



**UNIVERSITY
OF
LUSAKA**

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE SUPPLIER AND BUYER
RELATIONSHIP ON PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE IN AN ORGANIZATION: A
CASE STUDY OF UFUDU ZAMBIA LIMITED.**

BY

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A research report submitted as a partial fulfillment of a bachelor's degree in procurement and supply.

DECLARATION

This research paper is my original work and it has not been presented for any academic award in any university or institution of higher learning.

Signature:  Date: 19/12/2023

This dissertation report has been presented for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would want to express my gratitude to my supervisor and all those who made this specific endeavor possible for me. Blessings to all of you.

DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to my mum, dad and siblings for their overwhelming support during this academic journey. Thank you all.

ABSTRACT

In any organization, the relationship between suppliers and buyers is crucial for the success of both parties. Improving this relationship can lead to numerous benefits, including increased efficiency, reduced costs, and enhanced product quality. This research endeavored to evaluate the impact of the supplier and buyer relationship on production performance in an organization. This study's main theoretical concept was the transaction cost theory, which stipulates that the optimal organizational structure is one that maximizes economic efficiency by minimizing exchange costs amongst business players. For buyer- supplier relationship to be sound, there is a need to ensure that there is clear and open communication which is very essential in fostering a strong supplier-buyer relationship, both parties should establish effective lines of communication and ensure that expectations and requirements are clearly communicated. Generally, organizations must endeavor to establish good relationship with business stakeholders and it is that relationship which will see many company objectives achieved.

Descriptive research design composed of both qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. A sample size of 100 respondents, made up of Ufudu employees and suppliers was purposively selected, 50% of 200 approximated individual staff and suppliers all together was used.

According to this survey, Ufudu was working with suppliers to foster innovation and ongoing development. However, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the degree of cooperation being encouraged; arguing that more needed to be done by both Ufudu and suppliers to improve buyer-supplier relations. It was determined by some respondents that Ufudu faces difficulties in putting the buyer-supplier relationship concept into practice. They stated that problems occasionally arise that impact the goals, trust, and communication between Ufudu and suppliers, which in turn makes the concept difficult to implement and negatively impacts Ufudu's production performance. It is therefore recommended that Ufudu must work around promoting quarterly relationship assessments and evaluations, and ensure to share experiences surrounding issues of delayed supply of raw materials to ensure that suppliers make an adjustment accordingly, address communication and ensure goals are shared and that every side recognize the goals influencing operations in a given company, this will help each stakeholder find a better way of playing their role without any delays and without affecting production performance of Ufudu.

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List of abbreviations

BSR-Buyer Supplier Relationship

HQ-High Quality

SA-South Africa

ND-Numerical Data

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter looked at the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, significance, study limitations and definition of key familiar terms.

1.2 Background of the study

In their current accessible competitive sets, businesses are engaged in direct competition with one another. The buyer-supplier relationship in such a linked and competitive market is therefore seen as win-lose by the purchasing firm because buyers frequently treat their suppliers in an antagonistic manner. On the other hand, many innovative businesses have discovered that they may better serve their end customers by forming strategic partnerships and collaborating with their suppliers. As they appear to be having difficulties with their supplier-buyer relationships, emerging enterprises in Zambia are finding it difficult to preserve their competitive advantage (Cannon, 2010). Firms that have poor buyer-supplier relationships have been reported failing to meet their business goals, some struggling to meet their fixed costs and with some closing down due to lack of stable supplies and sales, this has attracted the interest of many researchers to address the subject and unearth possible solutions to failing supplier-buyer relationships and business underperformance.

The connection between a corporation and its suppliers is a key component of business operations, and this relationship is known as the buyer-supplier relationship. This partnership, which is essential to a company's success, is based on mutual respect, open communication, and trust. Establishing and maintaining a strong buyer-supplier relationship is crucial in an increasingly globalized market where businesses frequently depend on suppliers from other countries to ensure the prompt delivery of goods or services, uphold quality standards, and achieve cost effectiveness.

The buyer-supplier relationship is a critical aspect of business operations, as it involves the interaction and collaboration between a buyer and a supplier. This relationship is characterized by a mutual exchange of goods, services, and information, with the aim of meeting each party's needs and objectives. Understanding the buyer-supplier relationship is essential for both buyers and suppliers to effectively manage their interactions and achieve desired outcomes.

In a buyer-supplier relationship, the person or business who buys products or services from a supplier is known as the buyer. Contrarily, it is the supplier who offers these products or services to the customer. Trust, open communication, and reciprocal advantages are the foundation of this partnership. Suppliers depend on customers for a steady stream of demand and revenue, while customers depend on suppliers to deliver high-quality goods or services at fair pricing.

Recognizing the many factors that affect the buyer-supplier relationship is essential to comprehending it. Power, trust, communication, and collaboration are some of these dimensions. When one party has the ability to sway another's choices and resource allocation, this is referred to as having power. As it encourages dependability, honesty, and cooperation, trust is essential to building and maintaining healthy relationships. Information exchange, setting clear expectations, and dispute resolution all depend on effective communication. Last but not least, collaboration entails working together to accomplish shared objectives, like raising product quality or cutting costs.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Buyer-supplier relationships are an area that is becoming increasingly important in business world. In order to gain a competitive advantage and better market positioning. Companies are putting a strong emphasis on developing closer relationships with suppliers; the belief is that an improvement in the relationship between suppliers and buyers has potential to improve trading activities between the two ends. So far, little is known about the practices that can aid in the evolution of long-term and collaborative relationships for firms in Zambia especially Ufudu Zambia Limited, as well as the interaction and existence of buyer-supplier relationships at various levels in a business relationship (Akkermans, 2009). Suffice to say that, without proper supplier-buyer relationships, firms, Ufudu Zambia Limited inclusive suffers underperformance as they do not on time get the resources they need to spearhead their activities.

Ufudu Zambia Limited interacts with many suppliers to meet the demands of their steel products, but reports show that sometimes Ufudu Zambia Limited suffers loss especially when dealing with a monopoly supplier that do not want to benefit both ends in their transactions. There is need to establish the benefits that Ufudu Zambia Limited would get if it endeavoured to strengthen its good relationship with its suppliers. There has been concerns that despite Ufudu Zambia Limited being good at providing their services sometimes the materials they use are below standard and are not durable ,some supplied materials even fail to meet compliance requirements for their products such as prefabs while some supplier wants to take advantage and be opportunists to the firm in terms of pricing, late delivery of materials is yet another

issue that apparently affect the operations of Ufudu Zambia Limited, this points to the relationship they have with certain suppliers and basically the conduct of certain suppliers that Ufudu Zambia Limited deal with (Dyer, 2011).

It's evident that a supplier whom you have no good relationship with can supply you with anything right or wrong hence affecting your operations as a firm, thus the need to establish the extent to which Ufudu Zambia Limited is promoting a good supplier-buyer relationship and find a probable way of strengthening the relationship (Chopra, 2010). Ufudu is reported to have been experiencing a drop in their profitability, a challenge in accessing resources meant to aid in their work, being experienced at Ufudu is also a delay in delivery of materials by suppliers, in addition to delay, some supplied materials are of poor quality, this is affecting the output of Ufudu work and its bringing a worry that surrounds their relationship with the suppliers. A study conducted by Carrim and others in 2020 in Pretoria (South Africa), Pretoria (South Africa) reveals that a poor relationship with suppliers can bring about late delivery of materials, delivery of poor quality materials which can affect the output of a firm in both quantity and quality, if not properly handled such a development could even affect the profitability of a firm. After a thorough examination, it can be stated that no other study has been conducted at Ufudu Zambia Limited to explain the impact of buyer-supplier relationships on organizational performance. As a result, this study attempted to bridge this gap by investigating the impact of buyer-supplier relationships on organizational performance in terms of production.

1.4 Research objectives

1.4.1 Main objective

The main objective was to investigate the impact of the buyer-supplier relationship on production performance in an organization: A case study of Ufudu Zambia Limited.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To find out the challenges faced in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu Zambia Limited.
2. To discuss the effect of trust, communication and goals on the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited.
3. To find out how buyer-supplier relationship affect production performance of the business at Ufudu?
4. To establish better practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia Limited.

1.5 Research questions

1. What challenges do you face in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu?
2. How do trust, communication and goal alignment affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited?
3. How does buyer-supplier relationship affect production performance of the business at Ufudu?
4. What practices do you think would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu?

1.7 Significance of the study

The results of this study would help Ufudu secure its materials on time once a good relationship with suppliers is established. A good supplier buyer relationship will help Ufudu timely secure only quality materials that will foster quality work output, retain customers since they will be satisfied with the work, something that will improve the returns of Ufudu in the long run. The study's findings may therefore help Ufudu employees, their departments, the businesses they work for and with, the communities in which they live, the nation's government, and the country in creating sound decisions and policies regarding buyer-supplier relationships.

1.8 Scope of the study

The scope of a study describes how deeply the research area will be probed throughout the endeavour and details the constraints under which the investigation will operate. This study endeavoured to answer the questions regarding buyer-supplier relationships, a sample of 100 respondents made up of Ufudu employees from the procurement and customer service departments was recruited for the study from the Ufudu corporation in Lusaka and suppliers to, who were recruited from within Lusaka, Zambia, using a purposive sampling procedure. Due to financial constraints, the study only concentrated on the employees at the main Ufudu office in Lusaka and their consistent suppliers.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of this study were the difficulties in obtaining management approval to engage employees at Ufudu, this was due to some managers thinking their employees were leaving work pending while they attended to the study interviews or questionnaires. It was also difficult to access published information on this subject because few researchers have conducted research on this topic in Zambia and at this company, which was relatively new. In addition, it was a little difficult to access accurate data from

respondents at Ufudu because some staff tried to conceal the real picture for fear of the unknown. Sometimes officers from the sales and procurement department were in the field, say where they were installing devices within Lusaka or outside, this made it a little difficult for the researcher to access them from their main office which was the research site in this study, however, despite the said challenges, significant information was obtained though it took more time than planned.

1.10 Definitions of key terms

Supplier: A person or firm that provides something (Dyer, J. and Chu, W,2011).

Buyer: A person or company that acquires something by paying and acquire (Chopra, S. and Meindl, P,2010).

Buyer-Supplier relationship: This entails transactions between the supplier and buyer involving purchase and supply of either goods and services or both (Dyer, J. and Chu, W,2011).

Production: In this study it will refer to the process of creating goods or items, or products and services to satisfy human wants and needs (Carrem etal', 2020).

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Chapter overview

The literature on the to-be-outlined research components was evaluated in this chapter. As a result, this chapter gave a theoretical review, empirical review, a theoretical framework that looked at theories and models associated with this topic, and a conceptual framework review that provided a diagrammatic overview of the independent and dependent variables.

2.1 Non empirical review

A narrative or traditional literature review, which is a thorough, critical, and impartial analysis of the current information on a topic, was used in this study. They are a crucial component of the research process and aid in creating the study foundation, emphasis, or context of the study.

Buyer-supplier relationships are business arrangements between organizations for the supply and purchase of commodities or services. While suppliers are concerned with providing the correct quality goods at a price that is profitable, buyers are concerned with acquiring the right product at the right price (Helper and Sako,2005).

A strong relationship between a buyer and a supplier depends on trust amongst other factors. Economics and sociology, which have viewed the institutional setting and inter-firm relationships from many angles, are where the study of trust first emerged. There are certain shared interests between the two fields of study that have influenced supply chain management research. Developing relationships among the various supply chain agents depends on a variety of factors, including interpersonal and inter-firm trust. The importance of the provider is crucial to the buyer-supplier relationship. In a relationship between customers and suppliers, partnership is a more advanced condition than involvement. Buyer-supplier relationship remains very important to a company's performance and profitability (Dyer and Chu, 2011).

Challenges faced in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship

A crucial component of company operations is the buyer-supplier relationship, which entails communication and cooperation between a buyer and a supplier. A mutual exchange of commodities, services, and information that aims to satisfy the needs and goals of both parties characterizes this

relationship. Both buyers and suppliers must have a thorough understanding of the buyer-supplier relationship in order to properly manage their interactions and produce the intended results for their firms. In a buyer-supplier relationship, the person or business who buys products or services from a supplier is known as the buyer. Contrarily, it is the supplier who offers these products or services to the customer. Trust, open communication, and reciprocal advantages are the foundation of this partnership. Suppliers depend on customers for a steady stream of demand and revenue, while customers depend on suppliers to deliver high-quality goods or services at fair pricing (Dyer, and Chu, 2011).

Recognizing the many factors that affect the buyer-supplier relationship is essential to comprehending it. Power, trust, communication, and collaboration are some of these dimensions. When one party has the ability to sway another's choices and resource allocation, this is referred to as having power. As it encourages dependability, honesty, and cooperation, trust is essential to building and maintaining healthy relationships. Information exchange, setting clear expectations, and dispute resolution all depend on effective communication (George, 1968). Last but not least, collaboration entails working together to accomplish shared objectives, like raising product quality or cutting costs.

Any company connection, but this is especially true in the buyer-supplier dynamic, depends on effective communication. However, there are a number of typical obstacles that can prevent suppliers and customers from effectively communicating. Language barriers are one of the biggest problems. Buyers and suppliers may come from different nations and speak different languages in a market that is becoming more and more international. As a result, there may be misunderstandings, erroneous interpretations, and problems communicating crucial information. Language difficulties can make it difficult to build trust and can also cause delays in making decisions and solving problems (Dyer, and Chu, 2011).

The absence of direct and succinct communication routes presents another difficulty in buyer-supplier interactions. There might not always be agreement on the best platforms and communication channels. This may lead to misunderstandings or missed opportunities for dialogue. Important information may be missed or improperly communicated, for instance, if a buyer prefers email communication but the supplier prefers phone calls. Both parties must create open lines of communication and settle on the most efficient ways to exchange information.

Finally, cultural differences might make it difficult for buyers and suppliers to communicate. The vast diversity in cultures among various geographical areas can have an impact on conventions, expectations, and communication practices. For instance, while direct communication is encouraged in some cultures, it may be considered impolite in others to express concerns or disagreements. These cultural differences may result in miscommunications or incorrect messages, which may even have an effect on the overall company partnership. In order to promote efficient communication and sustain a fruitful cooperation, it is essential for both buyers and suppliers to be aware of and sensitive to these cultural variations.

Factors affecting buyer-supplier relationships on organization performance.

Any firm must have strong ties with its suppliers and customers to succeed. These connections lay the groundwork for efficient supply chain management and have a significant bearing on both parties' overall performance and financial success. Trust, communication, and the congruence of aims and objectives are just a few of the variables that might affect the dynamics between buyers and suppliers.

Trust is one of the most crucial elements influencing interactions between buyers and suppliers. A successful collaboration is built and maintained on a foundation of trust. Buyers must have faith that suppliers will fulfill orders promptly and to the necessary quality standards. On the other side, providers must have faith that customers will pay on time and treat them fairly. It takes time and work on both sides to build trust, which calls for straightforward communication, dependable performance, and a history of dependability (Dyer, and Chu, 2011).

Another important element that affects relationships between buyers and suppliers is communication. Both sides can comprehend each other's requirements, expectations, and concerns when there is effective communication. Quick problem solving and misunderstanding avoidance are made possible by open and transparent communication. Buyers must clearly define their requirements, and suppliers must regularly update customers on the status of their orders and any potential delays or other pertinent information. Since it allows for the sharing of ideas and insights, effective communication also stimulates collaboration and creativity (George, 1968).

In interactions between buyers and suppliers, alignment of aims and objectives is also essential. Buyers and suppliers are more likely to cooperate to accomplish shared goals when their goals are similar. If their objectives are not in line, disputes may occur and strain relationships. Conflicts may arise, for instance, if a buyer is concerned with cutting costs and a supplier is aiming for product innovation. To establish a happy

and mutually productive relationship, it is crucial for both sides to have a clear grasp of each other's objectives and discover common ground.

In conclusion, a number of variables, such as trust, communication, and goal alignment, can affect the interactions between buyers and suppliers. Building a firm basis for the partnership requires trust, and good communication fosters understanding and avoids misunderstandings. Aligning goals and objectives makes ensuring that everyone is working toward the same goal, which promotes a more positive and productive partnership. Businesses can develop solid and mutually beneficial buyer-supplier partnerships that support their overall performance by recognizing and resolving these aspects.

Trust, communication, and goal alignment are a few elements that might affect the relationship between a buyer and a supplier. While efficient communication fosters understanding and avoids misunderstandings, trust is necessary to provide a solid basis for the collaboration. A more peaceful and productive relationship results from the alignment of goals and objectives, which guarantees that both parties are striving toward a common goal. Businesses can build solid, win-win relationships with their suppliers by recognizing and resolving these elements, which will help them succeed in the long run (Dyer, and Chu, 2011).

Practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship in an organization.

For every firm to succeed, developing and managing the buyer-supplier relationship is essential. This connection is the one that exists between a business and its suppliers, when the provider offers the customer products or services. Establishing reliable channels of communication, developing a relationship of trust, and cooperating to achieve shared objectives are crucial for creating and maintaining a solid buyer-supplier relationship.

In order to establish and maintain the buyer-supplier relationship, effective communication is essential. Both parties must express their expectations, needs, and any changes or problems in a clear and concise manner. Regular meetings, emails, or phone conversations can help achieve this. Open and honest communication keeps everyone on the same page and helps to avoid misunderstandings (George, 1968).

The relationship between the buyer and the supplier must also be based on trust. Over time, trust is developed by consistently providing high-quality (HQ) products or services, keeping deadlines, and being trustworthy. Buyers must have faith in suppliers to deliver what they have promised, and suppliers must

have faith in buyers to make payments on time and give specific instructions. Trust also entails being truthful and open when issues arise, as well as cooperating to discover solutions.

Finally, a buyer-supplier partnership requires cooperation to achieve shared objectives. The goals should be clearly understood by both parties, and they should cooperate to reach them. To improve efficiency and effectiveness, collaboration may involve exchanging information, knowledge, and resources. Both the buyer and the supplier can gain from a strong and mutually beneficial relationship by acting as partners rather than rivals.

In conclusion, effective communication, trust, and collaboration are essential for creating and managing the buyer-supplier relationship. Organizations can develop a strong and effective buyer-supplier relationship by having clear communication channels, being dependable and trustworthy, and cooperating to achieve shared goals. This partnership is crucial for guaranteeing prompt delivery of goods or services, upholding quality standards, and ultimately ensuring the organization's success.

2.2 Empirical review

There is much research that have been conducted on the topic of buyer-supplier relationship, discussed below are some of the studies conducted.

Global review

A study conducted in 2013 by Andrew Finger in Brazil at the university of Alagoas, whose aim was to understand the trust in the buyer-supplier relationship discovered that a good buyer-supplier relationship is one where there is trust and involvement from both the buyer and supplier, he found that without trust and involvement, the relationship between the buyer and the supplier can go bad and end up negatively affecting their operations (Andrew, 2013).

Results from earlier studies on buyer-supplier relationships pointed to a beneficial relationship between a solid buyer-supplier relationship and company performance. The results of their study did show that effective procurement initiatives reduce energy use, waste, and costs, but they came to the conclusion that if all parties are to fully carry out their responsibilities in good faith and if the relationship is to benefit the buyer and suppliers and subsequently foster strong organizational performance, there must always be a more significant shift toward stronger levels of collaboration between the buyer and supplier (Chopra and Meindl, 2010).

Regional review

Carrim and others conducted a study in 2020 in South Africa, Pretoria in selected entities, the aim of their study was to find better means of sustaining the buyer-supplier relationship in enhancing supply chain management in logistics service context, they learned that firms have less been spending time on improving their buyer-supplier relationships. They discovered that building sound collaborations and understanding between buyers and suppliers would help sustain their relations and promote good organization performance. They concluded that, if companies are to enjoy good buyer-supplier relationships they should consider building trust, collaborations and involvement (Carrem et al,2020).

Local review

A study conducted by Mubanga in 2022 in Lusaka whose aim was to determine the impact of supply chain management practices on performance of small and medium enterprises found that relationships, information sharing, and engagement helps put up good buyer-supplier relationship, she concluded that promoting good supply-buyer relationship practices promotes good performance of organization (Mubanga,2022).

2.3 Theoretical review

The study embraced a few theories related to the subject at hand, of the many theories, it considered looking at Transaction cost and social exchange theories.

Transaction cost theory

According to transaction cost theory, the optimal organizational structure is one that maximizes economic efficiency by minimizing exchange costs. According to the theory, each type of transaction incurs coordination costs for monitoring, controlling, and managing transactions. A good relationship with trust, between a company's purchasing and its suppliers will promote economic efficiency in the company's operations. The theory goes on to say that buyer-supplier interaction calls for trust, understanding and consistence. This theory is key to this study as it is looks at the existing relationship between a buyer and supplier and how the interaction must be conducted (Williamson, 1979).

Social exchange theory

The concept of social exchange theory is based on the idea that a relationship between two people is formed through a cost-benefit analysis. In other words, it's a metric designed to assess an individual's effort in a person-to-person relationship. This theory emphasizes the significance of the buyer-supplier relationship in the business world. It emphasizes that a good relationship between the two sides is required for a firm to operate with all the quality materials from its suppliers; only then can an organization operate productively and efficiently. This theory's postulations point to what leads to a productive firm using the buyer-seller relationship (George, 1968).

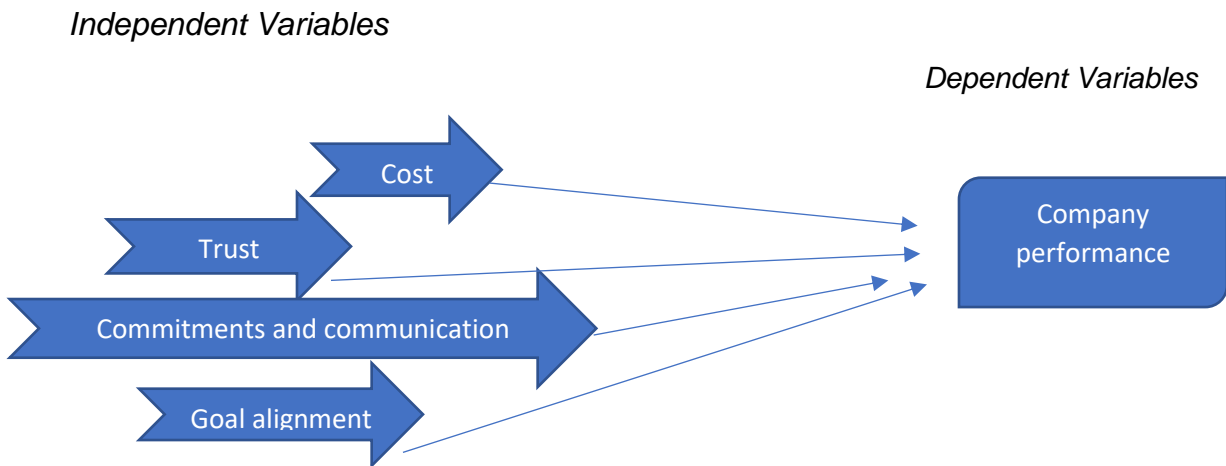
Gaps in Literature

There are studies that have been conducted in Zambia in line with material supply in organization but there were very few studies if not non that had specifically touched on the impact of buyer-supplier relationship on production performance of firms in Zambia, and none was done to specifically look at Ufudu company in particular, there were no study that had inputs from Ufudu employees on this subject, hence the need to.

2.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework that demonstrated the link between the independent and dependent variables was presented in this section. Figure 1 below illustrated the conceptual framework for the study.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.



Source:(Author, 2023)

Descriptions of key variables

Cost

A good and stable relationship between the buyer and suppliers will promote economic efficiency where both the supplier and buyer will appreciate the engagement. Reduced cost of engaging each other will help

promote business at a low cost and this will encourage good corporation and engagements hence reducing how much the firms are putting in transactions, this will in turn promote good company performance (Williamson, 1979).

Trust

Trust remains very cardinal in the buyer-supplier relationships. The two parties should trust each other and believe that they are going to deliver on their obligations as expected. Ensuring trust between the two parties signifies a dedication to serving the other party better and without any unexpected diversions. It is trusted that amongst other things strengthen relationship between buyers and suppliers and promote good company performance due to availability and stable flow of materials (Dyer, and Chu, 2011).

Commitment and communication

When the buyer and suppliers maintain their commitments such as to deliver materials or make payments for supplied materials the relationship between the two is strengthened and it's long lasting. Understanding is yet another factor that helps in maintaining a good buyer and supplier relationship, once there is commitment and understanding in the transactions involving the two stakeholders their relationships will last and so will their companies continue performing better and in a stable manner (George,1968).

Involvement

Should the buyer or supplier make any changes to their operations, the other party must be engaged and briefed, this helps in adjusting in the operations of the two people, say when the buyers' adjustments their payment period, the suppliers must be informed so that they don't just bump into the delay in making payments for the goods they could have supplied. Ignoring the other party may frustrate them to an extent that they don't wish to work with the firm again. Otherwise, good engagements usually maintain the buyer supplier relationships and in turn help the firm operate well (Dyer and Chu, 2011).

Goal alignment

The process of making sure that the aims and objectives of many people or organizations are tightly matched and working toward a shared goal is referred to as goal alignment. In partnerships between buyers and sellers, when cooperation is necessary for both parties to succeed, this idea is especially crucial. Several significant advantages can be obtained in these interactions when aims are in alignment. Objective alignment fosters improved cooperation and communication between the buyer and provider in

interactions. In order to accomplish such goals, information, ideas, and resources are more likely to be shared when the buyer and supplier have similar aims in mind. Because both sides are able to take advantage of each other's skills and experience, this increased collaboration may result in increased production and efficiency. Second, objective congruence between buyers and suppliers fosters trust and strengthens the relationship between the parties. Both the buyer and the supplier are more likely to keep their agreements and deliver on their promises when their goals are congruent. This promotes a sense of dependability and dependability, both of which are essential for sustaining an effective long-term relationship (Dyer and Chu, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter of the study discussed the method that the researcher used, an outline of this chapter included research design, methodology, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data analysis, validity and reliability checks, and ethical considerations. It was easier for the researcher to conduct the study with a well outlined methodology, this therefore was the researchers guiding tool even as she pursued the study.

3.2 Research Approach

In quantitative research, numerical data are systematically gathered and analyzed to provide answers to research questions or test hypotheses. It involves using statistical methods to data analysis and inference. This kind of research concentrates on quantifiable variables and seeks to identify connections, patterns, or trends between them. The primary goals of quantitative research are to offer empirical support and extrapolate results to a larger population. One advantage of quantitative research approach is that this type of research allows for precise measurement and analysis, enabling researchers to draw conclusions that are more reliable and accurate than those based on subjective or qualitative methods.

The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend and analyze human behavior, experiences, and meanings in relation to a specific situation. Instead of collecting and analyzing numerical data(ND), as is the case with quantitative research, qualitative research tries to acquire rich, descriptive data using a variety of methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. With this method, researchers can investigate complicated phenomena and obtain a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and psychological elements of a certain research topic. Qualitative research has the advantage of capturing in-depth information on a specific issue. Open-ended questions help researchers better comprehend the context and complexities around an interest issue by letting participants to express their experiences in their own words. Insights and conclusions that may not be possible using quantitative research techniques can result from this.

Mixed methods research is a comprehensive approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a more thorough understanding of a particular research topic. This approach acknowledges that different research questions may require different types of data and that by using both qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers can obtain a more complete and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The ability of mixed methods research to validate and triangulate

results is one of its key benefits. Quantitative data provides for statistical analysis and generalizability, but qualitative data can offer in-depth and rich insights into participants' experiences, motives, and viewpoints. Researchers can cross-validate their findings by merging the two, ensuring that the outcomes are not skewed or impacted by just one kind of data.

The study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods, which is a mixed method. The method was of help to the researcher in gauging and assessing efficiency. The researcher benefited from showing the statistical correlation between variables. By ensuring that the weaknesses of one type of data were counterbalanced by the advantages of another, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative method enhances an evaluation. This approach helped the researcher gather both figures and human aspect about the study.

3.3 Research Design

Research design is a plan of how a research study will be conducted to get the right answers to the questions being asked is referred to as a research design. This study made use of descriptive design, this helped the researcher describe the phenomenon at hand. Data collection is quick and simple when using a descriptive design, especially when conducting surveys. With the help of this design, the researcher was able to gather data in a setting that is both natural and trustworthy. Furthermore, it allowed the study to be conducted in the respondents' natural environment, ensuring the collection of accurate and high-quality data.

3.4 Study Population

A research population consists of persons or elements, and these could be persons or events, anything at all of the research interest, including observations, abstract qualities and judgments. The study was carried out at Ufudu Limited in Lusaka Province. The study targeted employees in the procurement and sales departments at Ufudu Zambia Limited, the total population of employees at Ufudu is approximately 80 according to ZoomInfo, with almost everyone having a hand in the procurement and sales department.

3.5 Sample Size

The number of participants or observations included in a study is referred to as the sample size. Sample size also leads to a procedure for determining the number of items to be included in the sample. A sample size of 100 (50% * 200) was used targeting staff under procurement and sales department and consisted of Ufudu suppliers, representing 50% of the population arrived at, combining Ufudu employees and their consistent suppliers in Lusaka, which stood at 200 approximately. The total number of employees

combined is 30, realizing that every employee at Ufudu has a hand in both the procurement and sales department, this study included everyone in the study as it found targeting everyone at Ufudu feasible and achievable.

3.6 Study site

Targets of the study was Ufudu Limited, Lusaka. A research site is a place where research is conducted. Research typically takes place in universities, hospitals, research facilities, and field programs (Esterberg, K. G., 2002).

3.7 Sampling Technique

The method used to select the sample's participants for a particular study is known as a sampling technique. In this study, a simple random sampling, cluster sampling technique will be used, this sampling technique is very simple and usually removes the aspect of biasness, hence the participants in this study will be selected at random at Ufudu Zambia Limited in Lusaka. A probability sampling technique called cluster sampling involves grouping a population into clusters, such as districts or schools, and then selecting a sample at random from among these clusters. In a perfect world, each cluster would be a tiny reflection of the entire population. Employees of Ufudu will be grouped in clusters of stores and sales, and procurement. The 100 respondents had some falling in any of the given clusters and interviews were conducted accordingly.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

Tests, questionnaires, inventories, interview schedules or guides, rating scales, survey plans, and other forms used to gather data are examples of data collection instruments. A questionnaire comprising open and close ended questions was used to collect information for this study. An open and close ended questionnaire was used, open ended questions helped gather the in-depth details of the concepts from respondents as they gave their opinions on the topic, close ended questions on the other end helped gather more quantitative details about the subject. An interview was also used with those respondents that were not able to fill in a questionnaire. To help the researcher quantify the problem, a questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data through close ended questions. Because of its ease of analysis, a questionnaire was used.

3.9 Primary and Secondary data sources

The Ufudu employees who successfully completed their questionnaires, participated in interviews, and/or are the subject of observations served as the study's key sources. Secondary data came from journal articles, books, journals, and the internet. Secondary data also came from non-targeted individuals who had an opinion on material management.

3.10 Data analysis

Descriptive analysis is a type of data analysis that aids in accurately describing, displaying, or summarizing data points so that patterns may appear that satisfy all the data's requirements. Descriptive analysis (statistics/analytics) was used in this study. It is chosen for its ability to generate accessible insights from uninterpreted data. The research study used Statistical Packages for Social Sciences version 20 to analyse quantitative data. The researcher used it due to it being quick and reliable.

3.11 Reliability and Validity

The capacity to consistently deliver the same outcomes when the same variables are measured in the same manner repeatedly and on multiple times is known as reliability. Measuring reliability entails determining how consistently high-quality data is gathered with the least degree of bias and mistake.

The degree to which the chosen research instruments accurately measure what they are designed to measure is referred to as "validity". In order to establish construct validity of variables and the validity of the research's abstract concepts, the study made sure that the research's instruments are logically sound and comprehensive enough to account for all the abstract concepts that respondents will be engaged over.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

The researcher assured everyone that the study was purely academic and that it was significant in adding to the body of knowledge. The researcher handled the respondents' and their respondents' responses' privacy and confidentiality in a transparent and expert manner. The researcher ensured that respondents got to enjoy their right to either participate or pull out at any given time, respondents typed their responses into the provided box without stating their names in order to protect respondents from revealing their identities and all respondents only participated with their consent, they had the option of providing or withholding information, and did not suffer any consequences (Esterberg,2002).

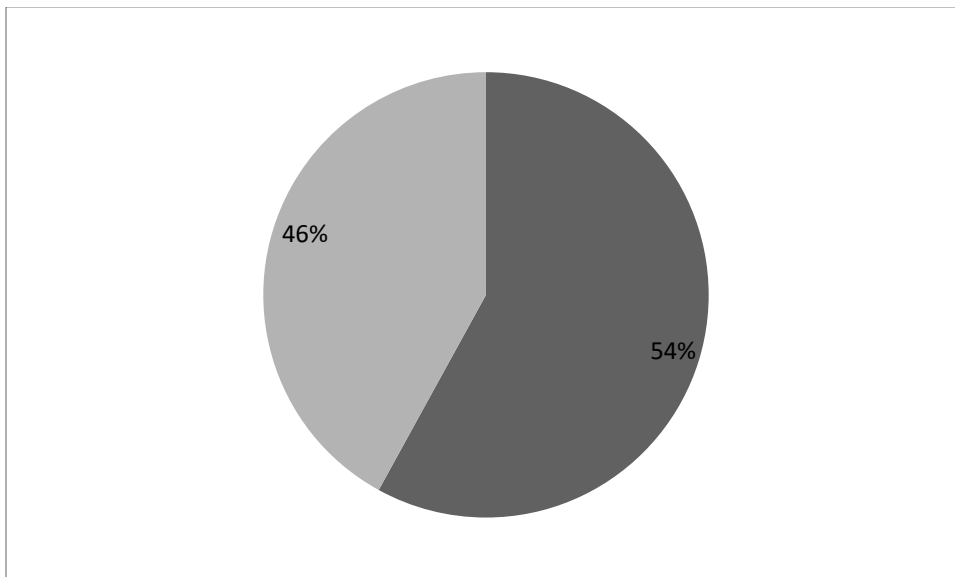
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the analysis of the findings in line with the research objectives and the analysis of the data collected from questionnaires. This involved an assessment of the impact of the supplier and buyer relationship on production performance in an organization: a case study of Ufudu Zambia Limited.

4.0 Interpretation of Data

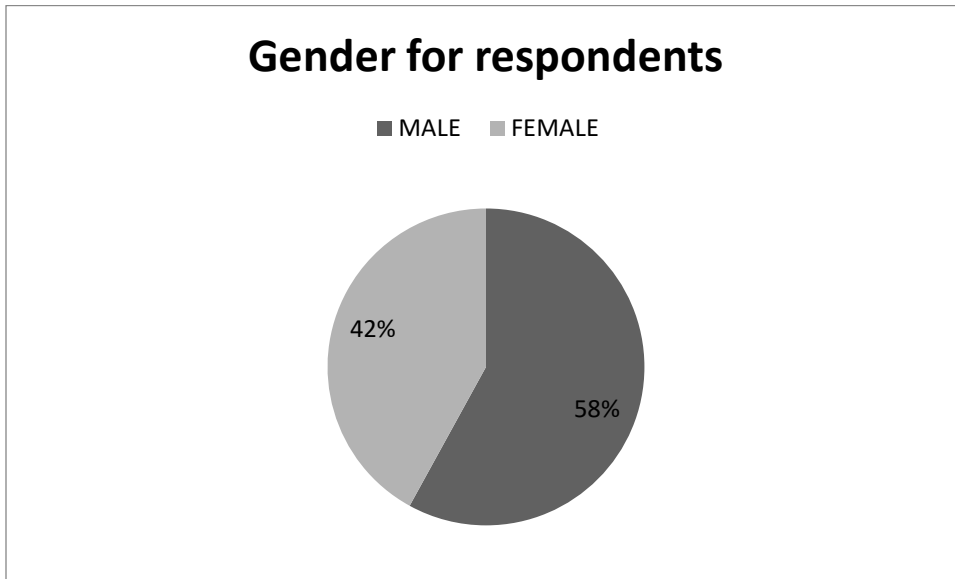
Figure 4.2 Distribution indicating either respondent is buyer or supplier



Source: Researcher,2023

Figure 4.2 shows the respondents category, either buyer or supplier, the study reveals that 46% of respondents were Ufudu employees while 54% respondents were Suppliers that had supplied Ufudu with various materials for a long time. It was significant to get views from both Ufudu employees and suppliers because both ends have had an experience with their own business relationship.

Figure 4.3 Distribution indicating the respondent's gender.



Source: Researcher,2023

Figure 4.3 shows the gender distribution for the participants in the study, 42% was for females, while that of males was 58%. This representation covered both buyers and suppliers. This finding reveals that there were more males participating in the study, however, both had key roles to play in their buyer- supplier relationship and it was cardinal to include them all in the study. It is imperative to include both male and female participants in research studies for several reasons, as it is consistent with the research principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Table 4.1 -Age distribution of study respondents

Age	Number	Percentage
18-30 years	20	20%
31-40 years	30	30%
41-50 years	33	33%
51-60 years	17	17%
Above 60 years	0	0%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.1 above shows 20% of respondents from both suppliers and Ufudu in this study were between 18 and 30 years old, with 30% being between 31 and 40 years old. Additionally, table respondents between 41 and 50 years were at 33%, with those between 51 and 60 years old standing at 17%. It was realized that respondents between 41 and 50 years had a higher participation in this academic study.

Table 4.2 - Respondents length of service at Ufudu Limited

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	16	16%
6-10 years	34	34%
11-15 years	28	28%
16-20 years	18	18%
Above 20 years	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.2 reveals that 16% of the respondents had worked for Ufudu for less than 5 years ,34% of the respondents had worked for Ufudu for a period between 6 and 10 years, with 28 % of respondents having worked between 11-15,16-20 years workers stood at 18% with only 4 workers having served above 20 years. These findings revealed that most workers at Ufudu served above 5 years and were thus able to answer the questions pertaining to the buyer supplier relationship in terms of performance productivity. The employees that served more years at Ufudu had more experience and details about the buyer- supplier relationship. Long serving employees tend to have more information on an organization (Andrew, 2013).

Table 4.3 **Distribution by level of education for respondents**

Respondent	number	percentage
PRIMARY LEVEL	0	0%
SECONDARY LEVEL	10	10%
COLLEGE LEVEL	30	30%
UNDERGRADUATE	50	50%
POST GRADUATE	10	10%
PHD	0	0%
TOTAL	100	100%

Source, Author 2023

Table 4.3 shows the qualification distribution for respondents both at Ufudu and amongst suppliers. 10% reached secondary level, with 30% having reached college, 50% did reach their undergraduate levels with only 10% having reached their post graduate levels. Most respondents had reached their secondary levels and above, these educational attainments helped in understanding issues surrounding buyer and supplier relationships, pertaining to production performance. It was discovered that most respondents with degrees and master’s degrees had a better understanding of the subject and this was helpful.

Table 4.4 Respondents responses on department of operations

Respondent	Number	Percentage
Procurement	55	55%
Stores	37	37%
Operations	8	8%
Total	100	100%

Source, Author 2023

Table 4.4 reveals that the procurement department which has a responsibility of procuring materials had 55 of its staff present in this study, while 8 staff from operations department took part in the study with only 37 respondents from stores department. It was discovered that a lot of respondents from the procurement department participated in this study and made quiet significant contribution to its progress, however, all the respondents that took part in the study played a very key role in providing information that spoke to the buyer-supplier relationship, in terms of production performance. The relationship between a buyer and a supplier involves intricate interactions between several organizational units (Cannon, 2010). Key departments like sales, production, and procurement must work together and coordinate their efforts if the entire relationship with suppliers is to be successful and effective.

Table 4.5 Responses on buyer-supplier relationship

	Strongly Strongly	Agree	neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL
Ufudu carries out full assessment before selecting potential suppliers for your business	23	34	9	17	17	100
You assess supplier's ability to meet quality standards and specifications	23	34	9	17	17	100
You ensure transparency and open communication with your suppliers	23	34	9	17	17	100
You monitor and manage the performance of your suppliers	10	50	0	10	30	100
You collaborate with suppliers to drive innovation and continuous improvement	30	10	0	60	0	100
You handle disputes or issues that may arise in the buyer-supplier relationship in a professional manner	0	70	0	30	0	100

Source: Researcher 2023

Table 4.5 reveals that 57% of respondents indicated that Ufudu carries out full assessment before selecting potential suppliers for their business with rest saying opposite, with 57% of respondents indicating that Ufudu assess supplier’s ability to meet quality standards and specifications while the remaining saying otherwise, 57% of respondents stated that Ufudu ensures transparency and open communication with their suppliers with the remaining respondents saying otherwise. Additionally, 60% of respondents said Ufudu monitors and manage the performance of their suppliers, with 40% saying Ufudu does collaborate with suppliers to drive innovation and continuous improvement. Organizations must evaluate their suppliers in order to make sure they are collaborating with trustworthy, knowledgeable, and moral partners. The evaluation enhances performance, reduces risks, and advances the general prosperity of the buyer-supplier

partnership. Collaboration between buyers and suppliers is critical in the intricately linked and complex economic environment of today (Bowersox, 2002). The efficiency, creativity, and competitiveness of both sides will be greatly impacted by the success of this partnership.

Table 4.6 You incorporate sustainability and ethical considerations into your supplier selection and relationship management.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	10	10%
Neutral	10	10%
Agree	60	60%
Strongly agree	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.6 above shows that 10% respondents disagreed that they incorporate sustainability and ethical considerations into their supplier selection and relationship management, stating that sometimes Ufudu management pays less attention to ethical and sustainability consideration, 10% respondents chose to remain neutral, with 60% respondents saying they incorporate sustainability and ethical considerations into their supplier selection and relationship management, 20% respondents strongly agreed that they incorporate sustainability and ethical considerations into their supplier selection and relationship management at Ufudu. Organizations dedicated to ethical and responsible business practices must integrate sustainability and ethical considerations into supplier selection and relationship management. This strategy not only complies with social norms but also lowers risks, improves reputation, and fosters long-term company success (Cannon, 2010).

Table 4.7 You use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of your buyer-supplier relationships.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	20	20%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	80	80%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.7 shows that 20% respondents disagreed that they use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of their buyer-supplier relationships, they complained that sometimes Ufudu does not pay attention to indicators. 80% Respondents said that they use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of their buyer-supplier relationships. Organizations need to employ Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the efficacy and success of a range of processes and interactions, including those between buyers and suppliers. This could include the following: cost savings made possible by the buyer-supplier relationship; defect rate, or the percentage of goods or services that meet quality standards; timely delivery of goods, which is essential for keeping production schedules on track; and an overall supplier performance score based on a variety of criteria, such as quality, timeliness, and communication, among many other factors (Dyer, 2011).

Table 4.8 You involve your suppliers in your strategic planning process.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	48	48%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	52	52%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.8 shows that 48% respondents were dissatisfied with the level of supplier involvement in strategic planning, 52% respondents agreed that they involve their suppliers in their strategic planning process. Participating suppliers in the strategic planning process of the business is becoming more widely acknowledged as a beneficial approach that transcends conventional buyer-supplier associations. Incorporating suppliers into strategic planning is crucial for the success of an organization as a whole and for many facets of business operations. Incorporating suppliers into strategic planning cultivates a feeling of cooperation and joint venture. Instead of being transactional entities, suppliers become essential players, strengthening and improving relationships for both parties (Dyer, 2011).

Table 4.9 You have measures in place to manage and mitigate risks associated with your suppliers.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	100	100%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	0	0%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.9 shows that 100% respondents said that they do not have measures in place to manage and mitigate risks associated with their suppliers with some stating that if they existed then they do not know so much about them as it has never been disclosed to them. It is crucial to implement strategies to control and reduce supplier-related risks for a number of reasons. These actions support a company's general performance, sustainability, and resilience. A vital link in the supply chain is the supplier. Reducing and managing supplier-related risks improves the supply chain's overall resilience. Stock outs, operational pauses, and production delays can result from supply chain disruptions (Andrew, 2013). If supplier-related risks are not addressed, they may lead to higher costs due to missed deadlines, poor quality, or the requirement to locate substitute suppliers.

Table 4.10 You don't face challenges in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	60	60%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	40	40%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.10 reveals that 60% respondents said Ufudu does have challenges in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept, stating that sometimes issues affecting the trust between Ufudu and suppliers arises and this somehow makes the implementation of the concept difficult. 40% agreed that that Ufudu does not face challenges in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu. Organizations usually face challenges of poor-quality inputs supplied to them and often times delays in supplying inputs, this affects the entire production process. Employing the buyer-supplier concept might present a number of obstacles that businesses must overcome. These difficulties may stem from variables pertaining to the intricate structure of supply chains, variations in corporate cultures, unpredictability in the economy, and foreign market circumstances (Bowersox, 2002). Different information availability between buyers and suppliers can impede efficient decision-making, and ineffective communication between buyers and suppliers can result in misunderstandings, delays, and less than ideal collaboration.

Table 4.11 Trust, communication and goal alignment affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	55	55%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	45	45%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.11 shows that 55% respondents indicated that trust, communication and goal alignment does not affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited, with 45% respondents agreeing that trust, communication and goal alignment affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited. Important elements that have a significant impact on the dynamics and effectiveness of buyer-supplier interactions include trust, communication, and goal alignment. These components are interconnected and essential to promoting cooperation, resolving disputes, and accomplishing shared goals (Bowersox, 2002). Any successful connection, including those between suppliers and buyers, is built on trust. Building trust lays the groundwork for open communication, teamwork, and mutual success. Clear expectations and difficulties are communicated to both parties in a transparent and honest manner, which fosters trust. Clear communication avoids misconceptions, lowers errors, and guarantees that both parties have a mutually understood knowledge of the connection. It is crucial for communicating expectations, requirements, and changes in plans. Overarching goals and objectives should be understood by suppliers and buyers alike (Bowersox, 2002). By directing both parties' efforts toward shared objectives, goal alignment increases effectiveness as a whole.

Table 4.12 Buyer-supplier relationship affect production performance of the business at Ufudu

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	100	100%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.12 reveals that 100% of respondents confirmed that buyer-supplier relationship does affect production performance of the business at Ufudu, stating that Ufudu business's production success is greatly influenced by the relationship between its suppliers and them. The dynamics of this relationship can affect many aspects of the production process, making it an essential component of supply chain management. Good communication between buyers and suppliers makes it easier to plan and coordinate jointly. It also guarantees a smooth flow of information and resources, which improves production scheduling. Better teamwork and communication result in increased supply chain visibility. Accurate demand forecasting is made possible by real-time information sharing, which lowers the possibility of production bottlenecks. Improving the buyer-supplier relationship through cooperation is essential to maximizing production efficiency (Bowersox, 2002). It fosters a robust and adaptable supply chain and improves productivity, quality, and innovation

Table 4.13 There are practices that strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	30	30%
Neutral	10	10%
Agree	60	60%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.13 shows that 30% respondents said that there are no available practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu, with 10% respondents choosing to remain neutral, 60% respondents agreeing that there are practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu, stating that Ufudu does hold business relationship reviews that surrounds improving buyer-supplier relationship, they talk about the challenges and achievements recorded in their relationship and this helps improve and strengthen the relationship between Ufudu and suppliers. For mutual gain and long-term success, the buyer-supplier relationship must be strengthened (Andrew, 2013). A few strategies that businesses may use to build a solid and cooperative relationship with their suppliers include creating open lines of communication; sharing pertinent information in an honest and transparent manner; and encouraging an environment where people are willing to engage in candid conversation in order to solve problems.

Table 4.14 There are successful buyer supplier collaboration that results in mutual benefits.

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	11	11%
Neutral	0	0%
Agree	89	89%
Strongly agree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4.14 shows that 11% respondents disagreed that there are successful buyer supplier collaboration that results in mutual benefits, stating that its usually one sided, at times benefiting suppliers and sometimes Ufudu. 89% respondents said that there is successful buyer supplier collaboration that results in mutual benefits, defending that Ufudu and suppliers do strike a balance in their dealings to ensure that no side is disadvantaged. Effective collaboration between buyers and suppliers is critical for a number of reasons, including risk management, strategic expansion, operational effectiveness, and overall business success. In order to achieve operational excellence, promote innovation, control risks, and guarantee long-term strategic growth, successful buyer-supplier partnership is essential (Andrew, 2013). The advantages go beyond specific companies; they have a good effect on the whole supply chain and help create a more robust and competitive business environment.

4.15 Discussions/interviews with respondents

4.15.1 Discussion

It is crucial to implement strategies to control and reduce supplier-related risks for a number of reasons. These actions support a company's general performance, sustainability, and resilience. A vital link in the supply chain is the supplier. Reducing and managing supplier-related risks improves the supply chain's overall resilience. Ufudu should realize that incorporating suppliers into strategic planning is crucial for the success of their organization as a whole and for many facets of business operations. Incorporating suppliers into strategic planning cultivates a feeling of cooperation and joint venture, this approach can help Ufudu and its suppliers score many business goals ahead.

Objective number one in this study was to find out the challenges faced in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu Zambia Limited. According to this report, Ufudu encounters difficulties with linguistic and cultural barriers while working with certain suppliers, particularly those based outside of Zambia. Stating that miscommunications might lead to the shipment of incorrect materials, which has an impact on Ufudu output. Dealing with suppliers who have diverse cultural and linguistic origins might result in miscommunications in today's international business climate. It was also discovered that a lack of open communication was impeding Ufudu and suppliers' ability to exchange vital information, which resulted in errors and inefficiencies.

It was discovered that outside variables, such as economic downturns, natural catastrophes, and geopolitical events, were interfering with Ufudu's supply chain and impacting the buyer-supplier relationship. Sometimes the relied on supplier delivered materials late and sometimes promised yet didn't deliver materials at all, this affected Ufudu's production and its efficiency. Reliance on one supplier was another problem that was shown to be harming Ufudu. If a buyer relies too much on one source, they run a big risk of problems if that provider has problems.

At Ufudu, it was discovered to be difficult to maintain consistent quality in both products and services, particularly when there were changes in the materials or production procedures. At Ufudu, ensuring suppliers follow quality standards and legal requirements was found to be extremely difficult. This was made worse by the fact that suppliers occasionally provided lower-quality products, which had an impact on the company's output (Bowersox, 2002). The cost-effectiveness of the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu was impacted by fluctuations in the price of raw materials, labor expenses, and other economic factors that also affected the gasoline used for material transportation. This analysis also discovered that

unanticipated charges, including higher storage or shipping expenses, had an impact on Ufudu's total cost structure.

This study concludes that both effort and dedication are necessary to achieve true partnership between Ufudu and supplier, where both parties work together for mutual gain. According to the study's findings, there is a growing requirement for suppliers and customers to support ethical and sustainable business practices. This can present difficulties for certain companies. It is frequently necessary to combine strategic planning, technological investment, good communication, and a dedication to fostering long-lasting, cooperative partnerships in order to overcome these obstacles. Frequent evaluations, performance reviews, and initiatives for continuous improvement can assist in addressing these issues and boosting the relationship's general efficacy between the customer and supplier.

The second objective of this study was to explain how trust, communication and goals affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited. According to the study's conclusions, a successful buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu is built on trust. This study discovered that Ufudu and its suppliers held that mutual trust is essential for fulfilling promises made by either party, such as revealing confidential information or making on-time deliveries of commodities. Both the buyer and the supplier can be more flexible when faced with obstacles when there is a high degree of trust. Building trust increases confidence in one's capacity to handle adversities like market swings or unforeseen interruptions (Bowersox, 2002). Long-term commitment is fostered by trust. Buyers are more likely to stick with suppliers that regularly satisfy expectations, and suppliers are more likely to invest in innovations or upgrades that benefit the buyer.

It was discovered that at Ufudu, defining and outlining expectations requires good communication. To prevent misconceptions, both sides shared a certain amount of information regarding the specifications, timeframes, and needs. Though it wasn't always possible because of language and cultural barriers, there was open and honest contact between Ufudu and its suppliers. When problems occurred, though, communication was crucial. This study comes to the conclusion that being willing to have frank and cooperative conversations about difficulties helps solve problems more quickly and keeps minor disagreements from turning into big ones (Andrew, 2013).

Though this was not always the case, regular and prompt communication of pertinent information such as market trends, predictions, and strategic plans allows both the supplier and the customer to make decisions that are in line with the relationship's overall objectives.

A shared vision and matched objectives are hallmarks of successful buyer-supplier partnerships; however, the study found that Ufudu did not share these characteristics, with less goal and vision sharing. Literature showed that mutual success is more likely when both sides are aware of and working toward the same objectives.

The third objective was to find out how buyer-supplier relationships affect production performance of the business at Ufudu. Relationships between buyers and suppliers are vital in determining how well a corporation performs in terms of production. The nature of these connections may have an effect on a number of production-related factors, which may eventually have an impact on productivity, affordability, and the capacity to satisfy client demand.

According to this study findings, suppliers occasionally failed to guarantee the timely delivery of components and raw materials, which had an impact on Ufudu's production days since they occasionally had to start waiting for the supplier to provide goods (Andrew, 2013). The survey also discovered that Ufudu and suppliers worked together, which in some cases improved carrying costs, reduced stock outs and surplus inventory, and improved inventory management. However, this was not always the case as one side failed to prudently handle their responsibilities for various reasons. The study concludes that Ufudu didn't get raw materials on time and sometimes received poor quality raw materials, this both affected the production number of days and also the out quality, failure to collaborate at times also affected the inventory management process at Ufudu. All these irregularities were attributed to lack of proper collaboration and shared vision and goals.

The fourth and last goal of this study was to establish better practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia Limited.

Effective two-way communication is essential for Ufudu and its suppliers to address concerns, quickly resolve problems, and constructively share feedback.

Unlike the existing quo, clearly identify and express agreed aims, vision and objectives that all stakeholders must completely comprehend. It is important to make sure that the provider and the buyer are committed to reaching the same goals.

Setting key performance indicators (KPIs) and periodically evaluating performance against these measures are necessary because collaboration was not always easy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The chapter made conclusions based on the main findings and it summarizes the findings that were previously cited in the immediate previous chapter.

5.2 Summary of the findings

In this study, a lot of respondents from the procurement department participated, some came from supplier firms and others from Ufudu, hence, a lot of significant contribution came from respondents that were playing the procurement role, however, all the respondents that took part in the study played a very key role in providing information that spoke to the buyer-supplier relationship, in terms of production performance at Ufudu. This study found that Ufudu was collaborating with suppliers to drive innovation and continuous improvement, though some respondents were not satisfied with the extent to which collaboration were being promoted, stating Ufudu and suppliers needed to do more to enhance their buyer-supplier relationship. Through some respondents, it was established that Ufudu does have challenges in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept, stating that sometimes issues affecting the trust, communication and goals between Ufudu and suppliers arises and this somehow makes the implementation of the concept difficult and production performance at Ufudu affected.

5.3 Conclusions

On the challenges faced in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu, this study now concludes that Ufudu encounters challenges with linguistic and cultural barriers while working with certain suppliers, particularly those based outside of Zambia, it experiences some miscommunications that lead to the shipment of incorrect materials, which has an impact on Ufudu output especially when they receive wrong materials which may be costly to even send back to the supplier. This study also concludes that outside variables, such as economic downturns, natural catastrophes, and geopolitical events, were interfering with Ufudu's supply chain and impacting the buyer-supplier relationship and production in particular at Ufudu. As with regards to how trust, communication and goal alignment affected the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited, the study concludes that sometimes the trusted supplier (s) delivered materials late and sometimes delivered poor quality materials, this affected Ufudu's production and its efficiency. This study concludes that some suppliers were not informed about Ufudu's goals and they were not aligned to them hence doing things outside what could have helped Ufudu such as delivering

materials late and at times delivering poor quality materials, this affected Ufudu's production. This study concludes that Ufudu and its suppliers enjoyed mutual trust and this was essential for fulfilling promises made by either party, such as revealing confidential information or making on-time deliveries of commodities. The study also concludes that both suppliers and Ufudu shared a certain amount of information regarding the specifications, timeframes, and needs to an extent even if this was not satisfying enough to certain individuals who felt it needed more efforts and commitment. Suppliers that were good at effective communication with Ufudu had less challenges supplying the expected materials and at the expected time, fostering efficient production at Ufudu, that's how much impact trust, communication and goal alignment had on the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu.

The study sought to explain how buyer-supplier relationship affected production performance of the business at Ufudu. The study concludes that the relationship of Ufudu and suppliers was found to have had great impact on the production performance of Ufudu, inputs quality and quantity and time of supply, all had a direct impact on Ufudu production performance, for instance suppliers occasionally failed to guarantee the timely delivery of components and raw materials, which had an impact on Ufudu's production days since they occasionally had to start waiting for the supplier to provide goods. On practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu. The study comes to the conclusion that prompt and efficient communication with suppliers is critical for Ufudu's procurement department to function effectively and foster a buyer-supplier relationship that benefits both parties. In addition to helping each party understand the demands of the other company, open, sincere, two-way communication between Ufudu and its suppliers will foster goodwill and confidence that will enable productive, efficient production that is likely to yield a healthy profit for Ufudu.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

1. Since Ufudu encounters challenges with linguistic and cultural barriers while working with certain suppliers, particularly those based outside of Zambia, it is here by recommended by this study that Ufudu begins to engage suppliers that can easily and efficiently communicate and trade as expectedly. Ufudu can rely on local suppliers or find better means of communicating with the same

suppliers, for instance find communicators that can help engage the suppliers in the much familiar language.

2. Since Ufudu experienced some challenges with regards to communication and trust difficulties, this study recommends that Ufudu need to establish open and honest lines of communication. They also need to make sure that information about production plans, demand projections, timely supply and quality inputs, need modifications, and language interpreters is shared on a regular basis. Ufudu need to invest in building trust with its suppliers and also work towards sharing their company goals with each supplier to ensure that every heads in the same direction.
3. The study found out that the relationship of Ufudu and its suppliers was found to have had great impact on the production performance of Ufudu, however, the supply of inputs was at times late, hence the recommendation being made by this study Ufudu promotes quarterly relationship assessments and evaluations, and ensure to share experiences surrounding issues of delayed supply of raw materials to ensure that suppliers make an adjustment accordingly.
4. Improving buyer and supplier relationship requires prompt and efficient communication with suppliers which is very critical for Ufudu's procurement department to function effectively, hence, this study recommends that Ufudu continues on this path of promoting effective communication with its suppliers.

5.5 Recommendation for future study

This study has looked at an assessment of the impact of the supplier and buyer relationship on production performance in an organization, future researchers can look at factors enhancing buyer and supplier relationship in manufacturing companies.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

I am a student pursuing purchasing and supply at the University of Lusaka, conducting research based on the topic **AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE SUPPLIER AND BUYER RELATIONSHIP ON PRODUCTION PERFORMANCE IN AN ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF UFUDU ZAMBIA LIMITED.**

The respondent's identify will not be revealed; the data will only be utilized for scholarly reasons. We humbly ask that you answer the following questions honestly and impartially. We sincerely appreciate your participation.

INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to the taxonomy, and please tick in the space () provided and fill in the blanks.

I look forward to your cooperation.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

(i) Indicate who you are ()Buyer ()Supplier

Q1 Indicate your Gender 1. Female () 2. Male ()

Q2 Indicate Your Age in the bracket

1. 18 – 30 years () 2. 31 -40 years () 3. 41 – 50 years () 4. 51 – 60 years () 5. above 60 years ()

Q3 How long have you been in service at Ufudu Limited?

1. 0 –5 years () 2. 6- 10 years () 3. 11 – 15 years () 4. 16 – 20 years () 5. above 20 years ()

Q4 What is your highest education level?

1. Primary level ()
2. Secondary level ()
3. College level ()
4. Undergraduate – university level ()
5. Postgraduate – university level ()
6. PHD – university level ()

Q5 In which department do you operate?

1. Procurement ()
2. Operations ()
3. Stores and sales ()

SECTION B: BUYER-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP

Q6 Kindly tick once in every statement based on your level of agreement or disagreement.

No.	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
i	Ufudu carries out full assessment before selecting potential suppliers for your business					
ii	You assess supplier's ability to meet quality standards and specifications					
iii	You ensure transparency and open communication with your suppliers					
iv	You monitor and manage the performance of your suppliers					
v	You collaborate with suppliers to drive innovation and continuous improvement					
vi	You handle disputes or issues that may arise in the buyer-supplier relationship in a professional manner					

Q7 You incorporate sustainability and ethical considerations into your supplier selection and relationship management.

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q8 You use key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of your buyer-supplier relationships.

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q9 You involve your suppliers in your strategic planning process.

- a) Strongly agree []

- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q10 You have measures in place to manage and mitigate risks associated with your suppliers.

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q11 You face challenges in implementing the buyer-supplier relationship concept at Ufudu

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q12 Trust, communication and goal alignment affect the buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu Zambia limited.

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q13 I Buyer-supplier relationship affect production performance of the business at Ufudu.

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []

- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q14 There are practices that would strengthen buyer-supplier relationship at Ufudu

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

Q15 Are there successful buyer supplier collaboration that resulting in mutual benefits?

- a) Strongly agree []
- b) Strongly disagree []
- c) Agree []
- d) Disagree []
- e) Neutral []

End of questions.

THANK YOU

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