimented secondary data with primary data in form of questionnaires and interview guide. The researcher distributed 20 questionnaires which were given as follows, sales and procurement received 7 and 6 respectively, whilst production received 5 and top management 2. The information obtained was reliable since it was provided by people who are directly involved with procurement team and their activities. Although collecting primary data was time consuming it provided accurate and reliable data crucial to the success of this research.

3.9 Data collection procedure.

A pilot study is a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a large study; in order to improve the latter's quality and efficiency (Kumar, 1999). Before distributing them to the employees, the researcher gave the general manager and human resources management department of the organization which consisted of 5 employees a copy of the questionnaires to review in case any sensitive information needed to be changed.

The pilot study provided early indicators and signals on difficulties the researcher would face when collecting data like some respondents failed to answer the questionnaire properly and others took a longer time than expected. Therefore, the exercise assisted the researcher to refine questionnaire and interview questions to ensure that the questions asked are relevant and easily understandable in order to extract reliable responses from the targeted research sample.

3.10 Data analysis and Presentation

A systematic approach to analysing, organizing, and presenting data acquired in a meaningful and intelligible way is referred to as "data presentation and analysis." Qualitative method was utilized because open-ended questionnaires and interviews allow respondents to answer questions in a way that provides the data that is needed. After collecting data using interviews and questionnaires, data was presented using tables, pie chart, bar graphs and histograms. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

3.11 Reliability and Validity

According to Cook and Campbell (2000), validity is the closest approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition, or conclusion. Data is reliable when the information gathered is free of prejudice or inaccuracy. In order to ensure the objectivity of the questionnaire and interview questions, a pilot study was conducted from 10 to 22 July 2022 on the general manager and the human resources personals that totalled to 5 individuals.

The researcher ensured that interview requirements were followed and that they were addressed appropriately. The data collected was validated for validity and reliability, and improvements were made in accordance with the results of the pilot study.

3.12 Research ethics.

Ethics are defined as systems of rules or expectations of conduct that direct moral decisions regarding conduct and interactions with others. Making ensuring that no individual is hurt or violated as a result of the research activity is the core objective of research ethics. Throughout the investigation, the researcher addressed a number of ethical difficulties. The information provided by the respondents was kept confidential and used for study purposes only. The researcher cited all of the writers and academics whose sources were consulted. However, this research study did not incorporate any information or concepts that were not properly acknowledged and given permission.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter sorely focused on research methodology and it comprised of the following key aspects; research design, targeted population, sampling methods which included the techniques and size, research instruments, data collection methods, procedures and analysis plan. The methodology's major goal was to make sure that the proper data collection techniques are used and effectively presented. On the study, the researcher combined qualitative and quantitative research methods even though the study is mainly quantitative in nature. The next chapter will

present collected data using pie charts, bar graphs and histograms. It will also cover and interpret the gathered data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter solely focused on research methodology and it comprised of the following key aspects; research design, targeted population, sampling methods which included the techniques and size, research instruments, data collection methods, procedures and analysis plan. The methodology's major goal was to make

sure that the proper data collection techniques are used and effectively presented. On the study, the researcher combined qualitative and quantitative research methods even though the study is mainly quantitative in nature. This chapter focuses on data presentation, discussion, analysis and interpretation

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

To improve uniformity, understanding, and simple data interpretation, the obtained data was coded, processed, categorised, and collated into pie charts and bar charts for each section. To ensure the highest level of accuracy and to reduce the margin of error during analysis, the questionnaire was divided into many sections. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Excel were used to process the data and examine variables such as the respondents' ages, educational backgrounds, and the roles and impacts of e-procurement on quality, price, and market share. Tables and pie charts were used to analyse the data and present the research findings.

4.2 Response rate

Twenty questionnaires were distributed evenly to the workers of three departments and top management for the study's purposes. Sixteen of the twenty forms were successfully completed and returned, making them the sample, with a response rate of 80%, as shown in table 4.1 below. Only 20% of the population did not answer.

Table 4.1: Response rate on questionnaires

Department	Expected response	Actual response	Response rate (%)
Sales	7	4	25%
Production	5	5	31.25%
Procurement	6	5	31.25%
Top management	2	2	12.5%

Total	20	16	80%
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Source: Primary Data, 2022

4.2 Age of Respondents

According to the respondents' age groups, a computation was made. The ages are shown in table 4.2 below. The age group between 20 and 30 years had the most respondents (10), followed by the age group between 31 and 39 years with 4 respondents, and the age group between 50 and above with just 2 respondents, representing 12.5%. This demonstrates that the institutions employ a young workforce, with the majority of workers in this study having an average age of 25 years. In the meanwhile, younger people can adopt new technology more quickly than elderly people. Therefore, the study anticipates that such a group will provide new and lively responses.

Table 4.2: Age group of respondents

Age in (years	Respondents	Percentage
20-30	10	62.5%
31-39	4	25%
40-50	0	0%
50+	2	12.5%
Total	16	100%

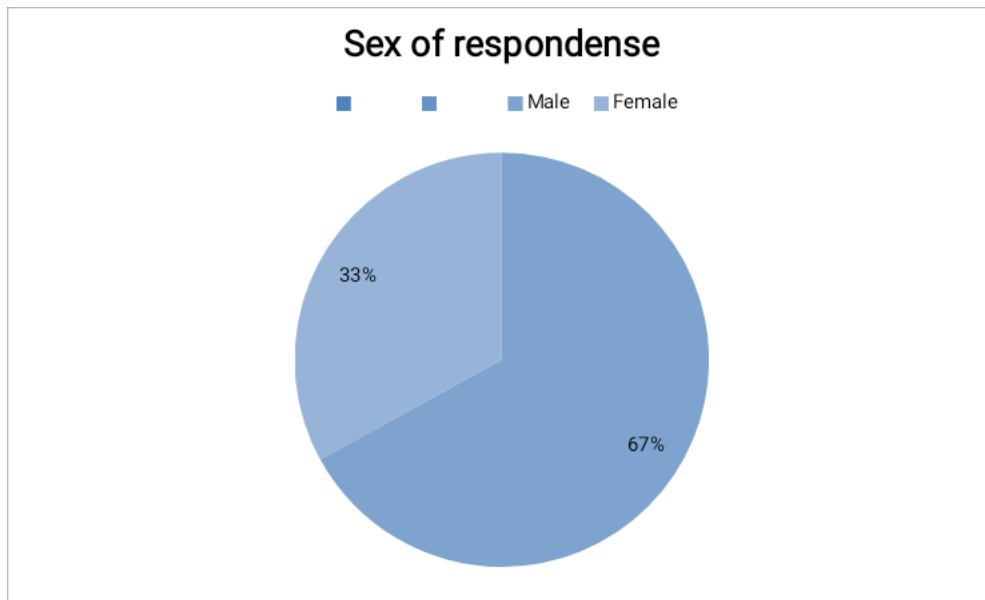
Source: Primary Data, 2022

4.3 Gender of respondents

Figure 4.1 indicates that male respondents outnumbered females. While 33% of the respondents were females, 67% of the respondents were males. This reflection seems not to be an accurate representation of the gender distribution in Zimbabwe, where the female to male ratio is 52:43. (Zimstats, 2022). The gender ratio in the formal employment sector is 32% for women and 68% for males. This is due to

patriarchy, where men are given preference over women in terms of education and personal growth, which results in fewer women working in formal jobs.

Figure 4.1: Sex of respondents

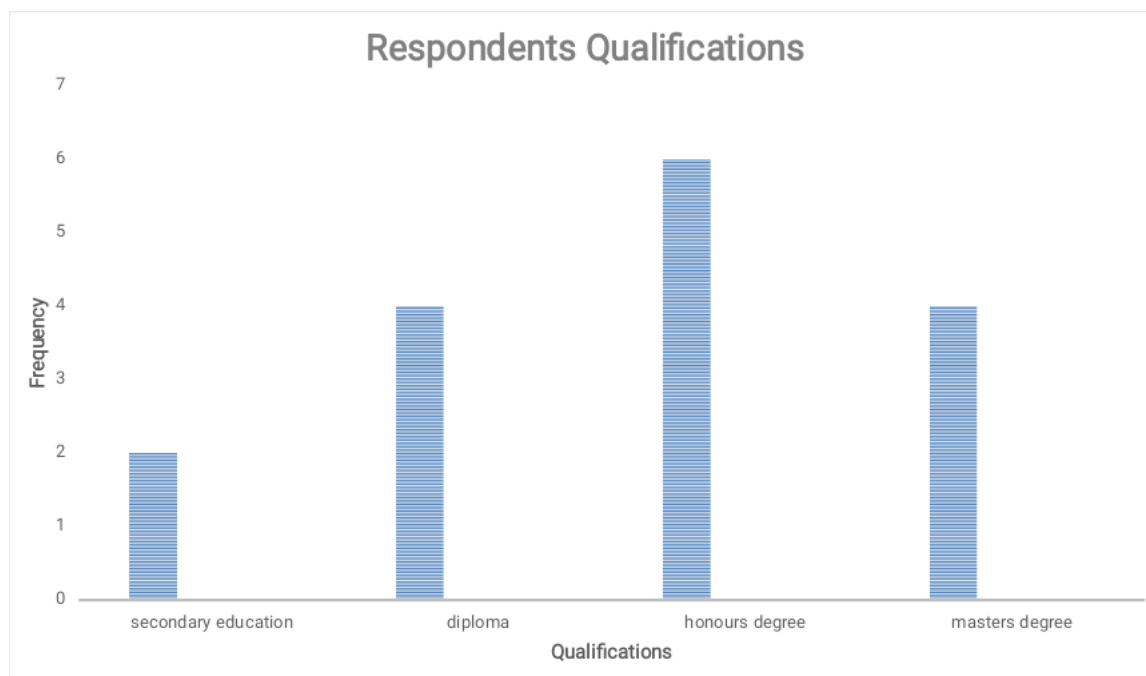


Source: Primary data, 2022

4.4 Academic qualification of the respondents

Individuals' education levels influence how they comprehend and react to other viewpoints. This further demonstrates their capacity to make use of e-procurement technology. The application and use of e-procurement technology will be possible, with such employees that are trained. According to the information in figure 4.2 below, 13% of respondents have a secondary education, 26% have a diploma, 38% have an Honours degree, and the rest 25% have a master's degree or above. This demonstrates that the majority of respondents held degrees.

Figure 4.2 Highest academic qualifications



Source: Primary data, 2022

4.5 Working experience of the respondents

The study identified the respondents' employment experience in order to assess the degree to which their comments may be used to draw judgments about the subject under study based on their employment experiences. The interviewees' past employment experiences with Coca-Cola Zimbabwe are disclosed below in **table 4.3**.

Table 4.3: Working experience of the respondents

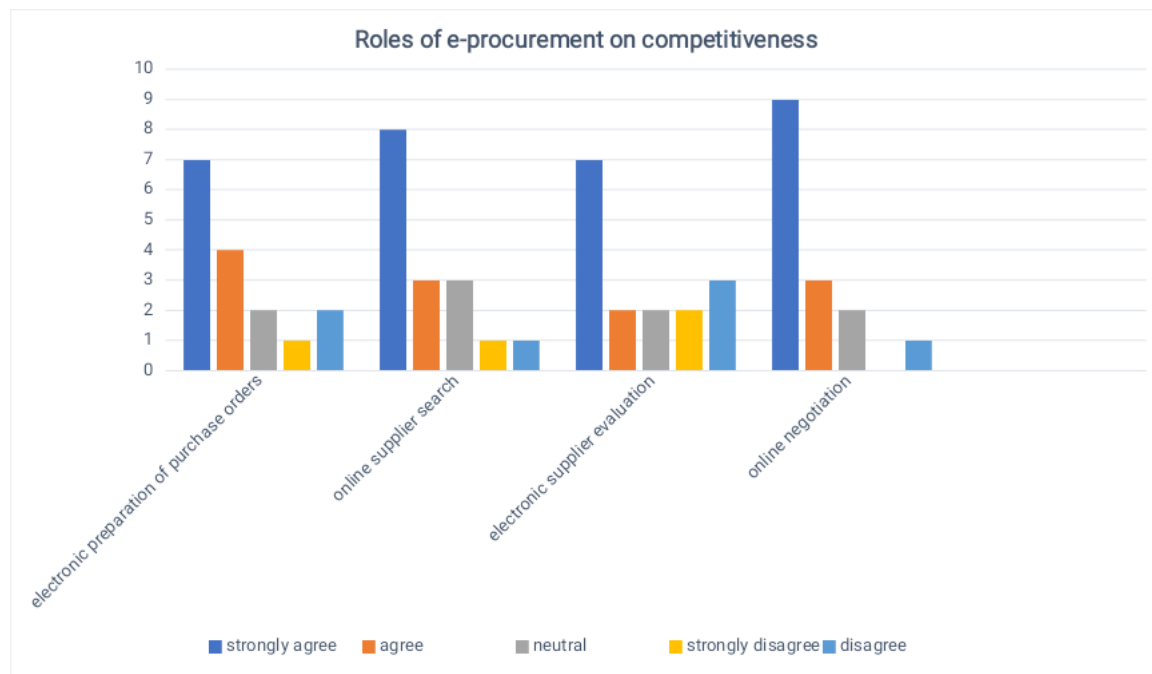
Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
0 to 5 years	6	38%
5 to 10 years	2	12%
11 to 15 years	5	31%
16 and above	3	19%
Total	16	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2022

4.6 The roles of e-procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness.

The roles of e-procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness in the food and beverages industry was measured using four answers whereby, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agree that there were the roles of e-procurement on competitiveness. This section presented findings to the answers posed in this regard with responses given on a five-point Likert scale where 1= strongly agree; 2= Agree; 3 Neutral; 4 strongly disagree; 5 disagree.

Figure 4.3 Roles of e-procurement on competitiveness



Source, primary data, 2022

The findings were shown in Table 4.4 below. The responses "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were interpreted to mean that the assertion was not universally accepted. The response of "Neutral" was interpreted to mean that the statement was not aligned. "Agree" and "strongly agree" responses were interpreted as statements mostly concurred.

Table 4.4 the roles of e-procurement on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness in the food and beverages industry. (n=16)

Constructs	5	4	3	2	1
Electronic preparation of purchase orders	7	4	2	1	2
Online supplier search	8	3	3	1	1
Electronic supplier evaluation	7	2	2	2	3
Online negotiation	9	3	2	0	1

Key: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; strongly disagree=2; disagree=1

Source, Primary data, 2022

The majority of respondents gave that electronic preparation of purchase orders high marks as an aspect/ role of e-procurement. The findings show that 7 respondents, representing 43.7% felt that electronic preparation of purchase orders would streamline the procurement cycle and help in achieving competitiveness, while 3 respondents (18.5%), believed that such a role of e-procurement cannot be used to shorten the procurement process and increase Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness.

The results showed that 8 (or 50%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the opinion that online supplier search contributes to the competitiveness of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe through e-procurement. While 3 respondents (18.75%) shared the same opinion. About 6.25% of respondents were unsure whether online supplier search, which is fuelled by e-procurement, increases competitiveness. On the other hand, 2 (13%) of the respondents completely disagreed with the assessment of online supplier searches.

The contrast that electronic supplier evaluation plays a part in e-procurement's ability to achieve competitiveness received very high ratings from 7 respondents (43.7%) and high ratings from 2 (12.5%). Furthermore, the results showed that (2) 12.5% strongly disagreed whereas 3 (18.75%) of the respondents disagreed with the claim that electronic supplier evaluation plays a role in establishing competitiveness

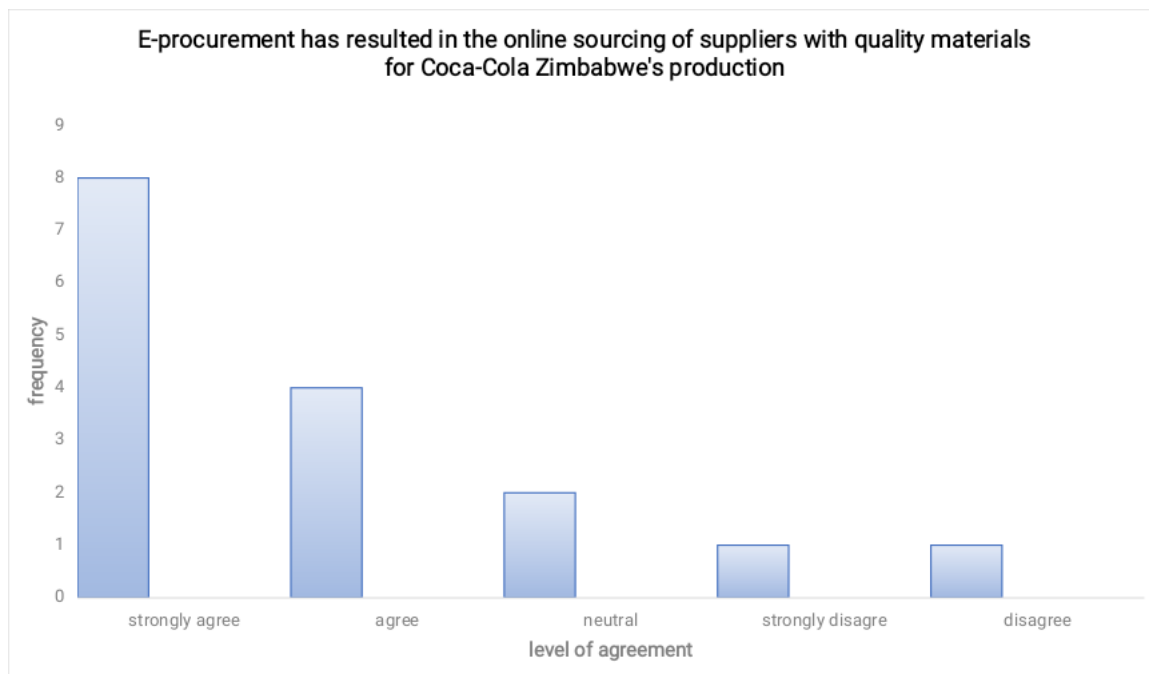
through e-procurement. Only 2 (12.5%) of the respondents were unsure of their position on this point.

The study's findings clearly imply that 9 (56.2%) of respondents believed that online negotiating played a part in e-procurement by accelerating the procurement process and fostering competition, whereas 1 (6.25%) of respondents disagreed. According to the study's findings, three respondents (18.75%) believed that online negotiations accelerated the procurement process and increased competition, whereas two respondents (12.5%) expressed neutrality.

4.7 The effects of e-procurement on competitiveness variables (product price, product quality and market share)

The study looked at the effects of e-procurement on product price, product quality and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share. Different questions were drafted so as to obtain answers for the question. In responding to the four questions which were drafted, the respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they were agreeing. This section presented findings to the answers posed in this regard with responses given on a five-point Likert scale where 1= strongly agree; 2= Agree; 3 Neutral; 4 strongly disagree; 5 disagree.

Figure 4.5: E- procurement on Productivity



Source, Primary data, 2022

The findings were shown in Table 4.5 below. The responses "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were interpreted to mean that the assertion was not universally accepted. The response of "Neutral" was interpreted to mean that the statement was not aligned. "Agree" and "strongly agree" responses were interpreted as statements mostly concurred

Table 4.5 E-procurement on productivity (n=16)

Constructs	5	4	3	2	1
E-procurement has resulted in the online sourcing of suppliers with quality materials for Coca cola Zimbabwe's production	8	4	2	1	1

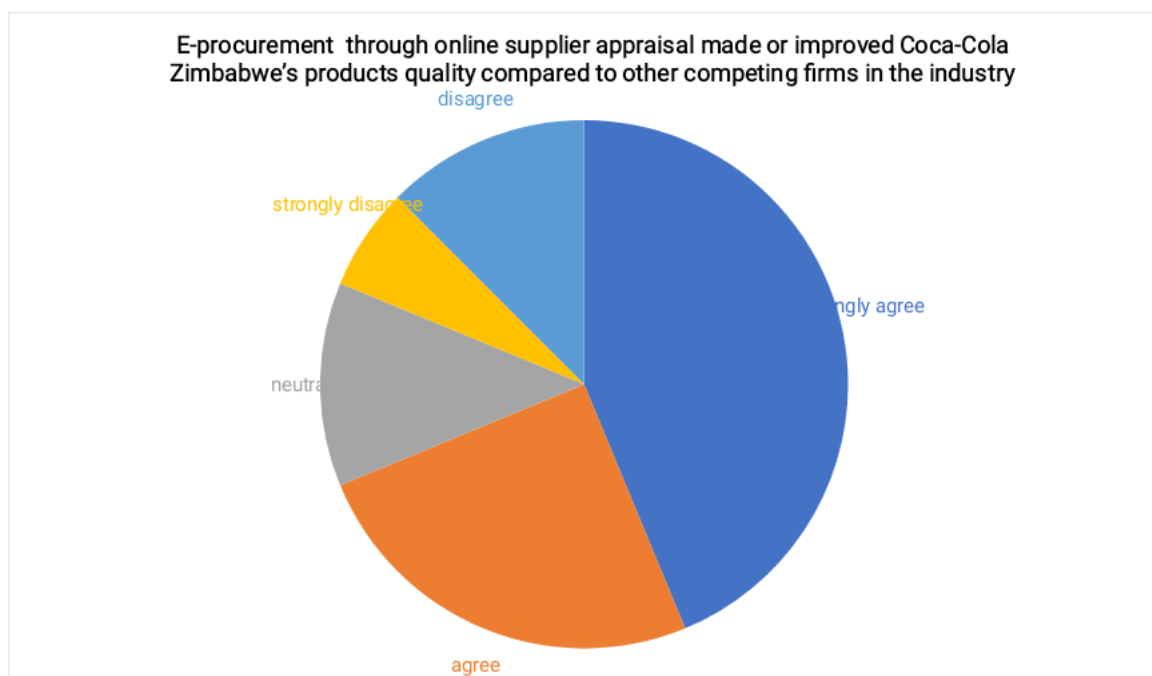
Key: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; strongly disagree=2; disagree=1

Source, Primary data, 2022

The findings revealed that 8 (50%) of the respondents rated high in response to that e- procurement has resulted in the online sourcing of suppliers with quality materials

for Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's production. The findings indicate that 4 (25%) of the respondents believed that e-procurement has an effect of improving the quality of products as it allows online sourcing of suppliers with quality materials for production that results in quality outputs while only 2 (18.75%) of the respondents felt that e-procurement does not result in the sourcing of suppliers with quality materials for production. The results indicated that 2 (12.5%) of the respondents were neutral.

Figure 4.6 E-procurement effects on product quality.



Source, Primary data, 2022

The findings were shown in Table 4.6 below. The words "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were used to indicate that not everyone agreed with the argument. The word "Neutral" in the response was taken to suggest that the statement was not in alignment. Responses of "agree" or "strongly agree" were taken to mean that the majority of the statements agreed.

Table 4.6 E-procurement effects on product quality. (n=16)

Constructs	5	4	3	2	1

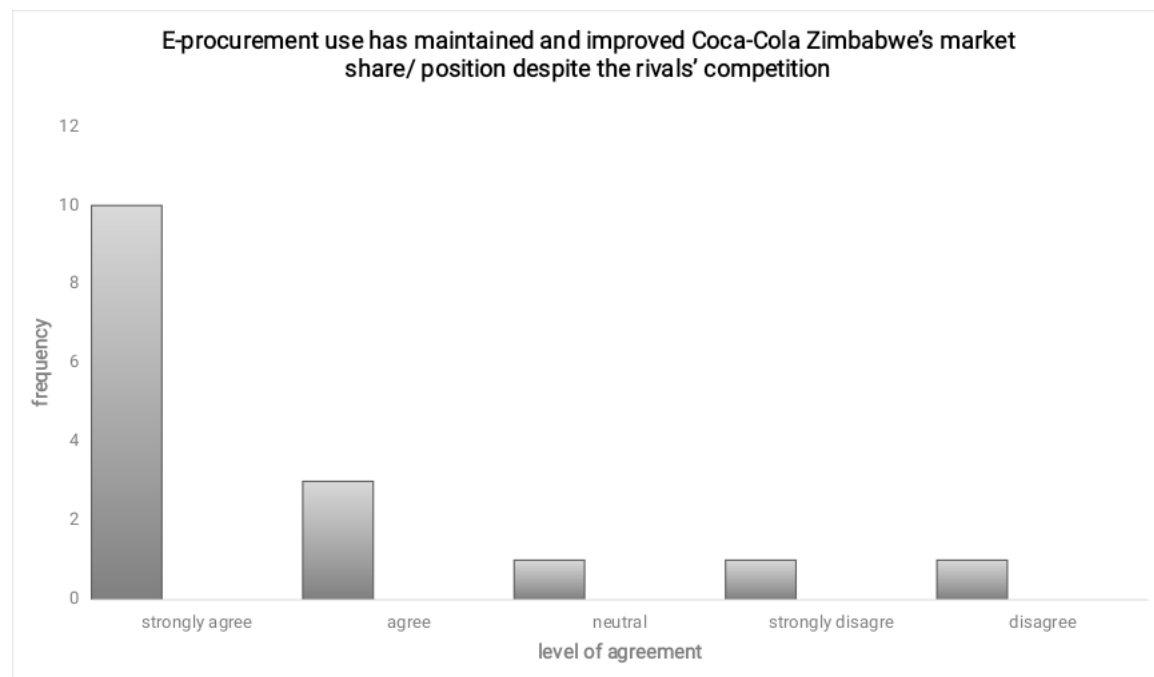
E-procurement through online supplier appraisal made or improved Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's products quality compared to other competing firms in the industry	7	4	2	1	2
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Key: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; strongly disagree=2; disagree=1

Source, Primary data, 2022

The results showed that 7 respondents (43.7%) strongly agreed with the assertion that e-procurement increased or improved Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product quality in comparison to that of other industry rivals. 4 responders (or 25%) indicated their agreement with the same construct. About 2 respondents, or 12.5%, were unsure whether e-procurement has enhanced Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product quality in comparison to that of other sector rivals. However, 2 respondents (12.5%) and 1 respondent (6.25%) utterly disagreed with the opinion expressed.

Figure 4.7 E- procurement effects on market share/ position



Source, Primary data, 2022

The findings were shown in Table 4.7 below. The responses "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were interpreted to mean that the assertion was not universally accepted. The response of "Neutral" was interpreted to mean that the statement was not aligned. "Agree" and "strongly agree" responses were interpreted as statements

mostly concurred

Table 4.7 E- procurement effects on market share/position. (n=16)

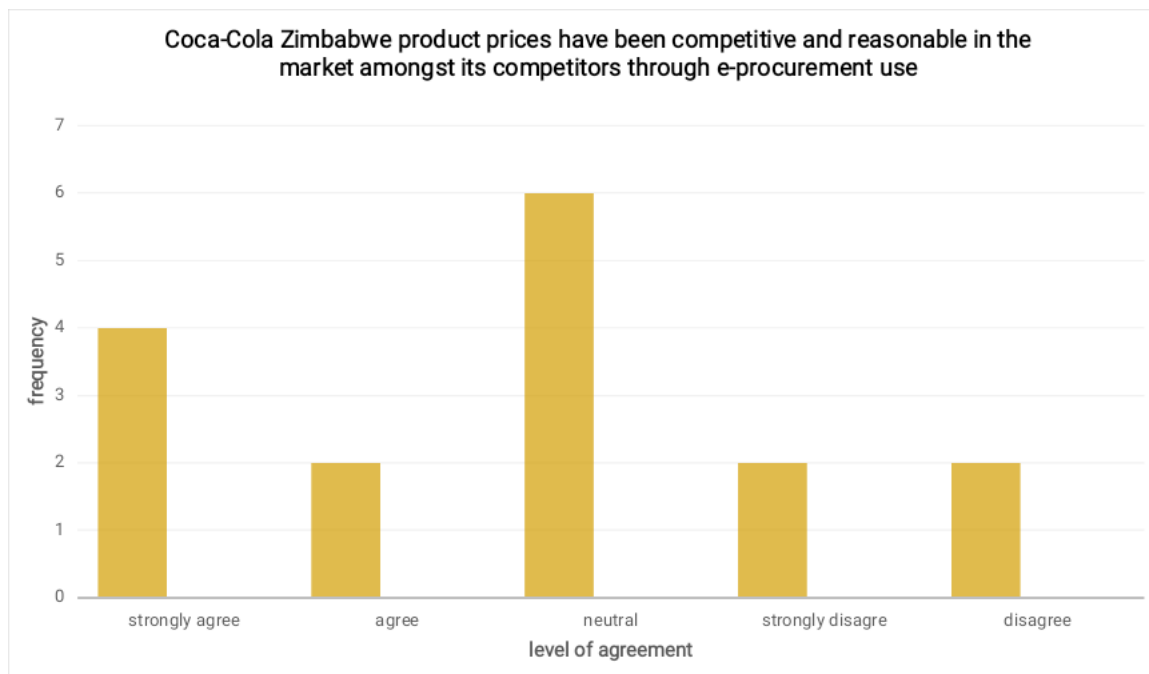
Constructs	5	4	3	2	1
E-procurement use has maintained and improved coca- cola Zimbabwe's market share/ position despite the rivals' competition.	1	3	1	1	1

Key: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; strongly disagree=2; disagree=1

Source, Primary data, 2022

The results show that despite competition from rivals, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share and position have been enhanced and maintained through the use of e-procurement. 10 (62.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the construct, whereas 3 (18.75%) did agree. Despite the competition from competitors, some respondents (6.52%) believed that Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share/position was neither maintained or improved through the use of electronic procurement. According to the findings, 1 (6.25%) of the respondents disagreed with the construct while 1 (6.25%) were neutral.

Figure 4.8 E- procurement effects on product price.



Source, Primary data, 2022

The findings were shown in Table 4.8 below. The responses "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were interpreted to mean that the assertion was not universally accepted. The response of "Neutral" was interpreted to mean that the statement was not aligned. "Agree" and "strongly agree" responses were interpreted as statements mostly concurred

Table 4.8 E-procurement effects on product price. (n=16)

Constructs	5	4	3	2	1
Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product prices have been competitive and reasonable in the market amongst its competitors through e- procurement	4	2	6	2	2

Key: strongly agree=5; agree=4; neutral=3; strongly disagree=2; disagree=1

Source, Primary data, 2022

According to the study, 4 (25%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the proposition that Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product pricing have been reasonable and competitive in the market compared to those of its rivals through e-procurement.

Nevertheless, only 2 (12.5%) of the responders had the same viewpoint. The idea that Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product pricing have been reasonable and competitive in the market compared to its rivals through e-procurement was rejected by about 6 (37.5%) respondents. 2 (12.5%) of the respondents however, completely disagreed with the opinion expressed, as did 2 (12.5%).

4.8 Discussion

Using Coca-Cola Zimbabwe as a case study, the study was done to determine the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverage industry. The study also looked into three variables, and it was discovered that these three had a higher impact on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's ability to compete in the food and beverage sector. Employees from the departments of sales, production, procurement, and top management participated in the study. Data was gathered from sixteen of the twenty respondents because the other four either did not respond to the questions or did not return the survey. The sixteen responses had four and five representatives from the sales and procurement divisions, respectively. Two from top management and five from the production. An 80% response rate was given for this. The following objectives served as the study's guiding principles: to

- i. Examine the role of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry.
- ii. Analyze the effects of e-procurement on product quality, product price and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share.

The results of the study's first variable on product quality showed that e-procurement procedures contributed to finding suppliers of high-quality components for Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's manufacturing process. As a result, only high-quality ingredients from suppliers were used in the creation of the beverages, assuring their competitiveness in a market with other beverage producers like Varum Beverages. Additionally, it was determined that e-procurement increased or made Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's beverages superior to those of other companies like Varun. Additionally, the higher quality beverages drew in more and more consumers, boosting sales and boosting the company's competitive advantage.

The results of the study's second variable, market share, showed that despite rivalry from rivals such as Varun beverages, the adoption of e-procurement can boost Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share and position. By digitally automating crucial procurement process steps, time and money can be saved during the online ordering process and transactions can be completed promptly and cheaply. This could hasten the production process, enabling the timely delivery of beverages to the market. The study's findings also showed that Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's market share has increased via e-procurement thanks to its ability to sell an unlimited number of high-quality beverages at cost-effective pricing drawn from online sourcing and supplier evaluation.

As a result of using e-procurement, Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's product pricing have been found to be reasonable and competitive in the market compared to those of its rivals. This is true because e-procurement reduces transaction and production costs by evaluating suppliers online and selecting those with competitive rates. As a result, the final product, which are beverages, can be fairly and affordably priced. Additionally, e-procurement make products more affordable, luring clients, increasing sales, and improving market share, which strengthens the company's competitiveness.

Finally, the results reviewed that, respondents gave suggestions on ways to make e-procurement more effective within the organization Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. These included employee training and development, supplier portals development and technological development. A large number of the respondents agreed that there is need for employee training and development in order to boost the effectiveness of e-procurement and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness. Such employee trainings and developments can be done through workshops and seminars for examples which are usually carried out with PRAZ.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter concentrated on presenting, analyzing, discussing and interpreting data. The data gathered for this study was sufficient to achieve the research goals and would significantly aid in the generation of insightful findings. Based on the data collected, all research questions were analyzed and evaluated. The respondents gave insightful information on how e-procurement affects Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness. The next chapter summarizes the study findings and concludes the research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analyzed, discussed and interpreted data. The data gathered for this study was sufficient to achieve the research goals and significantly aid in the generation of insightful findings. Based on the data collected, all research questions were analyzed and evaluated. The respondents gave insightful information on how e-procurement affects corporate competitiveness. The emphasis of this chapter will be on formulating conclusions about the study and offering suggestions.

5.1 Summary of findings

It was discovered that the contributions of e-procurement to Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness in the food and beverage sector include online supplier search, electronic supplier evaluation, online negotiating, and easing the procurement cycle. The results show that 25% of respondents agreed that online supplier search increases competition in the food and beverage industry, and 43.7% of respondents strongly agreed that online supplier search had acted as a role of e-procurement and had a very big impact on achieving competitiveness for Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. However, 18.25% of respondents felt that online supplier search as a role of e-procurement had a very small impact on achieving competitiveness.

The evaluation of suppliers electronically received high marks from 50% of the respondents and 18.75% of the respondents, who both believed that seeing suppliers and available products online saves on trip expenses to conduct physical assessment and lowers output prices, enhancing price competition. This suggests that the study's findings strongly support the idea that using e-procurement methods increases competition in the food and beverage sector. Additionally, it was discovered that the use of online negotiation as a component of electronic procurement has a significant impact on Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's ability to compete in the food and beverage sector. According to 56.2% of the respondents, this is because it lowers production costs by eliminating the need for travel expenses for conducting negotiations.

The results of the study demonstrate that the electronic preparation of purchase orders, which is a function of e-procurement, saves time, reduces paperwork, improves efficiency and effectiveness, and fosters competition because outputs are delivered in the market at competitive prices and of high quality, although only 12.6% of the respondents believed that it had a very little effect on competition.

Additionally, it was stated that e-procurement had enabled Coca-Cola Zimbabwe to locate suppliers of high-quality raw materials. According to 50% of the respondents, this has increased or made Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's products of higher quality when compared to those of other industry competitors. The study's findings strongly imply that, despite competition from rivals, using electronic procurement can help an organization maintain and advance its market position or share in the food and beverage sector, as it has for Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. 62.5% of responders who strongly agreed with this. The study results also identified the need for employee training and development in order to boost the effectiveness of e-procurement and Coca-Cola Zimbabwe's competitiveness, this was highly suggested by the respondents.

5.2 Conclusion.

This study investigated the effects of e-procurement on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry using a case study of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. The study applied a descriptive statistics methodology and a sample size of 20 from a total population of 25. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews and analysed as well as presented in tables and graphs. The study found out that e-procurement has a positive effect on competitiveness of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe. Results indicate that e-procurement reduces Coca-Cola Zimbabwe production costs, market prices of Coca-Cola Zimbabwe products as well as increases quality of the products due to efficient procurement systems.

5.3 Recommendations.

1. Coca-Cola Zimbabwe should promote the use of e-procurement to procure all its inputs.
2. There is need for Coca-Cola Zimbabwe to upgrade its e-procurement infrastructure to increase the benefits associated with digital procurement processes.
3. Capitalisation of staff through workshops and seminars, to empower them with skills amenable with digital modern world must be done by Coca-Cola Zimbabwe

5.4 Recommendations for future studies.

This study used Coca-Cola Zimbabwe as a case study to examine how e-procurement impacts business competitiveness in the food and beverage sector. It consequently suggests that additional research be done to compare two businesses operating in similar industries for instance the clothing and fashion sector, in order to determine the effects of e-procurement on variables relating to business performance. Furthermore, a look on how to improve the use of e-procurement towards achieving competitiveness should be looked into.

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APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Bindura University of Science Education

Private Bag 1020

Bindura

Dear Respondent

My name is Takudzwa Leon Shereni an undergraduate student at Bindura University of Science Education studying towards a Bachelor of Commerce Honours Degree in Purchasing and Supply. I am undertaking research on the effects of e-procurement

on business competitiveness in the food and beverages industry. You are kindly asked to complete the following questionnaire. The information you provide is purely for academic purposes only, thus it will be seen as highly confidential and hence will be treated as such. Do not disclose your identity in anyway.

For any queries do not hesitate to contact the researcher on +263 771 447 190 or email on takushedza@gmail.com

Instructions

Complete in ink.

Do not write your name on any page of this questionnaire.

Please tick or circle your responses where applicable.

SECTION A- Demographic Data

Please tick the appropriate answer or fill in the gaps where appropriate.

1. Which department do you work in?

Sales () Procurement () Production () Top management()

2. What is your company position?

CEO () HOD () Manager () Non Manager ()

3. What is your Gender?

Male () Female ()

4. What is your age?

20-30 () 31-39 () 40-49 () 50+ ()

5. What is your professional qualification?

Secondary education () Certificate () Honours Degree () Masters Degree ()

6. How long have you been working in the company?

0-5 years () 6-10 years () 11-15 years () 16+ ()

SECTION B- Examining the roles of e-procurement on your organisation's competitiveness.

1. E-Procurement has the following as its roles on business competitiveness. How much do you agree?

Roles	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
Electronic preparation of purchase orders					
Online supplier search					
Electronic Supplier evaluation					

Online negotiation					
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SECTION C- The effects of e-procurement on competitiveness variables (price, quality and market share)

1. The online sourcing of suppliers with quality materials for production has been achieved through e-procurement.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
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2. Has e-procurement through online supplier appraisal made or improved your organization's products quality compared to other competing firms in the industry?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
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3. The use of e-procurement has been able to maintain and improve the organization's market share/ position despite the rivals' competition.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
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4. Through the use of e-procurement, the organization's product prices have been reasonable and competitive in the market compared to those of its rivals.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Disagree
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5. What are your suggestions in making e-procurement more effective within your organization?

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Thank You

APPENDIX 2

Interview guide

1. May I kindly know your age?
2. Your highest level of educational qualification?
3. How long have you been working in the company?
4. What do you understand about e-procurement and competitive advantage?
5. Do you think an effective use of e-procurement can improve the company's

competitive advantage?

6. Does the use of e-procurement improve the quality of your organisation's products?

7. Has the market share of the organisation improved ever since the use of e-procurement?

8. Products prices can be made competitive within the market by the use of e-procurement. What is your take?

9. What are your suggestions in making e-procurement more effective within your organization?