



**UNIVERSITY
OF
LUSAKA**

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

**AN EVALUATION ON THE EFFECT OF ETHICAL PRACTICES ON
PROCUREMENT EFFICIENCY, A CASE STUDY OF MIKA HOTEL**

By

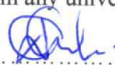
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**A Dissertation submitted to University of Lusaka in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for a Bachelor of Science in Purchasing and Supply.**

DECLARATION

This academic study is my original work and it has not been shared for any academic consideration in any university or learning institution of higher education.

Signature  Date: 12th November 2025

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

Signature:  Date: 12th November 2025

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive business environment, procurement has evolved from a routine administrative function into a strategic driver of organizational performance, efficiency, and sustainability. Ethical practices within procurement are increasingly recognized as vital for promoting transparency, reducing risks, fostering trust, and enhancing long-term business relationships. This study, titled "An Evaluation on the Effect of Ethical Practices on Procurement Efficiency: A Case Study of Mika Hotel," examined the extent to which ethical conduct influences procurement outcomes. A mixed-methods research design was employed, utilizing structured questionnaires and interviews to collect data from a sample of 52 respondents.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS version 20, while qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis. Guided by Agency Theory, the findings revealed that ethical practices are largely perceived to be integrated into procurement processes at Mika Hotel, with 63.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, 57.7% indicated that ethical practices do not necessarily reduce procurement delays, suggesting that challenges such as bureaucratic procedures, limited resources, and operational inefficiencies may overshadow ethical benefits. Similarly, 57.6% disagreed that ethical practices help control procurement costs, while opinions on quality improvement were slightly more favourable, with a slim majority acknowledging a positive effect.

Overall, 54.9% of respondents agreed that ethical practices enhance procurement efficiency, indicating a generally positive, though not unanimous, perception. The study concludes that while ethical practices contribute meaningfully to procurement efficiency, their effectiveness is influenced by consistency in enforcement and alignment with organizational systems. It recommends stronger application of ethical guidelines, enhanced monitoring, and improved transparency across all procurement activities. Future research should explore the challenges hindering ethical procurement in the hospitality sector.

Keywords: Ethical Procurement, Procurement Efficiency, Transparency, Supplier Relationships, Agency Theory, Hospitality Industry, Mika Hotel.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this academic work to my family for their unwavering support, and to the Almighty God, whose boundless love and grace have guided me throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Dr. Sikombe Shem, for his invaluable guidance, steadfast support, and insightful academic input throughout the course of this study. His dedication, encouragement, and timely feedback greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work. May God richly bless him.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive business environment, procurement is no longer perceived merely as a routine administrative function but rather as a strategic driver of organizational performance, efficiency, and sustainability. Organizations across industries increasingly recognize that ethical practices within procurement processes are essential to maintaining transparency, reducing risks, fostering trust, and enhancing long-term business relationships. Ethical procurement entails the application of principles such as fairness, accountability, integrity, and compliance with legal frameworks when sourcing goods and services. These practices not only safeguard organizations from reputational damage and financial loss but also promote efficiency in operations by ensuring that procurement activities are conducted in a transparent and professional manner. The hospitality industry, in particular, is highly dependent on procurement efficiency and strong supplier relationships due to its constant demand for quality products and services ranging from food supplies and equipment to facility management and service contracts. As one of the rapidly growing hotel chains in Zambia, Mika Hotel provides a unique case study for examining how ethical procurement practices influence organizational outcomes.

The hotel operates in an environment where competition is intense, customer expectations are high, and suppliers play a pivotal role in service delivery. Any lapse in ethical procurement can therefore compromise service quality, increase costs, and strain supplier relations, ultimately affecting guest satisfaction and overall organizational performance. Evaluating the impact of ethical practices on procurement efficiency and supplier relationships at Mika Hotel is therefore crucial in understanding how values such as fairness, honesty, and compliance translate into measurable business outcomes. It also highlights how adherence to ethical standards in procurement contributes to sustainable supply chain management, improved organizational reputation, and stronger collaboration with suppliers (Krause, D. R., Handfield, R. B., & Tyler, B. B, 2007). This study will further provide insights into the extent to which ethical practices influence cost-effectiveness, timely delivery, and mutual trust between Mika Hotel and its suppliers.

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Procurement plays a central role in the success of modern organizations by ensuring the availability of goods and services in a timely, cost-effective, and efficient manner. In recent decades, procurement has evolved from a back-office function to a strategic activity that directly contributes to organizational competitiveness, operational efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction. One of the key drivers of effective procurement is the adherence to ethical practices, which encompass principles such as fairness, integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect for legal and regulatory frameworks. These principles are not only fundamental to safeguarding an organization's reputation but also to maintaining efficiency and fostering long-term supplier relationships.

Globally, unethical practices in procurement such as bribery, favouritism, conflict of interest, and fraudulent tendering have been cited as major causes of inefficiency, inflated costs, and strained supplier relations. As a result, organizations have increasingly turned to ethical procurement policies as a means of mitigating risks and promoting sustainable operations. Ethical procurement is therefore viewed as a critical factor in ensuring that suppliers are treated equitably, contracts are awarded fairly, and procurement decisions are guided by merit and compliance rather than personal gain or external influence.

In Zambia, the procurement function has gained prominence following the introduction of the Public Procurement Act and subsequent policy frameworks aimed at promoting accountability and transparency in both public and private sector procurement. However, despite these measures, challenges such as corruption, delays in supplier payments, and non-compliance with ethical standards continue to undermine procurement efficiency and strain supplier relationships. Within the private sector, particularly in industries such as hospitality, procurement inefficiencies and poor supplier management can negatively affect service delivery, customer satisfaction, and overall competitiveness.

The hospitality industry is highly reliant on strong supplier networks to provide food, beverages, laundry services, furniture, and other essential supplies that directly influence guest experiences. Hotels must therefore ensure that procurement practices are not only efficient but also ethical, as suppliers play a pivotal role in shaping service quality and cost structures. Ethical practices such as timely payments, fair contract negotiations, transparent supplier selection, and respect for contractual terms can strengthen supplier trust and commitment, resulting in mutually beneficial relationships. Mika Hotel, a leading player in Zambia's

hospitality sector, provides an important case study for examining the impact of ethical procurement practices. As the hotel industry faces intense competition and heightened customer expectations, procurement efficiency and supplier relationships have become key determinants of operational success. Understanding how Mika Hotel integrates ethical principles into its procurement processes, and the impact these practices have on efficiency and supplier collaboration, will provide valuable insights into the role of ethics in sustaining organizational performance in the hospitality sector.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although procurement is increasingly recognized as a strategic function, unethical practices such as favouritism, kickbacks, biased supplier selection, and delayed payments continue to undermine efficiency and strain supplier relationships (Akenroye, 2014). In the hospitality industry, where service quality and reliability heavily depend on suppliers, these challenges can disrupt operations, inflate costs, and weaken customer satisfaction.

In Zambia, despite the establishment of accountability mechanisms under the Public Procurement Act, evidence shows that unethical practices persist in both public and private sectors (Chisanga, 2020). Within hotels, suppliers report lack of transparency in bidding, poor communication, and unfair treatment, which hinder sustainable partnerships and threaten operational stability. Mika Hotel, a leading hospitality establishment, is not exempt from these risks given its reliance on suppliers for day-to-day service delivery.

While studies on procurement ethics in Zambia have largely concentrated on public institutions (e.g., ministries, state agencies), there is limited empirical research on how ethical practices affect procurement efficiency and supplier relationships in the private hospitality sector (Sarkis, 2011). This knowledge gap is critical because inefficiencies in hotel procurement can directly compromise competitiveness in a service-driven industry.

This study therefore investigates how ethical procurement practices influence efficiency and supplier relationships at Mika Hotel, aiming to generate insights that can strengthen procurement performance and sustainability within Zambia's hospitality industry.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General objectives

To evaluate the effect of ethical practices on procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel.

Specific objective

1. To assess the extent to which ethical practices are integrated into procurement processes at Mika Hotel.
2. To examine the relationship between ethical practices and procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel.
3. To determine the effect of ethical practices on supplier trust, collaboration, and relationship management at Mika Hotel.
4. To identify the challenges and barriers to implementing ethical procurement practices at Mika Hotel.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent are ethical practices integrated into the procurement processes at Mika Hotel?
2. How do ethical practices influence procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel?
3. What is the impact of ethical practices on supplier trust, collaboration, and relationship management at Mika Hotel?
4. What challenges and barriers hinder the effective implementation of ethical procurement practices at Mika Hotel?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study will be significant to multiple stakeholders, including Mika Hotel, the hospitality industry, suppliers, policymakers, and the academic community. For Mika Hotel, the study may provide insights into how ethical procurement practices influence operational efficiency and supplier relationships. By identifying strengths and gaps in the hotel's current procurement practices, the research may offer practical recommendations that may help improve efficiency, reduce risks associated with unethical behaviour, and strengthen supplier collaboration, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and competitiveness.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was confined to evaluating the effect of ethical practices on procurement efficiency and supplier relationships, with a specific focus on Mika Hotel in Zambia. The research concentrated on the hotel's procurement function, examining how ethical principles such as transparency, fairness, accountability, and integrity are applied in sourcing, contract management, and supplier engagement. The study covered two key dimensions: procurement efficiency and supplier relationships. Data was collected from Mika Hotel's procurement staff, management, and selected suppliers to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The study was limited geographically to Lusaka, where Mika Hotel's operations and procurement activities are primarily concentrated. While the findings may provide insights relevant to other hotels and organizations in the Zambian hospitality industry, the study did not aim to generalize results to all sectors or regions.

The research focused on the period between 2020 and 2025, a timeframe that captures recent procurement trends and challenges in the hospitality sector, particularly in the aftermath of disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving supply chain dynamics. Although the study explored various challenges affecting ethical procurement, it did not extend to broader issues such as labour relations, environmental sustainability, or corporate social responsibility, except where they directly influence procurement efficiency and supplier relationships.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Procurement Efficiency: The extent to which procurement activities are carried out in a timely, cost-effective, and resource-optimal manner, ensuring value for money, minimal delays, and compliance with established procedures. (Akenroye, 2023).

Supplier Relationships: The quality of interaction and collaboration between an organization and its suppliers, measured by trust, communication, cooperation, reliability, and long-term partnership sustainability (Sebatta, 2022).

Transparency: The degree to which procurement processes, criteria, and decisions are openly communicated and documented, allowing all stakeholders to understand how procurement decisions are made (Krause, 2020).

Accountability: The responsibility of procurement staff and management to justify decisions, act in the organization's best interest, and accept consequences for actions or inactions (Sebatta, 2022).

Hospitality Industry: A sector that provides services such as accommodation, food and beverages, and other guest-related services. In this study, it specifically refers to the operations of Mika Hotel in Zambia (Krause, 2020).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on ethical practices in procurement, procurement efficiency, and supplier relationships. The chapter explores general information on procurement ethics, empirical evidence from previous studies, theoretical foundations guiding the research, the conceptual framework, and the gaps identified in existing literature. The review aims to provide a solid foundation for understanding the significance of ethical practices in enhancing procurement efficiency and strengthening supplier relationships, particularly within the hospitality industry.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF ETHICS AND PROCUREMENT

Procurement is a critical business function that ensures organizations acquire goods and services in a cost-effective, timely, and efficient manner. Over the years, procurement has evolved from being a purely administrative function to a strategic activity that significantly impacts organizational performance. Ethical practices in procurement such as transparency, fairness, accountability, integrity, and compliance with regulations are increasingly recognized as essential for building trust with suppliers, enhancing efficiency, and reducing risks of fraud or corruption. In the hospitality sector, procurement efficiency and ethical supplier management are critical for ensuring uninterrupted service delivery. Hotels rely on reliable suppliers for food, beverages, cleaning materials, furniture, and other operational inputs. Any lapses in ethical procurement practices can lead to inefficiencies, disputes with suppliers, and compromised service quality, which can negatively affect customer satisfaction and organizational reputation.

2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.2 Ethical Practices and Procurement Efficiency: A Thematic Review

2.2.1 Global Perspective

Theme 1: Transparency and Open Contracting as Drivers of Procurement Efficiency

Globally, transparency has emerged as a central ethical mechanism for enhancing procurement efficiency. Evidence from OECD member states demonstrates that transparency-oriented practices such as open contracting, clear justification of award decisions, and evaluator rotation significantly shorten procurement cycles and improve bidder participation. The OECD (2016) cross-country assessment revealed that organizations adopting these measures experienced more competitive procurement processes and improved market confidence, underscoring transparency as a foundational pillar of efficient procurement systems.

Similarly, findings from the World Bank Enterprise Surveys (2018-2023), covering over 140 developing and emerging economies, reinforce the importance of transparency. Firms that implemented ethical procurement reforms including electronic documentation systems, competitive tendering, and strict disclosure requirements reported reduced transaction costs, fewer procedural bottlenecks, and enhanced supplier participation. These results confirm that transparency not only improves administrative efficiency but also reduces operational and business risks across diverse economic contexts.

Theme 2: Ethical Oversight, Whistleblowing, and Fraud Prevention

Another prominent global theme is the role of ethical oversight mechanisms in safeguarding procurement efficiency. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE, 2024) highlights that organizations with robust whistleblowing and fraud detection systems identify procurement fraud significantly faster and incur substantially lower financial losses. The study's findings indicate that ethical reporting structures preserve procurement integrity, prevent revenue leakage, and ensure that procurement resources are used efficiently. Collectively, global evidence suggests that ethical oversight is essential for sustaining efficient and accountable procurement systems.

2.2.2 Regional Perspective

Theme 3: Ethical Supplier Relationships and Trust Building

Within the Southern African region, ethical procurement practices are strongly associated with improved supplier relationships and reliability. Mutuku (2019), in a comparative study of hotel chains in Kenya and Tanzania, found that the introduction of supplier codes of conduct and transparent award procedures enhanced trust and delivery reliability. Ethical clarity in procurement interactions was shown to reduce opportunistic behavior and foster more dependable supplier performance, particularly in service-oriented sectors such as hospitality. Further regional evidence from Zambia, Malawi, and Botswana supports this theme. Manda and Mutenyo (2022) observed that ethical relationship management practices such as honoring payment terms, providing timely feedback, and maintaining transparent communication strengthened supplier commitment and encouraged joint investments in quality improvements. These practices contributed to smoother procurement processes and long-term efficiency gains.

Theme 4: Governance Structures and Ethical Controls

Ethical governance mechanisms also play a critical role in procurement efficiency across the region. In South Africa, Ndlovu and Dlamini (2021) demonstrated that ethical controls such as segregation of duties, tender committee oversight, and compliance monitoring significantly reduced post-award disputes and contract variations. These governance structures minimized transaction costs and enhanced procurement predictability, reinforcing the importance of institutional ethics in public and private procurement systems.

2.2.3 Local Perspective

Theme 5: Transparency, Documentation, and Auditability

Zambian studies consistently identify transparency and proper documentation as key contributors to procurement efficiency. Chomba (2020) found that competitive quotation processes, clear procurement records, and strong audit trails significantly reduced procurement lead times and generated cost savings within organizations in Lusaka. These findings indicate that transparency-based ethical practices directly improve procurement performance and accountability at the local level.

Theme 6: Ethical Supplier Due Diligence and Risk Reduction

Ethical vetting of suppliers is another dominant theme in the Zambian context. Mwila and Phiri (2021) established that supplier due diligence practices including tax compliance verification, assessment of past performance, and credibility checks led to improved product quality and timely deliveries. By reducing supplier-related risks, ethical due diligence enhances overall procurement efficiency and service reliability.

Theme 7: Ethical Compliance and Efficiency in the Hotel Sector

Within Zambia's hotel industry, ethical procurement compliance has been shown to yield tangible efficiency benefits. Banda and Nyirenda (2022) reported that fair supplier selection, adherence to procurement policies, and proper documentation reduced delays and strengthened supplier cooperation across hotels in Lusaka, Ndola, and Livingstone. Their findings confirm that ethical procurement norms are not only compliance tools but also strategic drivers of operational efficiency and sustainable supplier relationships.

2.2.4 Gaps in literature

Most studies on procurement ethics focus on the public sector or developed countries, with limited focus on private hotels in Zambia. There is a lack of empirical evidence linking ethical procurement practices directly to procurement efficiency and supplier relationships in the hospitality industry. Existing research often overlooks challenges specific to supplier relationship management in hotels, such as trust-building, conflict resolution, and collaboration. This study addresses these gaps by examining Mika Hotel's procurement processes and supplier interactions in a Zambian context.

2.3 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.3.1 Agency Theory

Agency Theory explains the relationship between principals (such as owners, shareholders, or government authorities) and agents (such as managers or procurement officers) who are entrusted to act on behalf of the principals. According to Joseph Phiri (2020), agents are expected to make decisions that advance the interests of the principals. However, conflicts often arise when agents pursue personal interests such as favouritism, corruption, or self-benefiting procurement decisions that do not align with organizational goals. In procurement, unethical behaviours can widen the gap between the interests of agents and principals, leading to inefficiencies, inflated costs, and loss of trust. Ethical procurement practices play a critical role in reducing these agency problems by promoting transparency, accountability, and adherence to policy guidelines. When agents behave ethically, the likelihood of misconduct is minimized, thereby improving procurement efficiency and strengthening trust in supplier relationships.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, as highlighted by Christopher (2016), argues that organizations should not focus solely on satisfying shareholders or owners but must consider the needs and interests of all stakeholders involved in or affected by their operations. These stakeholders include suppliers, customers, employees, communities, and regulatory bodies. In the context of procurement, this theory emphasizes the importance of recognising suppliers as key partners whose interests, welfare, and expectations should be taken into account. Integrating ethical principles such as fairness, transparency, and equitable treatment helps organizations create mutual value and build strong, cooperative supplier relationships. By ensuring that procurement decisions respect the interests of all stakeholders, organisations can enhance their reputation, improve supplier loyalty, and achieve better overall procurement performance.

2.3.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional Theory suggests that organizational behaviour is strongly influenced by the norms, values, rules, and expectations established within the institutional environment in which it operates. In the context of procurement, this theory highlights how external pressures such as government regulations, professional standards, industry norms, and societal expectations shape ethical conduct within procurement processes. Organizations adopt ethical procurement practices not only to improve internal efficiency but also to maintain legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of stakeholders. When procurement activities are guided by institutional pressures promoting transparency, fairness, and accountability, organizations are more likely to implement policies that discourage corruption, favouritism, and unethical supplier dealings. As a result, Institutional Theory shows how adherence to institutional norms enhances trust, reduces reputational risks, and ultimately improves procurement performance by aligning organizational practices with accepted ethical standards.

Agency Theory was the most suitable main theory for this study because it directly explains how the ethical or unethical behaviour of procurement officers influences the efficiency of procurement processes carried out on behalf of the organisation. The theory highlights that unethical practices such as favouritism, bribery, inflated pricing, and personal interest create agency problems that hinder procurement efficiency. It also emphasizes accountability and transparency, showing that ethical procurement practices help align the interests of agents with those of the principal, which is the core focus of this study.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

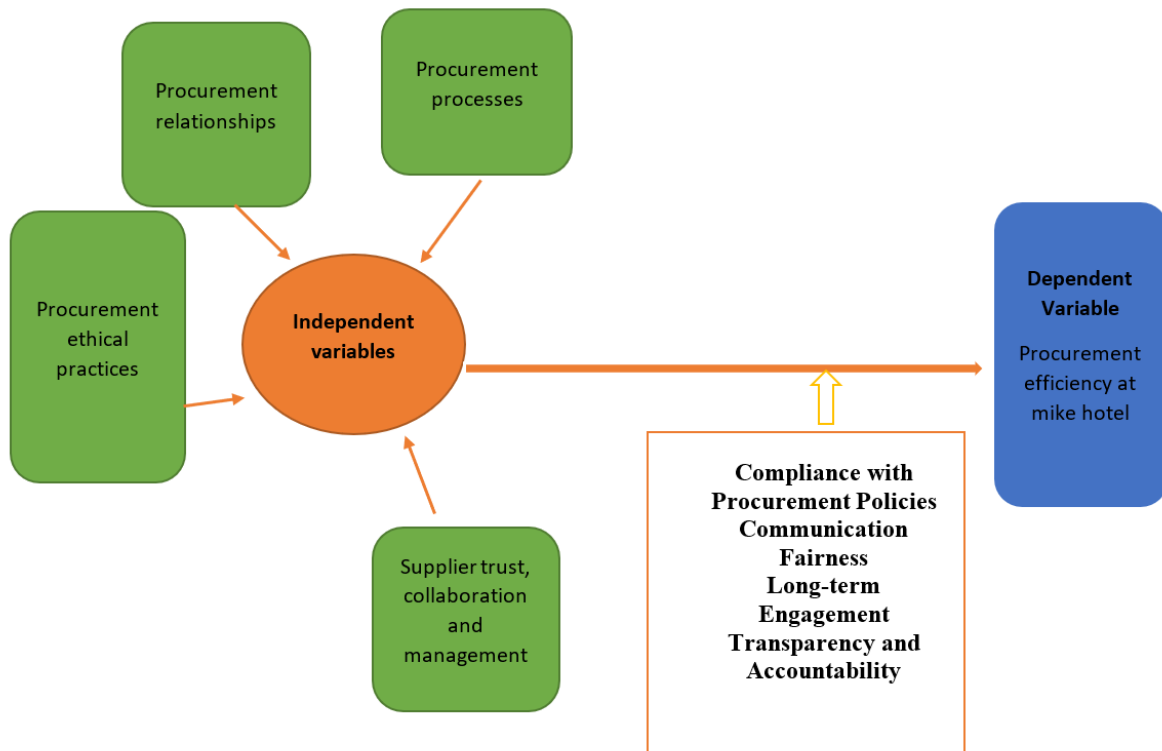


Figure 1

Mediating variables

Source: Researcher, 2025

2.5 Relationship between independent and dependent variable

Procurement processes

Efficient, well-designed procurement processes including clear requisition flows, standardized tendering, e-procurement where appropriate, and timely contract management shorten cycle times, reduce costly rework, and lessen opportunities for irregularities that slow delivery (Coleman, 2022). When requisition, approval and supplier-selection steps are streamlined and automated they reduce human error, speed order fulfilment for perishable and high-turnover items, and lower administrative costs- all directly improving procurement efficiency and the hotel's ability to serve guests reliably. International reviews show that modernizing procurement processes and embedding best-practice rules reduces bottlenecks and increases market participation, which supports faster, cheaper purchasing in service industries such as hospitality.

Procurement ethical practices

Ethical procurement practices including impartial supplier selection, anti-fraud measures rotating evaluators, conflict-of-interest declarations, consistent documentation and whistle-blowing channels reduce corruption risks and misallocation of resources that inflate costs and create delays. Formal ethics measures mean fewer contract disputes, more predictable pricing and quicker award decisions, which directly translate into improved operational efficiency and lower incidence of emergency purchases which are often expensive. Recent assessments of procurement integrity note that policies and systems that promote accountability and integrity produce measurable gains in value-for-money and reduce procurement-related losses (Coleman, 2022).

Supplier trust, collaboration and management

Strong supplier trust and proactive supplier management increase reliability, lead-time predictability, and product/service quality critical for companies that depend on timely delivery of perishables and service inputs. When companies invests in fair treatment, timely payments, and regular performance feedback, suppliers are more likely to prioritize the company's orders, invest in quality improvements, and propose service innovations. Empirical hospitality supply-chain research links improved communication and collaborative routines between buyers and suppliers to better operational outcomes and higher supplier responsiveness (Christopher, 2023).

Procurement relationships

The quality of procurement relationships, meaning long-term, transparent buyer-supplier relationships governed by clear contracts and mutual expectations -supports lower transaction costs, fewer disputes, and quicker problem resolution (Coleman, 2022).

How the moderating variables shape these effects -

- **Compliance with Procurement Policies:** Strict compliance ensures that efficient processes and ethical rules are actually applied, preventing shortcuts that erode gains. However, overly rigid enforcement without capacity or e-tools can slow operations; the best outcomes occur when compliance is supported by clear procedures and training. Policy implementation guidance from procurement bodies emphasises that enforcement plus capability-building produces better value-for-money and efficiency.

- **Communication Fairness:** Perceived fairness in communication, timely, accurate information to bidders and suppliers increases supplier willingness to participate and collaborate. Fair communication reduces disputes and the need for costly clarifications, thereby magnifying the efficiency benefits of good procurement processes and ethical conduct. Studies show that improved buyer–supplier communication positively affects procurement performance.
- **Long-term Engagement:** Long-term engagement, strategic supplier relationships, multi-year contracts for key categories moderates the relationship by converting short-term savings into sustainable efficiency gains -suppliers invest in capacity and quality when they expect ongoing business, which reduces lead-time variability and emergency sourcing. Hospitality guidance recommends combining strategic contracts with performance reviews to lock in efficiency gains.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency ,open criteria, documented award rationales, accessible records and accountability ,audit trails, conflict-of-interest controls strengthen the positive impact of ethical practices on efficiency by deterring rent-seeking and making it easier to benchmark and improve processes. Global and sector reports underline that transparency and accountability are foundational to converting ethical practice into concrete efficiency and financial-savings outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology that guided the study on the effect of ethical practices on procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel. It presents the research approach, design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis methods, reliability and validity considerations, and ethical considerations. The methodology ensured that the study is conducted systematically, producing valid and reliable findings.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach allowed measurement of procurement efficiency and supplier relationship outcomes using structured data, while the qualitative approach captured insights from key informants on perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to ethical procurement practices. This approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject by integrating numerical data with descriptive insights.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employed a case study research design, focusing specifically on Mika Hotel. A case study was suitable because it allows an in-depth investigation of complex phenomena within a real-life context. This design was particularly appropriate for examining how ethical procurement practices influence efficiency within a single organizational setting.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION

The study population consisted of: Procurement staff and management at Mika Hotel responsible for procurement decisions. Selected suppliers who provide goods and services to Mika Hotel. The study population was chosen to ensure representation of both internal and external perspectives on procurement ethics and its effects on efficiency and supplier relationships.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE

A sample size of approximately 52 respondents was used, including 22 procurement staff and 30 suppliers. This size was sufficient for capturing diverse perspectives while remaining manageable for data collection and analysis.

The sample size for the study can be determined using **Yamane's formula (1967)**:

$$N=n \div (1 + N(e^2))$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = population size
- e = level of precision (sampling error, usually 0.05 for 95% confidence level)

$$n = \frac{60}{1 + 60(0.05^2)}$$

$$= \frac{60}{1.05}$$

$$= 52$$

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

A combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques was employed: Purposive sampling was used to select procurement staff and key suppliers with direct experience in the procurement processes. Simple random sampling was used among eligible suppliers to ensure fairness and reduce selection bias.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaires: Structured questionnaires were distributed to procurement staff and suppliers to collect quantitative data on procurement efficiency, ethical practices, and supplier relationships.

Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with procurement managers and selected suppliers to gain qualitative insights into ethical challenges, strategies, and perceptions.

Document Review: Procurement records, contracts, and policy documents were reviewed to triangulate data and provide additional context.

3.8 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 was used in this study. It was chosen for its ability to generate accessible insights from un-interpreted 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.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews was analysed using thematic analysis, which involves categorizing responses into recurring patterns and key themes. This method was particularly useful in identifying challenges and barriers to the implementation of ethical procurement practices, as well as providing deeper insights into supplier–hotel relationships.

3.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability was ensured by pre-testing questionnaires with a small group of procurement staff and suppliers to confirm consistency of responses. Validity was maintained by using well-structured instruments, triangulating data from multiple sources (questionnaires, interviews, and document review), and aligning questions directly with research objectives.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study ensured that all participants were fully informed about the research before taking part. Each respondent received a clear explanation of the study's objectives, the type of information being collected, and how the data would be used. Participants were also briefed on any potential risks or discomforts, although these were minimal given the nature of the study. They were assured that participation involved no physical or psychological harm. Consent was obtained, in accordance with ethical research standards. Only after confirming that respondents understood the study and willingly agreed to proceed did data collection begin, thereby upholding respect for autonomy and ethical responsibility.

The study placed strong emphasis on protecting the privacy of all respondents. Participants were assured that their names, positions, or any identifiable information would not appear in the final report or any part of the research output. Instead, codes or anonymous identifiers were used to ensure that responses could not be traced back to particular individuals or organizations. All questionnaires and recorded data were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher. The information gathered was used strictly for academic purposes and shared only in aggregated form. These measures ensured that the confidentiality and dignity of participants remained safeguarded throughout the entire research process.

Participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and no respondent was coerced or pressured to take part. Participants were informed that their involvement was a personal choice and that

declining to participate would not result in any negative consequences. They were further made aware that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, even after initially agreeing to participate, and could do so without providing any justification. This principle helped maintain an ethical environment in which respondents felt comfortable and respected, ultimately contributing to the credibility and ethical soundness of the research.

The research was conducted with a high level of academic honesty and integrity. The researcher ensured that all procedures adhered to accepted research standards, and great care was taken to avoid any form of falsification or manipulation of data. Findings were reported accurately and objectively, without exaggeration, fabrication, or omission of essential information. All sources consulted were properly acknowledged to prevent plagiarism, and ideas drawn from other scholars were fully referenced. By upholding these principles, the study maintained its academic rigor and ensured that its conclusions were trustworthy and ethically grounded.

3.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study acknowledges several limitations. Focusing on a single case, Mika Hotel, limits the generalizability of findings to the broader Zambian hospitality sector. Additionally, responses from procurement staff and suppliers may be influenced by social desirability bias, potentially resulting in underreporting of unethical practices. Time and resource constraints further restricted the depth of data collection and analysis, limiting the scope of insights that could be drawn. Finally, access to internal procurement records was sometimes limited, which may have constrained the ability to fully verify certain reported practices, thereby affecting the comprehensiveness of the study's findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

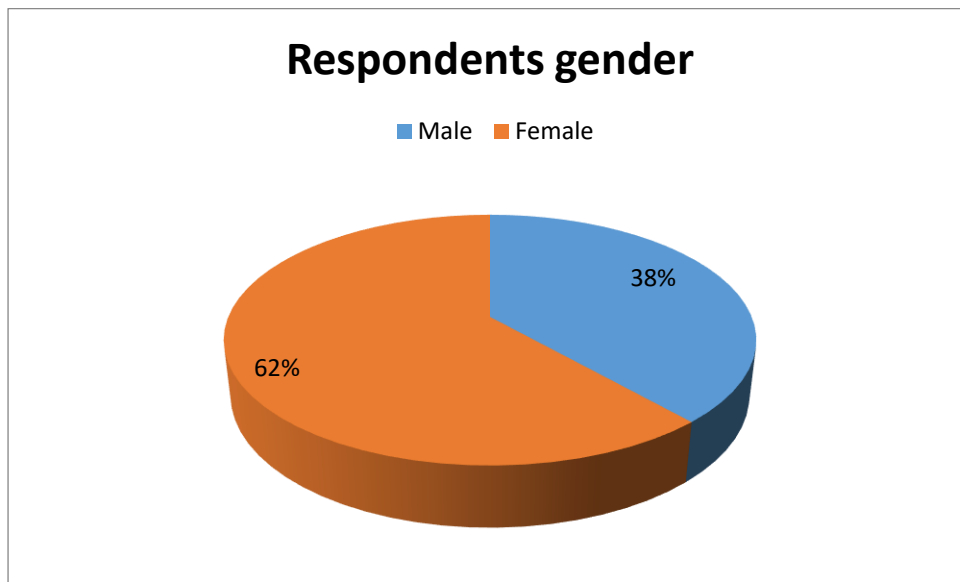
DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires given to Procurement staff, Supplier and Others which was analysed using SPSS and thematic approach. The findings are presented using pie charts and frequency distributions tables.

Presentation and analysis of data

Figure 4.1 Respondents Gender

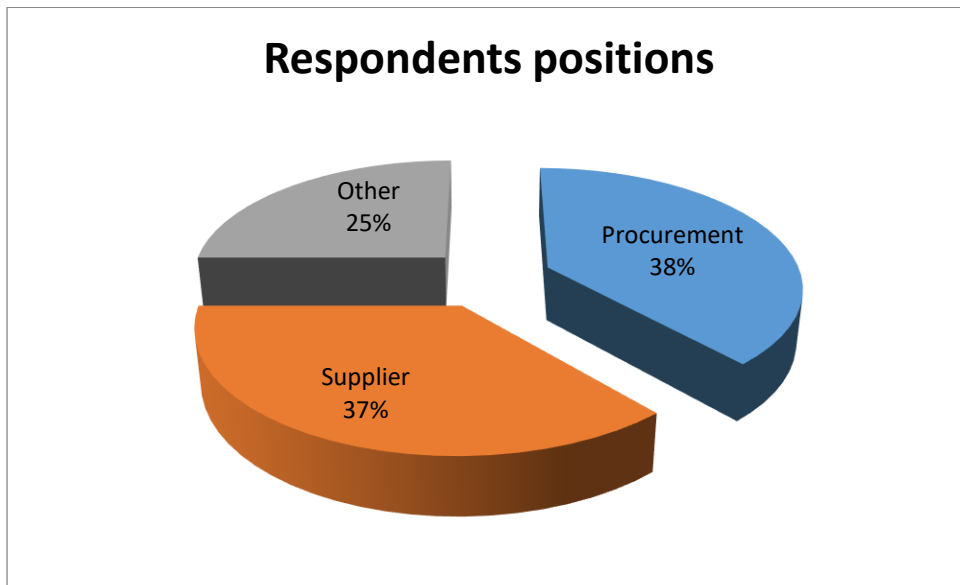


Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 4.1 shows that, the study involved a total of 52 respondents, comprising 20 males (38%) and 32 females (62%). This indicates that female participants were the majority in the study, suggesting that the perspectives captured were more representative of female staff or stakeholders within the procurement environment at Mika Hotel. The gender distribution reflects a higher level of female engagement in the procurement processes surveyed, which may influence insights on ethical practices, supplier interactions, and procurement efficiency, given potential differences in experiences or perceptions between male and female respondents. Overall, the data demonstrates a moderately balanced but female-dominated

sample, which is important for interpreting the findings in the context of gender dynamics in the hotel's procurement operations.

Figure 4.2 Respondents position at MIKA Hotel



Source: Researcher, 2025

Figure 4.2 indicates that majority of respondents were procurement staff (38%), with 20 individuals participating, followed closely by suppliers (37%), who numbered 19. This indicates that the perspectives of both procurement personnel and suppliers were well represented, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of procurement processes and related practices. The “Other” category (37%), consisting of 13 respondents, may include stakeholders such as administrative staff, management, or external consultants involved in procurement activities, providing additional context to the procurement environment. The findings suggest that procurement efficiency and challenges are primarily observed from the perspectives of those directly engaged in procurement and supply chain activities. The close representation of procurement staff and suppliers highlights the interaction and interdependence between these two groups in ensuring effective procurement operations.

Table 4.1 Respondents years of experiences

Years of Experience

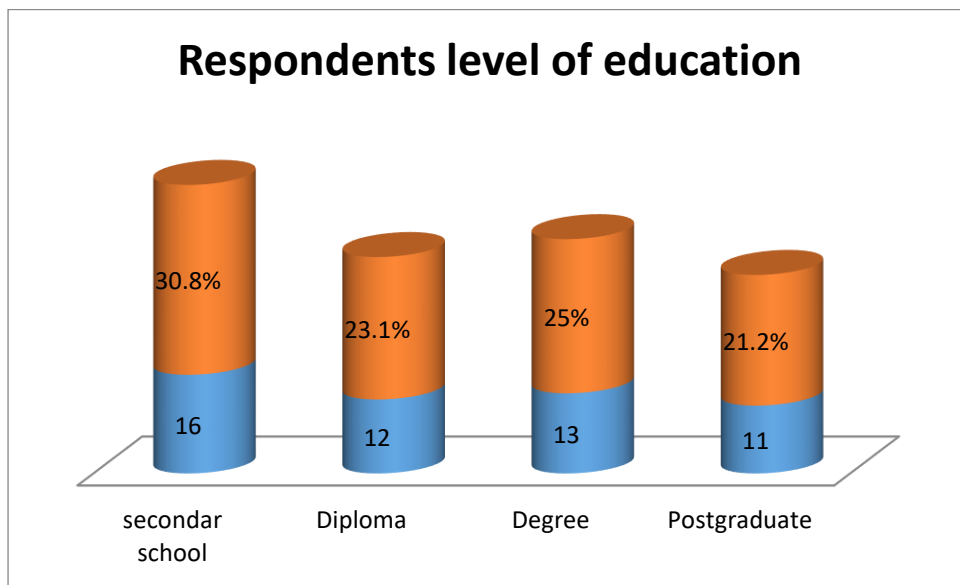
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
LESS THAN 1 YEAR	17	32.7	32.7	32.7
1-3 YEARS	12	23.1	23.1	55.8
4-6 YEARS	8	15.4	15.4	71.2
MORE THAN 6 YEARS	15	28.8	28.8	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 4.1 reveals that the study analyzed the professional experience of 52 respondents involved in procurement and related activities. Results show that 17 respondents (32.7%) had less than 1 year of experience, making it the largest single group. Those with 1-3 years of experience accounted for 12 respondents (23.1%), while 8 respondents (15.4%) had 4-6 years of experience. Notably, 15 respondents (28.8%) reported having more than 6 years of experience. Cumulatively, this shows that slightly over half of the respondents (55.8%) had three years or less of experience.

The findings suggest that the study captured perspectives from both inexperienced and highly experienced participants. The relatively large proportion of respondents with less than 1 year of experience indicates that fresh perspectives are well represented, potentially highlighting recent practices and challenges in procurement. Meanwhile, the significant representation of respondents with over 6 years of experience ensures that expert insights and historical knowledge of procurement processes are also included. This diversity in experience strengthens the study's understanding of procurement efficiency, as it reflects both contemporary trends and established practices.

Figure 4.3 Respondents level of education



Source: Researcher, 2025

Figure 4.3 show that respondents had varying levels of educational qualifications. Out of 52 participants, 16 respondents (30.8%) had completed secondary school, making it the largest group. Those holding a diploma numbered 12 (23.1%), while 13 respondents (25%) had a degree, and 11 participants (21.2%) possessed postgraduate qualifications. This distribution demonstrates a relatively balanced mix of education levels among the respondents, with no single category overwhelmingly dominating the sample.

The findings suggest that the study captured perspectives from a diverse educational background. A significant portion of respondents had secondary school education, indicating that a substantial number of personnel with foundational knowledge are involved in the study context. At the same time, the presence of diploma, degree, and postgraduate holders shows that more advanced and specialized knowledge is also represented. This diversity is important as it reflects both practical and theoretical understanding within the respondent pool, which can influence procurement practices, decision-making, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Table 4.2 Respondents views on whether ethical practices are integrated in their procurement processes

Integration of Ethical Practices

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	21.2	21.2	21.2
DISAGREE	8	15.4	15.4	36.5
AGREE	10	19.2	19.2	55.8
STRONGLY AGREE	23	44.2	44.2	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 4.2 shows that the responses indicate varied perceptions among participants regarding the integration of ethical practices in procurement processes. Out of 52 respondents, 23 (44.2%) strongly agreed that ethical practices are integrated, while 10 (19.2%) agreed. This means that a majority, 33 respondents (63.4%), perceive that ethical practices are indeed being incorporated in procurement activities. On the other hand, 11 respondents (21.2%) strongly disagreed and 8 respondents (15.4%) disagreed, showing that a notable minority believe ethical practices are either poorly integrated or absent. The study found that most respondents recognize the incorporation of ethical practices in procurement processes, suggesting a positive ethical orientation in procurement operations. However, the presence of disagreement among some participants highlights that ethical integration may not be uniformly applied across all procurement activities or departments. This indicates room for improvement in ensuring consistent adherence to ethical standards, possibly through enhanced training, monitoring, and enforcement of ethical procurement policies.

Table 4.3 Respondents views on Ethical practices reducing procurement delays

Ethical practices reduce procurement delays

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGIY DISAGREE	13	25.0	25.0	25.0
DISAGREE	17	32.7	32.7	57.7
AGREE	11	21.2	21.2	78.8
STRONGLY AGREE	11	21.2	21.2	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2025

According to table 4.3. Out of 52 respondents, 13 (25.0%) strongly disagreed and 17 (32.7%) disagreed, indicating that a majority of 30 respondents (57.7%) were skeptical about the role of ethical practices in minimizing delays. Meanwhile, 11 respondents (21.2%) agreed and another 11 respondents (21.2%) strongly agreed, suggesting that a smaller proportion (42.4%) believed that ethical practices positively impact procurement timelines.

The findings suggest that there is a prevailing perception among respondents that ethical practices alone may not be sufficient to reduce procurement delays. Most participants were doubtful, possibly due to other factors such as bureaucratic procedures, limited resources, or inefficiencies in procurement systems that overshadow ethical considerations. However, the fact that 42.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed highlights that some stakeholders recognize the importance of ethics in facilitating smoother procurement processes. Overall, the results point to a mixed perception, indicating the need for stronger enforcement of ethical practices alongside improvements in operational efficiency to effectively reduce delays in procurement.

Table 4.4 Respondents views on Ethical practices helping to control procurement costs

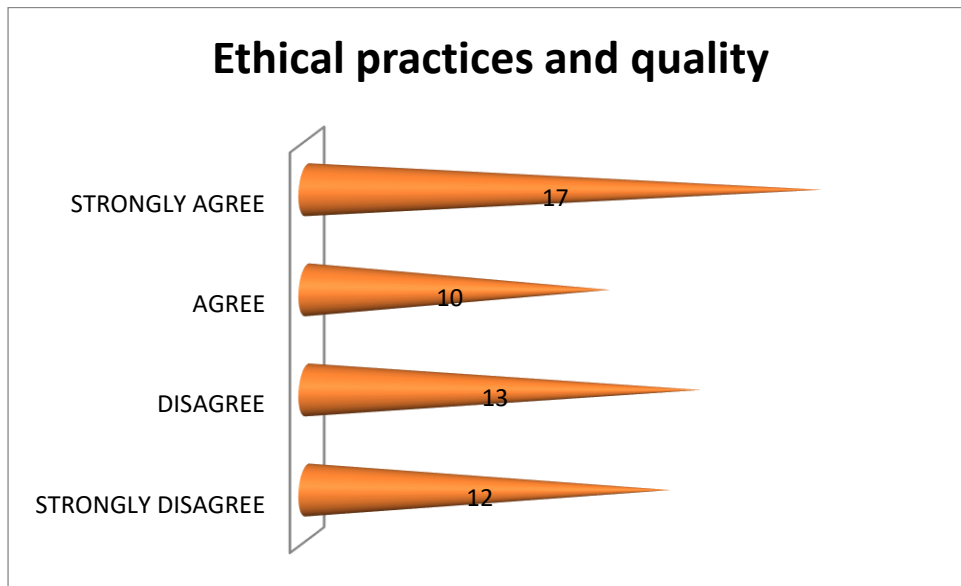
Ethical practices help control procurement costs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	15	28.8	28.8	28.8
DISAGREE	15	28.8	28.8	57.7
AGREE	9	17.3	17.3	75.0
STRONGLY AGREE	13	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2025

Looking at table 4.4. The results show a divided perception among respondents regarding the statement under investigation. A combined 57.6% of the participants (28.8% strongly disagree and 28.8% disagree) expressed negative views, indicating that more than half of the respondents do not support or believe in the statement. On the other hand, 42.3% of the respondents (17.3% agree and 25.0% strongly agree) expressed positive views, suggesting that a significant minority holds a favorable perception. By and large, the finding suggests that there is no clear consensus, but the dominant view leans toward disagreement. This implies that the issue being assessed may not be effectively implemented, clearly understood, or positively experienced by the majority of respondents. However, the substantial proportion of those who agree also indicates that experiences may vary across different groups, pointing to possible inconsistencies in practice or differing levels of awareness.

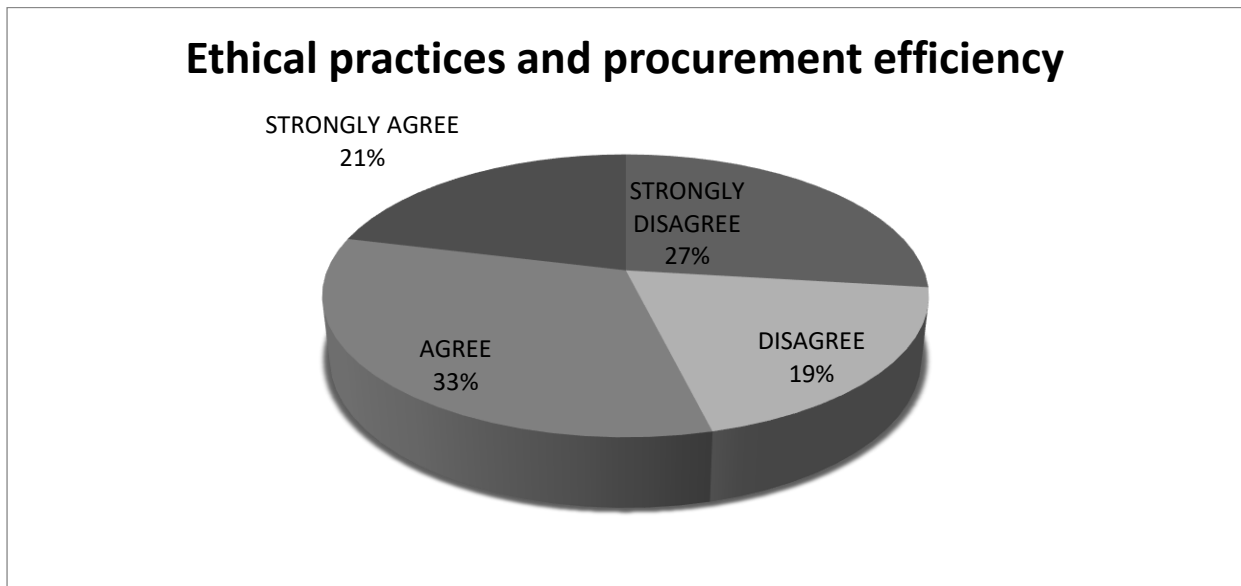
Figure 4.4 Ethical practices improve quality of goods and services



Source: Researcher, 2025

Figure 4.4 reveals that varying perceptions among respondents regarding whether ethical practices improve the quality of goods and services. A total of 25 respondents (12 strongly disagree and 13 disagree) hold negative views, indicating that some stakeholders do not believe ethical practices have a direct influence on quality outcomes. This group represents a significant portion of the respondents who may perceive ethical procedures as either ineffective or not consistently applied within procurement processes. On the other hand, 27 respondents (10 agree and 17 strongly agree) believe that ethical practices do improve the quality of goods and services. This majority suggests that most respondents recognize the positive role of ethical behavior in ensuring high-quality procurement outcomes, such as transparency, fair supplier selection, and adherence to standards. Overall, the findings reveal a slight majority leaning toward agreement, indicating that ethical practices are generally perceived as essential for enhancing the quality of goods and services, even though a sizeable minority remains unconvinced. This mixed perception may reflect differences in institutional experiences, the consistency of ethical enforcement, or past procurement outcomes within the organization.

Figure 4.5 Ethical practices enhance overall procurement efficiency



Source: Researcher, 2025

Based on figure 4.5. The results indicate mixed perceptions among respondents regarding whether ethical practices enhance overall procurement efficiency. A total of 24 respondents (14/27% strongly disagree and 10/19% disagree) expressed negative views, representing a sizeable group that does not perceive ethical practices as contributing significantly to procurement efficiency. In contrast, 28 respondents (17/33% agree and 11/21% strongly agree) expressed positive views, forming a slightly larger group that believes ethical practices play an important role in improving procurement efficiency. By and large, the finding shows that the majority of respondents (54.9%) agree that ethical practices enhance procurement efficiency, while 45.1% disagree. This suggests that although opinions are varied, a greater proportion recognises the value of ethical conduct such as transparency, fairness, and adherence to regulations in strengthening procurement performance. The divided views may also indicate differing experiences across departments or institutions, where some may have witnessed positive outcomes of ethical practices, while others may not have seen a significant impact due to inconsistent implementation or weak enforcement of ethical standards.

Table 4.5 Ethical procurement practices increase supplier trust

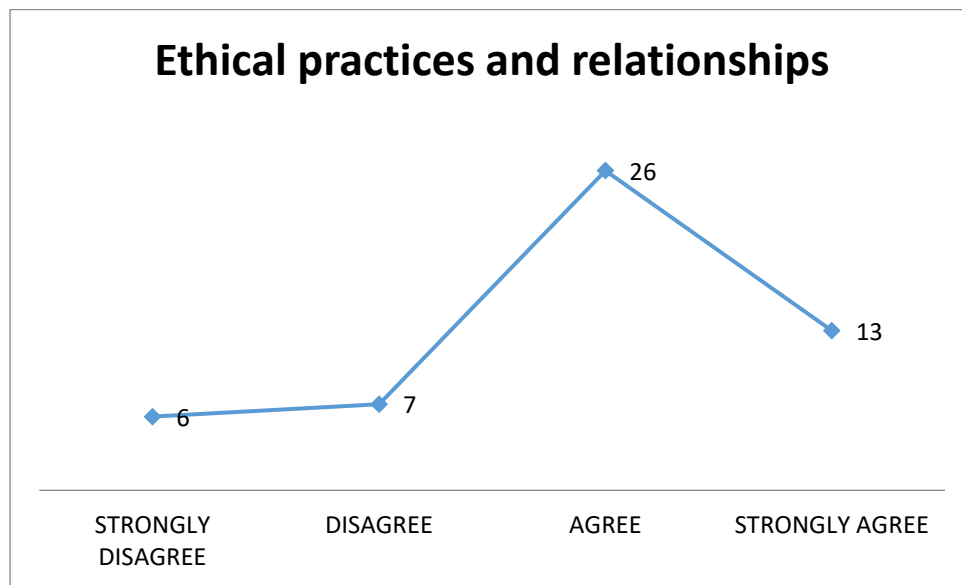
Ethical procurement practices increase supplier trust

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	11	21.2	21.2	21.2
DISAGREE	7	13.5	40.4	61.5
AGREE	21	40.4	25.0	86.5
STRONGLY AGREE	13	25.0	13.5	100.0
Total	52	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher, 2025

Table 4.5 shows the results indicate that most respondents believe ethical procurement practices play an important role in increasing supplier trust. A combined 65.4% of the respondents (40.4% agree and 25.0% strongly agree) hold a positive view, suggesting strong confidence that transparent, fair, and accountable procurement processes help build and maintain trust between organizations and suppliers. In contrast, 34.7% of the respondents (21.2% strongly disagree and 13.5% disagree) do not share this perception. Although this is a smaller proportion, it shows that some participants may have experienced inconsistencies or gaps in how ethical standards are applied in procurement processes. The findings suggest that ethical procurement practices are generally seen as a major contributor to strengthening supplier trust, but the presence of dissenting views indicates that not all stakeholders experience or observe these practices in the same way. This highlights the need for consistent implementation and communication of ethical standards across procurement activities.

Figure 4.6 Ethical practices contribute to long-term supplier relationships



Source: Researcher, 2025

Figure 4.6 shows that the majority of respondents believe that ethical practices contribute to long-term supplier relationships. Out of the total responses, 26 respondents (50.0%) agreed, while 13 respondents (25.0%) strongly agreed, giving a combined 75.0% positive perception. This shows that most participants recognise the importance of ethical conduct in building and sustaining long-term partnerships with suppliers. Conversely, only a small proportion disagreed with the statement. 7 respondents (13.5%) disagreed, while 6 respondents (11.5%) strongly disagreed, totalling 25.0%. This minority suggests that although some respondents may not fully associate ethical practices with long-term supplier relationships, their views are significantly outweighed by the majority. The findings imply that ethical behaviour is widely viewed as a key driver of trust, cooperation, and sustained engagement with suppliers, reinforcing its importance in procurement processes.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the major findings of the study, the conclusions drawn from the results, and the recommendations proposed to enhance ethical practices and procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel. The chapter also provides suggestions for further research. The study aimed to evaluate the effect of ethical practices on procurement efficiency by examining their integration in procurement processes, their influence on procurement delays, cost control, quality enhancement, supplier trust, and long-term supplier relationships.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that most respondents believe ethical practices are integrated into procurement processes at Mika Hotel. A combined 63.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 36.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This shows that although ethical practices are generally being implemented, some inconsistencies exist across different procurement activities. Findings also showed that a majority (57.7%) disagreed that ethical practices reduce procurement delays, while 42.3% believed they do. This indicates that most participants do not see ethical practices alone as sufficient to minimise delays, possibly due to other operational challenges such as bureaucracy, limited resources, or procedural inefficiencies. Results revealed a divided perception. About 57.6% disagreed that ethical practices help control procurement costs, whereas 42.3% agreed. This suggests that the cost-saving benefits of ethical procurement may not be clearly evident to all respondents, possibly due to inconsistent implementation, lack of transparency, or limited awareness.

A slight majority (27 respondents) agreed that ethical practices improve quality, compared to 25 who disagreed. This suggests that most respondents associate ethical conduct with improved supplier selection, transparency, and delivery of quality goods and services, although a significant minority remains unconvinced.

The results showed that 54.9% agreed that ethical practices enhance overall procurement efficiency, while 45.1% disagreed. This demonstrates a relatively balanced but positive perception regarding the role of ethics in strengthening procurement performance. Most

respondents (65.4%) agreed that ethical practices increase supplier trust, while 34.6% disagreed. This indicates that ethical conduct such as transparency, accountability, and fairness plays a critical role in building and maintaining credible supplier relationships. The majority (75.0%) agreed that ethical practices contribute to long-term supplier relationships. Only 25.0% disagreed. This demonstrates strong recognition that ethics fosters cooperation, loyalty, and continuity with suppliers.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that ethical practices play a significant role in shaping procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel. Ethical standards are fairly well integrated into procurement processes, but their application is not uniform across all departments. While ethical practices strongly enhance supplier trust and long-term relationships, their effect on cost control and procurement delays is perceived less positively. This suggests that while ethics strengthen relational and qualitative aspects of procurement, structural and operational challenges at the hotel may be overshadowing their full benefits. Overall, ethical practices contribute positively to procurement efficiency, but their effectiveness depends on consistent enforcement, awareness, and alignment with efficient procurement systems.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Enforcement of Ethical Standards**

Mika Hotel should ensure uniform implementation of ethical guidelines across all procurement departments through stricter monitoring, regular audits, and transparent reporting.

2. **Enhance Staff Training on Ethical Procurement**

Continuous training should be provided to procurement staff to improve awareness, understanding, and commitment to ethical conduct.

3. **Streamline Procurement Procedures to Reduce Delays**

Since ethics alone do not address delays, the hotel should simplify bureaucratic processes, improve coordination, and adopt digital tools to fast-track procurement activities.

4. **Improve Cost Control Mechanisms**

To increase the perceived cost benefits of ethical procurement, the hotel should

strengthen spend analysis, supplier performance evaluations, and market price benchmarking.

5. Strengthen Supplier Engagement and Communication

Regular communication, feedback meetings, and performance review sessions should be held to build stronger, more transparent relationships with suppliers.

6. Institutionalize Ethical Culture

The hotel should promote integrity through policies, leadership commitment, incentives for ethical behavior, and zero tolerance for unethical practices.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could investigate the challenges affecting the implementation of ethical procurement practices in the hospitality industry and also research could be expanded to compare the effect of ethical practices across multiple hotels or sectors in Zambia to improve generalizability.

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Appendix

Questionnaire: Ethical Procurement at Mika Hotel

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Position/Role (Procurement staff ☐ Supplier ☐ Other ☐

2. Years of experience in procurement or supplying to Mika Hotel:

Less than 1 year ☐

1–3 years ☐

4–6 years ☐

More than 6 years ☐

3. Gender

Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Highest level of education attained:

Secondary ☐

Diploma ☐

Degree ☐

Postgraduate ☐

Section B: Integration of Ethical Practices

5. To what extent do you agree that the following practices are applied in Mika Hotel's procurement processes?

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Agree ☐

Strongly Agree ☐

Section C: Ethical Practices and Procurement Efficiency

Ethical practices reduce procurement delays. ☐

Ethical practices help control procurement costs. ☐

Ethical practices improve the quality of goods and services obtained. ☐

Ethical practices enhance overall procurement efficiency at Mika Hotel ☐

Section D: Ethical Practices and Supplier Relationships

Ethical procurement practices increase supplier trust in Mika Hotel. ☐

Ethical practices promote collaboration between Mika Hotel and suppliers. ☐

Ethical practices contribute to long-term supplier relationships. ☐

Unethical practices negatively affect supplier loyalty and cooperation. ☐

Section E: Challenges and Barriers to Ethical Procurement

Which of the following challenges are present in implementing ethical procurement at Mika Hotel? (Tick all that apply)

Lack of transparency in tendering ☐

Delayed payments ☐

Favouritism and bias in supplier selection ☐

Weak enforcement of procurement policies ☐

Inadequate training for procurement staff ☐

Other ☐

Section F: Recommendations.

What measures would you suggest to strengthen ethical procurement practices at Mika Hotel?
(Open-ended)