

CHINO GWENYA, K., UTETE, R.

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: CASE OF STATE ENTITY IN ZIMBABWE

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Kudzanai CHINO GWENYAUniversity of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe
kudzanaichinogwenya@gmail.com**Reward UTETE**University of Zululand, Richards Bay, South Africa
uteter@unizulu.ac.za**Abstract**

Although the concept of procurement management has recently garnered attention of researchers, the relationship between strategic procurement practices and organisational performance is still unknown. Thus, study sought to assess the effect of strategic procurement practices on organisational performance within the public sector. However, the study specifically focused on a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. The study adopted a correlational research design and quantitative research approach. The data was collected from a sample of 53 respondents who comprised of head of procurement from state entity subsidiaries situated in different regions of Zimbabwe. The key findings of the study indicated that strategic procurement practices have significant and positive impact on organisational performance at a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. The government should ensure that there is smooth and timeously disbursement of funds to suppliers as this has been identified to be the root cause of strained relationships.

Keywords: Procurement management, Strategic procurement practices, Organisational performance, Supply chain management, Zimbabwe

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1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, public sector organisations are experiencing an unprecedented step of change and as a result, they are rapidly re-examining their operating models and supply chain markets strategies not just to withstand these market forces but gain competitive advantage (Chilunjika, Intauno, Uwizeyimana &

Chilunjika 2022). The global marketplace is so dynamic that procurement must play a leading role in capturing the value at stake (Spiller, Reinecke, Ungerman & Teixeira 2014). The environment organisations current operate has innumerable economic and political interference to their sources of supplies and services (Mazzucato & Kattel 2020). To thrive in this tumultuous environment, organisations are expected to keep on monitoring their competitive situation together with their internally controllable process particularly the procurement process (Isaac & Robert 2015). Clearly, procurement has a significant role to play in helping the public sector to achieve their objectives and prepare for the uncertainties (Tantalo & Priem 2016). This requires procurement to focus on driving costs out of the cost base, exploring new markets or partnerships, introducing new products and redesigning the organisational structure. But the opportunity also exists for the function to add value in a much more strategic way and ensuring that the process is economical, and efficiency is vital (Girth, Hefetz, Johnston & Warner 2012). This demands the whole procurement process to be well understood by the actors, government, the procuring entities and business community or suppliers and other stakeholders, including professional associations, academic entities and general public.

In today's economic environment doing what you have always done even if you are to do it very well is no longer acceptable (Chigumira, Chipumho & Chiwunze 2020). There is pressure to contain costs and produce results. Despite challenging circumstances, supply managers are expected to transform rather than simply improve their operations. This means adopting the philosophies, methods and process that makes the organisation perform at optimum level. What makes the organisation best in the industry is the strategies it utilises (Chigumira, Chipumho & Chiwunze 2020). The strategies provide control and regulation of public procurement and disposal of public assets in order to ensure that such procurement and disposal is performed in a manner reveal transparency, fairness, honest, cost effective and competitive (Marawu, Utete & Zhou 2023). The direct link of operational efficiency and organisational performance therefore makes the adoption of procurement practices crucial to today's organisational success. Procurement practices and how they will be effectively integrated into the organisational strategy is therefore valuable to today's business leaders (Chikwere, Chikazhe & Tukuta 2023). While the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, 2018 was meant to address the challenges related to procurement. The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act is important to oversee the way the procurement processes are managed, ensure minimisation of interference cases from players outside the concerned committees, discouraging fraudulent practices through debarment, transfer of procurements to other procuring entities, as well as introducing deterrent penalties (Kagande et al. 2022). Government agencies in Zimbabwe have not been realising economic efficiency and value for money in

their operations. Organisation in Zimbabwean public sector numerous procurement related challenges which includes inefficient operations, gigantic financial losses and provision of sub-standard products and services (Chilunjika et al 2022). This is attributed to poor supply chain stakeholders' engagement, poor public sector financial management and non-compliance to the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act 22:23 frameworks, one size fit all approach of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act 22:23 framework to the procurement of goods, works and services across all state institutions. This one size fits all approach has created challenges related to poor organisational performance. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to find out the effect of procurement practices on organisations performance in public sector with specific attention given to a leading state entity in Zimbabwe.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept of procurement management and strategic procurement practices

Procurement management refers to the strategies of procuring or acquiring products and services (Kwasira & Muiga 2016). It is also correct to refer procurement practices as those managerial actions undertaken to enhance performance of the integrated supply chain. According to Li, Ragu-Nathan, Ragu-Nathan and Rao (2016), procurement practices have been known as customer orientation, strategic partnership, level of information sharing, quality of information sharing, reverse logistics and information management. The public procurement system in Zimbabwe has evolved from a crude system with no regulations to an orderly legally regulated procurement system. According to section 6 of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act [Chapter 22:23], Procurement Regulatory of Zimbabwe (PRAZ) oversees public procurement system with its principal functions of ensuring that the public procurement law is complied with and the capacity of the function among stakeholders is enhanced (Chikwere, Chikazhe & Tukuta 2023). Dza, Fisher and Gapp (2013) state that it is critical for a thorough procurement planning to be undertaken as organisations are always facing budget constraints that cannot satisfy all capital acquisition needs. Procurement encompasses the whole process of acquiring goods or services. It starts when an organisation has identified a need and decided on its procurement requirement. The process includes risk assessment, seeking and evaluating alternative solutions, contract award, delivery of and payment for the goods or services and where relevant, the ongoing management of the contract and consideration of options related to contract (Chigumira, Chipumho & Chiwunze 2020). Procurement extends to the ultimate disposal of goods at the end of its full life.

2.1.1 Procurement process management

Dza, Fisher and Gapp (2013) state that it is indispensable for a thorough procurement planning to be undertaken as organisations always face budget constraints that cannot satisfy all capital acquisition needs. Mazzucato & Kattel (2020) indicate that public procurement is the process whereby public sector entities acquire goods and services from third parties of routine items. Ketchen, Crook and Craighead (2014) indicate that procurement take a form of obtaining all goods and services necessary for operating, maintaining and managing the organisations from external sources. Procurement is known as the process of obtaining goods, works and services through buying, borrowing or leasing. Girth, Hefetz, Johnston and Warner (2012) state that public sector procurement encompasses all activities involved in establishing essential requirements, sourcing practices such as market research and vendor evaluation, as well as negotiation of contracts to ensure management of external resources to fulfil organisation strategic objectives. Mazzucato and Kattel (2020) agree that public procurement is the process whereby public sector entities acquire goods and services from third parties of routine items. According to Kwasira and Mbuchi (2016), in order to enhance public service delivery, Asian Development Bank highlighted that the major objective of public procurement is cost reduction using competition and specialist expertise, the promotion of transparency and the protection of public funds, as well as through reducing and eliminating corrupt tendencies. Thai (2001) states that the primary concept of public procurement is saving money and increasing the efficiency of the daily business operation using advanced planning, scheduling and group buying.

2.1.2 Organisational capacity

According to Ochieng'Oyugi and Kamaara (2023), organisational capacity refers to an organisations potential to perform, the ability to successfully apply the skill and resources to accomplish its goals and satisfy stakeholders' expectations. Ting (2011) argues that organisational capacity relates to the ability of an organisation to fulfil its mission through a blend of sound management, strong governance, and a persistent rededication towards assessing and achieving results. Ketchen, Crook and Christopher (2014) assert that the role of procurement evolved from clerical function to strategic focus. Furthermore, strategic decisions have been made to invest in recruiting skilful and qualified personnel. Mokogi, Mairura and Ombui (2015) are of the view that it enables organisations to save costs and increase profit margins through minimal rework on supplier selection and contract management. Procurement function is regarded as an organisation cost centre and skilful employees are impetus in determining high profit margins and losses in organisations (Suyittawatt, 2017). Ketchen, Crook and Craighead (2014) argue

that strategic procurement affects the overall performance of the organisation over and above the procurement department. Patrucco, Luzzini, Moretto and Ronchi (2019) point out that strategic procurement contributes immensely to value creation in numerous organisations through cost management. Spiller et al. (2014) state that sourcing professionals must combine deep technical insights with broad leadership skills, particularly the ability to manage cross-functional teams and skill in managing outsourced relationships.

2.1.3 Buyer-supplier relationships

According to Kannan and Tan (2006), business firms are striving to secure deferent ways of controlling supply chains by integrating and evaluating the significance of suppliers in the activities of the firms. Ellis, Henke and Kull (2012) indicate that organisations are increasingly building co-operative relationships with their supply chain partners for the sake of attaining efficiencies, flexibility and competitive advantage. Nyaga, Whipple and Lynch (2010) suggest that collaborative relationships are instrumental in enabling the firms to adopt long term contract strategies that allow the supply chain partners to generate unique value. Ellis, Henke and Kull (2012) point out that relationships between organisations and their suppliers are designed to leverage the strategic and operational capabilities of each supply chain partner to help them achieve significant ongoing benefits. The ability to leverage supplier experience through preferred customer status and effective buyer-supplier relationship is widely recognised as a strategic lever for attracting superior treatment from suppliers. Burt, Burt, Brehmer and Johansson (2003) identify three main buyer-supplier relationship as transactional, collaborative and alliances. According to Ellis, Henke and Kull (2012), the most common and most basic type of buyer-supplier relationship is transactional. Nyaga et al. (2010) point out that it is commonly known as the arm's length relationship where neither party is concerned about other parties' well-being. He adds that very little trust is involved in this relationship and normally it is a onetime transaction between the buyer and the supplier. Burt et al. (2003) are of the view that they are rarely any big savings made in this kind of relationship and usually very little time and effort is taken by either party to go through with an agreement.

2.1.4 Organisational performance

Ahmed, Akbar, Aijaz, Channar, Ahmed and Parmar (2023) define organisational performance as the degree to which it increases productivity, reduces inventory, and increases its market share. According to Hassan and Omwenga (2023), procurement performance is tied to resources' innately varying degrees of efficiency, allowing businesses to improve delivery to customers at a fixed cost, or to maintain benefit at a lower cost.

Changalima and Mdee (2023) add that when procurement efficiency of the resources is directly proportional to the operational output results are achieved. According to Changalima, Mchopa and Ismail (2023), procurement efficiency can be measured by key performance indicators in an organisation such as the return on investment, return on capital employed and market share. On the other hand, Ahmed et al. (2023) point out that when it comes to the actual procurement process, accurate specifications of the works, services and products are of the utmost importance. Changalima and Mdee (2023) concur by postulating that accurate specifications are tantamount to customer satisfaction levels and pitfalls in specifications results in losses. The accurate fundamentals needs and specifications of the user must be well understood, in order to acquire the right products or services that meets the required quality standards. Musanzikwa (2013) points that procurement function entails anticipating needs, locating resources, and keeping tabs on their status, all of which improve the efficiency of an organisation. According to Chigumira, Chipumho and Chiwunze (2020), public sector procurement involves acquisition of goods, works and services should be undertaken within the jurisdiction of the procurement law, approved budget, and customer needs. Changalima, Mchopa and Ismail (2023) argue that high quality service delivery to all stakeholders is enabled not only by procurement staff skills, but also the procurement ethics and policy compliance. Organisations must set clear objectives and ensure compliance to high quality standards (Utete, 2022). Utete (2023) postulates that organisation performance is measured by determining quality, productivity, market share, increase in customer base, profitability, return on equity, customer satisfaction, management efficiency and increase in branch network.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study is informed by resource-based theory. According to Barney (1996), resource-based theory identifies and analyses organisations strategic advantages that will in turn be a source of competitive advantage. Madhani (2010) argues that these competitive advantages may be organisational, human or financial and their advantages are conferred based on their rareness, uniqueness and value. Barney (1996) emphasises that competitive advantage in organisation is determined through proper planning and functioning of procurement. A resource becomes a competitive advantage when it inimitable. Madhani (2010) states that if all organisations in an industry have the same resources there would not be any competitive advantage available. Soosay and Hyland (2015) postulate that resource efficiency enables procurement achieves more with less. Resources enable firms improve efficiency and save on unnecessary costs (Barney, 1996). They further state that procurement practices should be difficult to imitate and uncommon, for example sourcing processes. Uncommon resources keep away the competition and enable

organisations achieve much higher profit, such as organisations that purchase internationally, function well at business level. According to Khan, Tabish and Zhang (2023), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems are expensive to install and not all organisations have embraced their use, thus companies that have already installed ERP are a step ahead of the competition. However, effective collaboration contributes to sourcing performance by capturing additional value for end users through effective collaboration with suppliers and supplier involvement in the development of product specifications. As products mature and value shifts innovation takes place.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational research design and quantitative research approach. The population target population of this study consists of 60 head of procurement engaged in supply chain department from a leading public sector organisation based at its head office in Harare, Zimbabwe. It has sections which request for the procurement of goods and services on behalf of the whole organisation and as such, are best placed to evaluate the influence of procurement management practices on organisational performance, in other words, they are the ones with knowledge on both variables. These sections are as follows, Administration, Transport and Logistics, Health Directorate, Training and Finance.

As the target population is ranked, the study used random sampling technique. By its nature, random sampling technique is a probability sampling which affords all respondents an equal and a non-zero chance of being either included or excluded from the sample. To determine the sample size from each stratum, the study used Pedhazur and Schmelkis (1991) formulae which is shown below.

$$r = \frac{cxs}{P}$$

where,

r = the respondents required from each cluster

c = stratum population (total number of respondents from each stratum)

s = desired size of the sample

p = total population (60)

Closed-ended questionnaires were sent physically to the respondents. To establish the required sample size, the study used an electronic sample size calculator namely Raosoft. Based on the electronic computations, the results indicated that the required size of the sample is 53.

4. RESULTS

The study distributed 53 questionnaires and from the distributed, 45 were fully completed, returned and as such usable for analysis thus translating to a response of 84,9%. Therefore, this means that a response rate of 84,9% recorded in this study is adequate to produce valid results. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used, and results indicated that while 'procurement process management' scored 0.87 and 'organisational performance' scored 0.88. From the results, it is evident that the said measurement instrument was highly reliable. This stems from the fact that the respective Cronbach's Alpha values were well above 0.7 for all variables used in the study. Spathis Petridou and Glaveli (2004) agree that a minimum threshold of 0.7 is enough to prove the reliability of an instrument.

In this study, several demographic attributes of respondents were collected. These were in the form of gender, age, work experience, rank as well as academic qualifications. The demographic profile of study respondents is highly useful in that it forms the basis upon which the researcher can ascertain the ability or otherwise of respondents to fully appreciate the aspects of research which are under enquiry. Such information is presented in the following sections. The respondents were dominated by male respondents as they accounted for 77.8% of the total respondents. This therefore means that female respondents only represented 22.2% of the respondents. These levels of representation are consistent with a quasi-military organisation such as a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. This stems from the fact that law enforcement duties are masculine in nature and therefore the bulk of the workforce ought to be males. In addition, results clearly demonstrate that bulk of the respondents were in the 41-50 years age category. Most of the respondents were degree holders. It is apparent that academic qualifications are critical enablers for one to be deployed to these offices. Majority of the respondents had served in the organisation for a period between 11-15 years. In this study, a structured and self-administered questionnaire was used.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The following sections present descriptive statistics for the constructs. For clarity purposes, these constructs are procurement process management, buyer-supplier relationship, organisational capacity, and organisational performance. To measure the said constructs, a 5-point likert scale was developed with points ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The cut-off point was a mean score of 3 which means that all mean scores below that of 3.0 would indicate respondents' level of disagreement with a given item. Similarly, mean scores above the cut-off point suggest the level to which respondents agree with respective items. Table 1 shows the procurement process management.

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TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR PROCUREMENT PROCESS MANAGEMENT

	N	Mean	Std deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe has an effective inventory control	45	3.93	1.009	-.973	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe observes procurement management ethical practices	45	4.04	.999	-1.380	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe prepares its procurement plan based on approved budget	45	4.09	1.294	-1.424	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe's identified suppliers delivers goods and services on time	45	3.09	1.125	-.182	.354
Overall procurement process management	45	3.7889	.82392	-1.240	.354
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Source: Author's computation

Results depicted in Table 1 clearly show that a leading state entity in Zimbabwe has adopted procurement management process to a fair extent. This is shown by an overall mean score of 3.7889, a low standard deviation of 0.82392 also demonstrates that respondents' views were convergent. From the results, it is also apparent that the practice by a leading state entity in Zimbabwe to prepare its procurement plan based on the approved budget received the highest rating [mean = 4.09], followed by the organisations observance of procurement management ethical practices [mean = 4.04]. The enforcement of effective inventory control system was also highly rated as indicated by a mean score of 3.93. However, respondents were neutral on the ability of the organisations suppliers to deliver goods and services on time. This shown by a mean score of 3.09.

TABLE 2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR BUYER-SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP

	N	Mean	Std deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe strives to timeously settle its obligation to avoid straining relationships with suppliers	45	3.04	1.186	-.260	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe enjoys palatable relationship with external suppliers	45	3.36	.883	-.367	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe has a well-coordinated information sharing platform with its suppliers	45	3.62	1.029	-.738	.354
A leading state entity in Zimbabwe prioritize its long-term relationship with its suppliers	45	3.62	1.051	-.523	.354
Overall buyer-supplier relationship	45	3.4111	.80332	-.742	.354
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Source: Authors' computation

Results presented in Table 2 clearly demonstrate that all is not well in terms of the nature of relationship between a leading state entity in Zimbabwe and its suppliers of goods and services. This is shown by an overall mean score of 3.4111. A low standard deviation of 0.80332 also indicates that respondents' views

were not divergent in this regard. Furthermore, it is apparent that only 2 items [coordination in terms of information sharing with suppliers and prioritisation of long-term relationship with suppliers] attracted positive mean rating of 3.62 apiece. With regards to the remainder of the items, respondents were neutral as evidenced by mean scores of 3.04 and 3.36 respectively. Overall, these results confirm that buyer supplier relationship is a thorny in the flesh for a leading state entity in Zimbabwe.

TABLE 3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

	N	Mean	Std deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
The organisation has skilled personnel to handle procurement business according to the latest legal provision	45	3.73	1.232	-.988	.354
The organisation has experienced staff to handle procurement affairs in an efficient manner	45	3.73	1.095	-1.066	.354
The organisation has the necessary information technological infrastructure to support procurement	45	2.98	1.033	-.213	.354
Overall organisational capacity	45	3.4815	.95493	-.865	.354
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Source: Authors' computation

Results in Table 3 illustrate that a leading state entity in Zimbabwe has the capacity to procure goods and services in line with the dictates of the law. This is shown by an overall mean score of 3.4815. However, results further show that the organisation does not have the necessary technological infrastructure to support procurement. A mean score of 2.98 implies that respondents were neutral on this item. In the modern procurement world, technology is highly critical in that it helps not only improving effectiveness and efficiency but also plays a key role in eliminating or minimising the human element. Be that as it may, the organisation boasts of highly skilled and experienced personnel to take the procurement processes head on as indicated by respective mean scores of 3.73.

TABLE 4. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

	N	Mean	Std deviation	Skewness	
The organisation is detecting crime in line with set standards	45	3.04	1.261	-.229	.354
The organisation is reducing crime according to set standards	45	2.93	1.116	-.069	.354
The organisation finalises crime investigations in line with set standards	45	2.98	1.076	-.183	.354
The organisation delivers police service to the satisfaction of the public	45	2.80	1.079	-.150	.354
Overall organisational performance	45	2.94	.955	-.121	.354
Valid N (listwise)	45				

Source: Authors' compilation

Overall, results show in Table 4 revealed that in terms of performance, a leading state entity in Zimbabwe is not performing according to its set standards. This is indicated by an overall mean score of 2.94. A low

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standard deviation of 0.955 implies that respondents' views on this aspect were convergent. It is also worth noting all the individual items received neutral ratings. This is enough evidence to show that a lot still needs to be done in terms of performance.

Inferential statistics

To assess the effect of strategic procurement practices on organisational performance within the public sector, the study developed the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant relationship between strategic procurement practices and organisational performance in a leading state entity in Zimbabwe.

TABLE 5. REGRESSION MODEL SUMMARY

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the Estimate
1	.532 ^a	.283	.230	.838

Source: Authors' computation

1. Predictors: (Constant), strategic procurement practices (organisational capacity, buyer-supplier relationship, procurement process management).
2. Dependent Variable: Organisational performance.

TABLE 6. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	11.354	3	3.785	5.390	.003 ^b
Residual	28.791	41	.702		
Total	40.144	44			

Regression Coefficients							
Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	.438	.650		.674	.504		
Overall Procurement process management	.241	.216	.208	1.112	.273	.502	1.991
Overall buyer-supplier relationships	.164	.213	.138	.769	.446	.544	1.839
Overall organizational capacity	.296	.154	.296	1.923	.062	.740	1.351

a. Dependent Variable: Overall organisational performance

Source: Authors' computation

Results presented in Table 5 show that the R square value is 0.283. This means that 28.3% of the variations in the performance of a leading state entity in Zimbabwe are accounted for by strategic procurement practices namely organisational capacity, buyer-supplier relationship, and procurement process

management. The study went further and utilised the ANOVA results to ascertain whether the regression model (Table 5) was significant. In other words, ANOVA results were used as the basis to determine whether the three strategic procurement practices namely procurement process management, buyer-supplier relationship and organisational capacity were significant predictors of organisational performance. From the resultant computation (Table V), it is apparent that $F(3,41) = 5.390$; $p < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be deduced that the model is significant. Thus, the study concludes that there is a statistically significant relationship between strategic procurement practices (procurement process management, buyer-supplier relationship and organisational capacity) and organisational performance.

5. DISCUSSION

The study established that strategic procurement practices have significant positive impact on organisational performance. The study established that overall, the three strategic procurement practices namely procurement process management, buyer-supplier relationship and organisational capacity were significant in explaining the variations in organisational performance. In fact, the study established that the sub-independent variables accounted for a significant variation in organisational performance of a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. In terms of unique or individual variable contribution the study established that procurement process management and organisational capacity were significantly contributing to organisational performance while an insignificant effect was realised on buyer-supplier relationship. The results of this study align with Changalima and Mdee (2023) who studied procurement skills and procurement performance in public organizations and revealed that procurement skills and procurement planning have a positive and significant influence on procurement performance. Similarly, the findings of this study are in tandem with Hassan and Omwenga (2023) who conducted a study on contract management and procurement performance in Kenya and found that sound contract management has significant and positive impact on procurement performance. In addition, the findings of this study are in line with Isaac and Robert (2015) who studied the role of strategic sourcing on public procurement performance and found that strategic sourcing has a significant impact on procurement performance. However, Changalima and Mdee (2023), Hassan and Omwenga (2023) and Isaac and Robert (2015) did not specifically address the impact of strategic procurement practices on organisational performance. Hence, the findings of this contribute to new knowledge.

The results indicated that the leading state entity in Zimbabwe adopted procurement management process to a fair extent. The findings also clearly revealed that the organisation under this study prepare its procurement plan based on the approved budget. The results also indicated that the organisation observes

ethical practices of procurement management. The findings also revealed that the enforcement of effective inventory control system. However, the results revealed that the ability of the organisations suppliers to deliver goods and services on time the results of this study are in line with Li, Ragu-Nathan, Ragu-Nathan and Rao (2016) who studied the impact of supply chain management practices on competitive advantage and organisational performance and found that sound supply chain management practices improve organisation. The results concur with Kannan and Choon (2006) who studied on the impact of supplier selection and buyer engagement on relationship and firm performance and found that buyer engagement positive impact firm performance.

The findings of this study that all is not well in terms of the nature of relationship between a leading state entity in Zimbabwe and its suppliers of goods and services. The results confirmed that buyer supplier relationship is a thorny in the flesh for a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. The study has shown that a leading state entity in Zimbabwe is not fully enjoying palatable relationship with external suppliers and that insignificantly impact on organisational performance. The results of this study are in line with Awasthi, Govindan and Gold (2018) who studied multi-tier sustainable global supplier selection using a fuzzy AHP-VIKOR based approach and found that global risks are still not considered a major criterion for supplier selection. In addition, a study carried out by Baxter (2012) on how business buyers attract sellers` s resources found that supplier perceptions of the financial performance of customer relationships is a strong driver of preferred customer treatment. In the same vein, Ellis, Henke and Kull (2012) studied the effect of buyer behaviours on access to supplier technological innovation and found that supplier technological innovation has great in luring buyers.

The results of this study revealed that a leading state entity in Zimbabwe does not have adequate capacity to procure goods and services in line with the dictates of the law. The results indicated that the organisation does not have the necessary technological infrastructure to support procurement. In the modern procurement world, technology is highly critical in that it helps not only improving effectiveness and efficiency but also plays a key role in eliminating or minimising the human element. The results indicated that the organisation boasts of highly skilled and experienced personnel to take the procurement processes head on. The findings of this study are congruent with Dimand, Abutabenjeh, Rodriguez-Plesa, Alkadry and Bruns (2022) who studied human capital drivers of employee intent to innovate and found that experience is critical in improving procurement performance. The results of this study align with Dzuke and Naude (2015) who studied procurement challenges in the Zimbabwean public sector and found that lack of technological infrastructure hinder the organisation from attaining optimum performance.

6. CONCLUSION

Since the study addressed the impact strategic procurement practices have significant positive impact on organisational performance, the key objective of this study has been accomplished. The study concludes that strategic procurement practices significantly and positively contribute to organisational performance. However, the study found that the buyer-supplier relationships between a leading state entity in Zimbabwe and its suppliers have reached rock-bottom levels. This has negatively affected the performance of a leading state entity in Zimbabwe. The study also found that a leading state entity in Zimbabwe does not have the necessary information technology infrastructure to support procurement. The government of Zimbabwe through ministries of Finance and Economic Development should ensure that there is smooth and timeously disbursement of funds to responsible ministry to enable strategic and sustainable supplier relationship management is achieved as this has been identified to be the root cause of strained supply chain partners relationships. The government of Zimbabwe, through its parliament, must acquire sophisticated technological infrastructure for procurement department. The main limitation of this study is that it focused quantitative research approach. Hence, future studies may be carried out on this subject using qualitative research approach.

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