Buyer - Supplier Relationships Management Strategies and the Link with Procurement Performance of Large Scale Manufacturing Firms: Perspectives from Kenya

Alvin Boye. Dolo\textsuperscript{a}, Peterson Obara Magutu\textsuperscript{b*}, Lilian Kemunto Mogikoyo\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a,c}University of Nairobi, Department of Management Science
Nairobi, Kenya

\textsuperscript{b*}University of Nairobi, School of Business - Department of Management Science
Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract: The main aim of this study is to establish buyer-supplier relationships management strategies and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firm in Kenya. The study was guided by specific objectives that included; to establish the buyer - supplier relationships management strategies commonly used by large scale manufacturing firm and to determine the relationship between buyer - supplier relationships management and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firm. The study used cross-sectional survey research design. The population of interest in this study consisted of large manufacturing companies that are members of KAM (Kenya association of manufactures) in Nairobi. The population of this study was 1500 firms. The 10% of the target population of 1500 respondents made a sample size of 150 manufacturing firms. The study used both primary and secondary data which was largely quantitative and descriptive in nature. Mean and standard deviations was used as measures of central tendencies and dispersion respectively. Regression and correlation analysis was used to assess the strength of the relationships between the specified variables. From the findings indicated that communication among the supply chain partner is related to the degree of critical and proprietary information shared among each other’s. Information sharing involved information related to logistics, customer orders, forecasts, schedules, market and so on. Strategic partnerships with buyer and suppliers enable organizations to work more effectively with a few important suppliers who are willing to share responsibility for the success of the products. Recommendations were made that large manufacturing firms in Nairobi County and outside Nairobi should be advised to embrace the concept so that they can be able to reap the benefits of adopting these strategies. Large manufacturing firms are also advised to adopt the practices that are currently adopted at a very small extent because they can significantly improve organization performance from the current position.

Keywords: Buyer - Supplier Relationships Management Strategies, Procurement Performance, Large Scale Manufacturing Firms & Kenya.

1. Introduction

How buyers and seller relate with each other has received considerable interest in the recent past, particularly in the sector of procurement performance (Vonderembse, 1999). Thus, maintenance of the credibility of the supplier has been highly prioritized by the buyer. Studies conducted have shown that improved relation is prone to improve the procurement performance. The suppliers play a critical role in enhancing the competitive advantage and thus enhancing the performance in the organization. This is due to it improving the operations of the organization such as efficient and timely delivery (Hsu, 2006).

The supplier to buyer relationships has recently become the core of economic activities in any particular state and a critical point in attainment of the set goals and targets in organizations (Veludo, 2006). The amount of profit generated by any particular firm is directly proportional to how the company handles its supplies (Gadde F. and Hakansson, 2001). Particularly, good supplier to buyer relationships acts as a driver to both customer and shareholder value (Griffith and Myers, 2005). Three theories formed the basis of the study namely; transaction cost theory, social exchange theory and Resource based view
(RBV). Resource Based View Theory as proposed by Wernerfelt (1984), holds that the organization's resources are a major determinant of many of the organization's practices. The Resource Based Theory looks at how organizational resources are allocated and deployed in order to assist in the implementation of the strategies (Igecha, 2014). Of which resources are inputs of a firm's production and can be categorized as physical capital, human capital and organizational capital (Currie, 2009). Resource based Theory holds that before any strategy plan is formulated, the management has to carefully consider the available resources for the task. Thus if the company has adequate resources, the policy/ strategy implementation won’t be restricted by the resources (Currie, 2009). This is seen whereby firms that have more and advanced resources tend to perform better than the firms with limited resources. However, possession of resources isn’t a guarantee enough that the firm will gain competitive advantages. The resources ought to be effectively planned and used. This is by the firms conducting an analysis on the available resources and how these resources can be used to gain competitive advantage. Theory's proposition to the study is that the major determinant of the type of supplier-buyer relationship strategies is the available resources in the organ. The discipline of supply chain management is led by practice and not theories as depicted in the development of very few theories in recent times (Magutu et al., 2015).

The social exchange theory is built on the premise that any type of business transaction is prone to have exchange and interactions (Blakenburg and Johanson, 1992). This may termed as an interrelated connection of exchange relationships aimed at gaining a certain goal (Prenkert and Hallén, 2006). This relates to the system theory whereby each organization is affected by both internal and external factors. Whereby the success of the particular organization is determined by how well it handles its operations. This is related to the supply relationships as it sensitizes the importance of creating and maintaining business networks. The theory makes an assumption that all the supplier-buyer relations created are positive in nature and that none will have a negative impact to the organization. The theory’s proposition to the study is that the supplier-buyer relationships should be highly priorities during the formulation of any strategy.

The Transaction-cost Theory was initially proposed by Coase (1937). The theory was later modified to various disciplines such as the Transaction-Cost Economics (TCE) theory. The theory holds that before any transaction is undertaken, both the external and internal factors ought to be considered. Thus the various risks that are bond to occur from the transactions are evaluated and possible solutions are created (McIvor, 2000). The study makes an assumption that the top management and main decision makers not to undertake any transactions rationally. The study finds this theory to be of importance in explaining the behavior of organization with regards to supplier-buyer relationship (Williamson, 1979). Based on this theory, the manufacturing industries should not invest much in the supplier-customer relationships without having an evaluation as to whether the relationship created will be beneficial or not.

The Buyer - Supplier Relationships Management can be termed as a connection formulated so as to attain enhanced communication between the supplier and the buyer (Magutu et al., 2015). This helps to create trust whereby both parties are similarly aligned and can be able to assist each other if need be. There exists three main buyer-supplier relationships namely; collaborative, transactional and alliances (Burt et al., 2003). Collaborative relationships cater for the interests of both the supplier and the seller as each party will aim to gain equally. Alliance transaction on the other hand two parties come together as that each of them gains maximally from a transaction. Whereas transactional relationship is the most opted for by buyers and suppliers. In this particular relationship, each party is concerned minimally about the welfare of the other party. This is because the transaction is just for short time duration and thus minimal investments are required. Supply chain strategies are useful predictors of the firm’s performance as supply chain strategies explain 76.7 % of the changes in the firm’s performance (Magutu et al., 2015).

The supplier-buyer relationship forms a vital component of the supplier management. As such, the supplier management may be divided in two main ways. The first way is based on the number of suppliers while the other way is based on how the suppliers are distributed (Gadde and Häkansson, 1993). Regardless to the supply management method chose, effective coordination and communication with the suppliers is crucial so as to maintain smooth operations. This will ensure that the goods are supplied timely and that customer satisfaction is attained.

The following are some of buyer - supplier relationships management strategies which include: Buyer–Supplier Partnership Strategy, Communication Strategy, and Commitment to suppliers Strategy. Buyer-Supplier Partnership Strategy: Buyer- supplier partnership is a strategy aimed at ensuring that the contact between the buyer and the supplier occurs in a well-coordinated manner (Dyer and Ouchi, 1993). Particularly, the regular contact created by the Buyer- supplier partnership ensures not only dependability and reliability. This thus enables easy management of the transactions (Magutu et al., 2016). These
particular partnerships may be attained by both parties committing themselves and making adaptations which suit both the supplier and the buyer. Due to varying importance at different times, various adaptations may emerge (Brennan and Turnbull, 1999). Communication Strategy: Maintaining of proper and efficient communication is a vital component of enhancing the supplier-buyer relationships. It ensures that information is conveyed appropriately and timely (Mogikoyo et al., 2017). The procurement officials use a variety of media to get in touch with suppliers, including internet, face-to-face, fax, mail, e-mail, phone, and electronic data interchange (EDI) thus enhancing how the companies perform procurement wise (Rodrigo, 2001). Thus the management ought to choose the communication method that is prone to bring the most benefits. Commitment to Suppliers Strategy: Commitment is termed as the willingness of each party to give it their all in ensuring that the transaction takes place as planned (Kwon, 2004). Maintaining commitment in the buyer supplier relationship has been established to accrue various benefits such as: increased willingness in conducting operations, increased positivity, increased investment, reduced selflessness and increased personal effectiveness hence resulting in improved performance in procurements (Gounaris, 2005). This builds trust as the supplies are conducted with the individuals having internal motivation.

Procurement is the process of acquiring goods or services and ensuring efficient running of an organization (Weele, 2010). Performance on the other hand entails the effectiveness in the achievement of the set organization’s goals and targets. Particularly it can be accessed by attaining minimum operation cost while maintaining the efficiency (Kipmayo, 2014). There was a very significant relationship between procurement risk management practices and supply chain performance (Okonjo et al., 2016). Thus procurement performance is termed as the effectiveness and efficiency of procurement procedures. It is important to measure performance to determine achievement of goals and alignment of objectives with organizational strategy and most importantly firms that have implemented and used of various supply chain design practices have had nothing short of enjoying the fruits of their investments (Mutunga et al., 2015). Procurement performance is considered to be the result of two main components that is purchasing efficiency while maintaining the optimum effectiveness (Chene and Hodess, 2009). This ensures that the operation are conducted so as to meet the set standards in transactions (Deasy, 2014). Performance of procurement may be assessed in several ways such as the cost of procurement, procurement time, and the procurement accuracy (Mutunga et al., 2015). It can be used by the management in determining the various shortcomings in the procurements and how they can be countered. Procurement performance is a component of seven main factors which include proper procurement strategy, well-coordinated management information and focused procurement efforts. As such, supply chain procurement practices aim to enhance the flow of goods from the suppliers to the buyers. This leads to a better understanding of the systems and coordination of operations which goes a long way in achieving the operational performance (Tummalu, 2006).

The manufacturing sector in Kenya forms one of major economic boosters. This is due to the amount revenue it generates in terms of goods taxation and employment creation. It also provides a wide range of products, thus being the third leading sectors contributing to the country’s GDP. However, despite its importance, the sector still experiences periods of fluctuations over the years and still does not perform as well as expected (East African Community Facts and Figures – 2010, March Issue, 2011).

Large-scale manufacturing companies are the organizations with above Kshs100 millions of total asset value. This implies that these companies have invested much capital in terms of resources it uses, which include both material and non-material resources. Both the relations and improvements in the procurement performance are very important aspects in the operations of these organizations. This will ensure that the activities conducted are done at the shortest time possible while maintaining the set quality and standards (Benton W. C. and Michael, 2005).

2. Problem of Research

The area of supply chain performance consists one of the key interests in enhancing the performance of organizations. This is attributed to the fact that enhancements in the procurement operations will ultimately cause a significant improvement in the performance. As such the supplier to buyer relationship proves essential if this were to be attained. However, despite this importance, the exact relationship that exists between the variables is not that well established by the existing empirical research. To begin with Muhwezi (2009) conducted a study in Uganda aimed at establishing the supplier-buyer relationships. The study established that the parties involved do not put maximal effort in ensuring that the relationships are sustained. This thus creates low trust levels and the desired outcomes are not attained. This results correlates to those conducted by Benton (2012). Whereas a study conducted by
Mohammed (2012) on performance of manufacturing firms in Mombasa, Kenya established that well-coordinated buyer supplier relationships impact significantly on the operational performance.

In study carried out by Kiage (2013) held a study aimed to determine what undermines how the procurements perform. The study was conducted as a case study of the Ministry of Energy. Specifically the study sought to determine the impact procurement planning has on procurement performance; and to establish how various factors affect the procurement performance. The study establishes that an interaction between the supplier and the buyer highly determines how the procurement performs.

Chimwani (2014) conducted a study on factors influencing procurement performance in Kenyan public sector. Descriptive design was used in conducting the study. The target population was the 600 SLO staff comprising of which 60 respondents was chosen; this represents 10% of target population, and drawn using stratified sampling method. Both descriptive and inferential data analysis methods including frequencies and percentages. A positive relationship was established.

A study carried out by Rodrigo (2001) indicated that proper communication is a vital aspect of buyer-supplier relationships. Procurement professionals use a variety of media to communicate with suppliers, including electronic data interchange (EDI), mail, phone and email thus boosting procurement performance. There is need to explore other supplier evaluation attributes like the suppliers’ automation attributes and service delivery attributes and how they can influence supply chain performance. There is to conduct the same study in other sectors like manufacturing and service sector industries and firms (Mogikoyo et al., 2017).

This shows that although some manufacturing firms in Kenya yearn to improve their relationships with the suppliers, they haven’t been successful in maintaining continuity. Hence low levels of relationship loyalty, retention of suppliers and satisfaction of customers (Hunt, 2010). Despite of the studies conducted on the buyer - supplier relationships management strategies, the exact ways of enhancing this relationship is not well established. Additionally, there seems no study focusing on the manufacturing companies, particularly in Kenya. This study aimed at filling this knowledge gap and addressed the following research question; what is the relationship between buyer - supplier relationships management and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firms?

3. Research Focus

The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of buyer - supplier relationships management strategies and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firms. The specific objectives entailed:

(i) To establish the buyer - supplier relationships management strategies commonly used by large scale manufacturing firms.

(ii) To determine the relationship between buyer - supplier relationships management and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firms.

4. Conceptual Framework

In spite of having many-buyer supplier relationship management strategies studies undertaken as indicated above, none of the studies have drawn much emphasis on how large scale manufacturing firms should improve the effectiveness of the buyer-supplier relationship management strategies. Hence this poses a knowledge gap amongst procurement and logistics practitioners in large scale manufacturing firm. This study will attempt to establish the effects of buyer-supplier relationships management strategies and procurement performance of large scale manufacturing firm on procurement performance. This part of the research will seek to give clear and consistent definition of the research questions. It will be used to indicate the relationship between dependent variables which is the research problems and independent variables.
5. Methodology of Research

5.1. General Background of Research

The study used cross-sectional survey research design. Cross-sectional studies are descriptive and can use qualitative or quantitative measures, thus, enhancing data collection. Through cross-sectional survey, all population elements are considered ensuring that comprehensive findings are obtained on the subject matter (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

5.2. Sample of Research

The population of interest in this study consisted of large manufacturing companies that are members of KAM (Kenya association of manufactures) in Nairobi. The main reason for this choice is that these firms are likely to exhibit an elaborate SCM philosophy and make use of supplier – buyer relationships. According to the KAM website, there are 1700 registered members, 80% of them being in Nairobi. The population of this study was 1500 firms. According to KIRDI Directory of Manufacturing Industries (1997), large firms are those with 200 employees and above. This study adapted this definition. Gay (1992) holds that at least 10% of the population is a good representation where the population is large and 10% where the population is small. The 10% of the target population of 1500 respondents will make a sample size of 150 manufacturing firms. The researcher will randomly sample the target population to arrive at 150 manufacturing firms who will represent the entire population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceutical</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3. Instrument and Procedures

The study used both primary and secondary data. The data collected was mostly quantitative and descriptive in nature. The questionnaire was design so as to capture the current phenomena in the industries. The preference of the questionnaires is due to them being fast and convenient as the anonymity of the respondent is maintained. Secondary data on the other hand was acquired from the inspectorate of listed major manufacturing firms in Kenya.

5.4. Data Analysis

The process of obtaining valid and meaningful information from the collected data is known as data analysis. This ensures completeness of the collected data and enables not only interpretation but representation of the findings. The consistency was determined by the Cronbach Alpha so as to ascertain the internal consistency. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches were adopted with the analysis being aided by SPSS. The analyzed data was then presented in tables and figures.
A summary of the specific regression models, analysis and interpretation of results is presented below.

Thus, Let-
\[ Y = \text{Procurement Performance} \]
\[ X_1 = \text{Buyer-Supplier Partnership} \]
\[ X_2 = \text{Communication} \]
\[ X_3 = \text{Commitment to Suppliers} \]

Thus
\[ Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3) \]

Assuming a linear relationship
\[ Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \]

Where \( Y \) is the dependent variable and \( X_1 \) to \( X_3 \) are the independent variables while alpha, \( \alpha \) represents Realization of procurement performance that is independent of the above factors- (\( X_1 \) to \( X_3 \)). The betas, \( \beta_1 \) to \( \beta_3 \) are the betas for each factor which indicates the unit changes in \( Y \) for every unit chance in \( X_1 \) to \( X_3 \) respectively.

5.5. Results of Research

It was noted from the data collected, out of the 150 questionnaires administered, 120 questionnaires were filled and returned. This results show an 80% response rate, which is considered adequate to make conclusions for the study as it is in line with go assentation.

6. Demographic Information

The following discussion represents the demographic information that was collected from the respondents. The study above shows that 80% of the respondents were male while 20% were female. However, both genders were well represented to carry the study out. The researcher had to establish the bracket of the respondents; that 10% of the respondents were aged below 20 years, 23% were aged between 21 to 30 years, 31% were aged between 31 to 40 years, 18% were aged between 41 to 50 years, 8% were aged between 51 - 55 year, while 10% were aged above 55 years. From the study above, the age brackets were well represented to carry the study out. The study found out that 15% of the respondents had secondary education, 18% had a diploma while the majority 67% had a university degree. Both the respondents were well educated to respond to the questionnaire more appropriately.

7. The Buyer-Supplier Relationships Management Strategies Commonly used by Large Scale Manufacturing Firms in Kenya

The study sought to establish the buyer supplier relationships management strategies in manufacturing firms in Kenya. The strategies at hand include; Buyer–Supplier Partnership Strategy, Communication Strategy, and Commitment to suppliers Strategies research findings are as in the Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The firm enhances open communication between buyers and suppliers</td>
<td>4.254</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The firm enhances buyer-supplier partnership</td>
<td>4.253</td>
<td>.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is meaningful and timely information between firms and suppliers</td>
<td>4.124</td>
<td>.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is direct contact between the buyer and its suppliers</td>
<td>4.045</td>
<td>.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The regular contact between buyers and the suppliers is easier to manage</td>
<td>3.985</td>
<td>.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The firm treats suppliers as allies and close friends</td>
<td>3.846</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is trust between buyer and supplier</td>
<td>3.641</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is constant sharing of information</td>
<td>3.487</td>
<td>.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings in the above table shows that the respondents agreed to a great extent (3.487≤mean≤4.254, with a significant standard deviation) the firm enhances buyer-supplier partnership, there is a direct contact between buyer and its suppliers, the regular contact between buyers and the suppliers is easier to manage, there is constant sharing of information, the firm enhances open
communication between buyers and suppliers, there is meaningful and timely information between firms and suppliers, the firm treats suppliers as allies and close friends, there is trust between buyer and supplier. This means that manufacturing firms in Kenya use buyer supplier relationships management strategies to a great extent with an overall mean of (3.95). This implies that the manufacturing firms were mindful about the buyer supplier relationships management strategies.

The respondents agreed to a very great extend (4.354≤mean, with a significant standard deviation) there is joint decision making on matters of common interest, the respondents also agreed to a great extent (3.54≤mean≤4.225 with a significant standard deviation) there is a well establish buyer supplier partnership in the firm, Buyer/supplier collaboration enhances procurement performance, there is mutual support for both buyers and suppliers, the partnership between buyers and suppliers ensures efficiency in procurement operations, there is a well establish buyer supplier partnership in the firm. This means that the manufacturing firms embrace buyer-supplier partnership strategy to a great extent with an overall mean of (4.02). These findings were in line with Dyer and Ouchi (1993) who argues that the importance of buyer-supplier partnerships facilitates easier management.

The study sought to establish the communication Strategy as used by the manufacturing firms in Kenya. The research findings are as in the Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is open sharing of information which is indicated by the willingness of both parties to share important information</td>
<td>4.358</td>
<td>.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is engagement of suppliers and other partners in mutually beneficial value exchanges</td>
<td>4.214</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement professionals utilize a variety of media to communicate with suppliers</td>
<td>4.206</td>
<td>.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is effective communication which is a critical component of buyer-supplier relationships</td>
<td>3.974</td>
<td>.974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is trust between buyers and suppliers achieved through communication</td>
<td>3.784</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings in the above table shows that the respondents agreed to a very great extent (4.654, with a significant standard deviation) there is open sharing of information which is indicated by the willingness of both parties to share important information, the respondents agreed to a great extend (3.784≤mean≤4.358, with a significant standard deviation) there is engagement of suppliers and other partners in mutually beneficial value exchanges, procurement professionals utilize a variety of media to communicate with suppliers, there is effective communication which is a critical component of buyer-supplier relationships, there is transparency achieved through effective communication, there is trust between buyers and suppliers achieved through communication. This means that the manufacturing firms have Communication Strategy in place an overall mean of (4.19).These findings are similar to Janda et al. (2002).

The study sought to establish commitment to supplier’s strategy as used by the manufacturing firms in Kenya. The research findings are as in the Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitment to suppliers Strategy</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committed buyer seller relationship and commitment to core concepts in various transactions between the company and its partners are considered to improve the procurement performance of a firm</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.621</td>
<td>.6875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to a partner in relation to play is key to achieving favorable results for both companies, and has a direct impact on performance</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.600</td>
<td>.6674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commitment among buyers and suppliers brings the desire to develop a stable relationship</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.411</td>
<td>.5451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain the relationship, a confidence in the stability of the relationship, and investments in the relationship thus improving procurement performance</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.354</td>
<td>.5744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Commitment of supply chain partners willing to invest resources to achieve long-term success is sacrificing short-term interests

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.354</td>
<td>.3454</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a sustained commitment from both sides to achieve their common goals of the supply chain

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.324</td>
<td>.5643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is commitment to a lasting relationship of limited help thus high procurement performance

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>4.251</td>
<td>.5421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings in the above table shows that the respondents agreed to a very great extent (4.411≤mean≤4.621, with a significant standard deviation on the responses. This means that the manufacturing firms have commitment to supplier’s strategy in place with an overall mean of (4.41).

From the analysis of the findings, it was noted that looking at the firms’ procurement performance at the financial perspective, there was a progressive increase in reduced resource wastages for the six year period analysis. With the base being 2009, 2010 was noted to have an increase of 0.72%, 2011 had a decrease of 0.01%, 2012 had 0.63%, 2013 had a 0.65% increase, while 2014 had a 0.66% increase. Reduced delivery lead time were also noted to have progressively increased from 0.33% in 2010 to a 0.52% increase in 2014 as a result of effective supply chain performance. The study also noted that looking at the enhanced continuous production, there was an increase in the production index from 0.11% in 2010 to 0.54% increase in 2014. A similar case was noted to the Prevents shortages and stock out costs which indicated a 0.01% increase in 2010 to 0.34% increase in 2014. This concurs with Richard et al. (2016) conclusion that there is a link between supply chain strategies and firm performance.

8. The Relationship between Buyer - Supplier Relationship Management Strategies and Procurement Performance of Large-Scale Manufacturing Firms

The regression coefficients for the relationship between buyer-supplier relationship management strategies and procurement performance of large-scale manufacturing firms are as in table 5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyer-Supplier Partnership</td>
<td>3.544</td>
<td>.425</td>
<td>8.545</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.644</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Suppliers</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

The following regression result was obtained:

\[ Y = 3.544 + 0.541X_1 + 0.644X_2 + 0.148X_3 \]

\[ P=0.039^a \]

From the model, when other factors Buyer-Supplier Partnership are at zero, the performance of manufacturing firms will be 3.544. Holding other factors constant, a unit increase in would lead to 0.541 (p=.035) increase in performance of large manufacturing firms. However, holding other factors constant, a unit increase in communication would lead to a 0.644 (p=0.049) increase in performance of large manufacturing firms. The table above also shows that holding other factors constant, a unit increase in commitment to Suppliers would lead to a 0.148 (p=0.038) increase in performance of large manufacturing firms.

The study sought to establish the relationship that exists between buyer – supplier relationship management strategies and procurement performance of Large Scale Manufacturing Firms in Kenya. The researcher conducted a regression analysis to assist explain this relationship. The study adopted the following linear regression model to depict the expected relationship between the variables: \( Y=(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4) \):

Whereby: Y represents Procurement performance which was measured using the responses on the effect of various buyers – supplier relationship variables, \( x_1 \) is buyer – supplier Partnership; \( x_2 \) is
Communication: x3 is strategic supplier partnership and X4 is Commitment to suppliers; B0 is the model’s constant, and β1 – β3 are the regression coefficients while ε is the model’s significance from f-significance results obtained from analysis of variance (ANOVA). All the three independent variables were also measured using the responses on each of the variables obtained from the respondents. The results are illustrated and explained next.

Table 6. Model’s Goodness of Fit Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.734a</td>
<td>.539</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td>.1752</td>
<td>1.421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Buyer-Supplier Partnership, Communication, Strategic Supplier Partnership and Commitment to Suppliers

Table 6 shows that there is a linear association between the dependent and independent variables as shown by a correlation (R) coefficient of 0.734; The determination coefficient as measured by the adjusted R-square presents a moderately strong relationship was f 0.50, depicting that the model accounts for 50.3% of the total observation.

Table 7. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2.164</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.541</td>
<td>11.657</td>
<td>.039a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>9.775</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.939</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Buyer-Supplier Partnership, Communication, Strategic Supplier Partnership and Commitment to Suppliers b. Dependent Variable: Procurement performance

The ANOVA statistics presented in the table above show the model was significant as at p = 0.039 was established.

9. Summary of the Findings

The large manufacturing firms periodically evaluate the importance of its relationship with customers, it is therefore apparent that large manufacturing firms realize the importance to embraces buyer supplier relationship management strategies. The study above indicates that respondents agreed that there is suppliers and buyer partnership. It is clear that suppliers and buyer partnership affects large manufacturing firms’ performance. This shows that communication that would greatly strengthen both intra and inter-organizational integration and be the key to a seamless supply chain performance. The study also established buyer supplier relationship geared towards meeting customer expectation. It clear that organizations face challenges in implementation of supply chain management practices. That large manufacturing firm’ encounters a challenge when seeking partnerships with other firms due to completion issues and lack of goodwill. It is apparent that commitment affects procurement performance. In general, the adoption of commitment maybe appropriate in the following conditions: innovative products; products with high monetary density, high specialization and wide range; markets characterized by long delivery time, low delivery frequency and high demand uncertainty; and manufacturing or logistics systems with small economies of scales and no need for special knowledge.

10. Conclusion

From the analysis of findings we conclude that communication among the supply chain partner is proportional to the information symmetry that exists. Also, from the findings in section four above, conclusions are made that partnerships with buyers and suppliers enable organizations to operate more efficiently. Strategically aligned organizations can work closely together and eliminate wasteful time and effort. It is therefore clear that a strategic partnership emphasizes long-term relationship between trading partners and “promotes mutual planning and problem solving efforts”.

11. Recommendations

Large manufacturing firms in Nairobi County and outside Nairobi should be advised to embrace the concept so that they can be able to reap the benefits of adopting these strategies. Large manufacturing
firms are also advised to adopt the practices that are currently adopted at a very small extent because they can significantly improve procurement performance from the current position. The study mainly focused on large manufacturing firms only. There is a need to conduct a similar study which will attempt to find out integrating logistics strategies, Supply chain integration and performance and relationship between supply chain performance and supply chain responsiveness of large manufacturing firms in Kenya.

12. Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study and application therefore are limited to large manufacturing companies firms in Kenya. They may not be applicable directly to other firms operating outside the Kenyan manufacturing industry. It is therefore important to note that they can only be used for comparative purposes and not any direct application in another industry or country. The researcher encountered lots of limitation while conducting the research, was getting the respondents who were interviewed during working hours as many of them were out for field work or in closed door meetings. To overcome this, the researcher needed to make special appointments to meet the targeted respondents early in the morning before they leave office. The study also acknowledged that not all information sought for this research is in the public domain and to overcome this challenge permission was required to access the organizations documentation which captured the required information.

References

Igecha (2014). Determinants of strategy implementation at the institute of quantity surveyors of kenya.
Kipmayo (2014). Supply chain metrics that matter – a focus on the high-tech industry.


